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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 19, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that in accordance with the representation made by the government under the provisions of Standing Order 55(1) I have caused to be published a special order paper giving notice of introduction of government bills. I now lay the relevant document upon the table.

[*Translation*]

My dear colleagues, I have the honour to lay on the table a copy of the reprint of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, dated September 1994, which includes all amendments to the Standing Orders since the beginning of the session.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

FULL EMPLOYMENT ACT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon) moved that Bill C–209, an act to provide for full employment in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, today I rise in this Parliament to speak to what I believe is one of the biggest issues facing each one of us here and one of the greatest responsibilities, jobs and job creation.

We are still in double digit unemployment. There are still far too many people unemployed. It is time this government took direct action and accountability for unemployment levels.

Bill C–209, an act to provide for full employment in Canada, will ensure that the government is as accountable for job creation as it is for deficit reduction.

A full employment strategy means that all of the federal government's activities, managing interest rates and the dollar, dealing with trading partners, investing in new businesses and innovation, helping workers retrain, and every other aspect of federal economic and social policy are guided by the objective of achieving full employment.

Full employment does not mean an unemployment rate of zero per cent. Economists estimate that it is generally considered between 3 and 4 per cent. It does mean that there is no permanent structural unemployment and that it is a set of precepts by which other policies should be guided. Full employment also does not mean that the government guarantees everyone a job. It means that the number of jobs available in public and private sectors is very close to the number of people active in the workforce.

The objectives of a full employment policy have been proven over and over again in other countries to work very well in concert with proper labour market policies.

A full employment economic strategy will build social justice with unemployment and underemployment reduced. The devastation of poverty and a lack of choices and opportunities are tragedies that characterize our present economic system, one that is clearly in failure.

[*Translation*]

I would like to explain, first of all, that this bill requires the minister to prepare a draft plan for the achievement of full employment in Canada and lay it before Parliament.

• (1105)

The draft plan would then be reviewed by a standing committee of the House of Commons. The minister would consider the report and recommendations of the committee in the preparation of a final plan. The plan would be reviewed annually against the targets for achieving full employment, and the report on any adjustments necessary to meet the targets of the plan would be prepared within six months of the end of the year and laid before Parliament.

I have quite a few recommendations on how this objective should be achieved—in fact, there are 22—but I will just describe a few. For instance, an environmental awareness program that would promote the goal of sustainable development through new environmental technologies, sewage treatment facilities and energy efficiency programs.

It is therefore necessary to have an investment policy that includes the right to review and regulate foreign investment in Canada, a national investment fund that operates at arms–length from the government and an elimination of corporations' rights to deduct interest expenses from taxable income.

A national policy on education that includes a national council on education which would examine all issues relevant to education.

An important ingredient of this plan is strengthened support to existing social programs such as health care and the creation of new social programs such as a national child care program.

It is also necessary to have comprehensive adjustment measures for workers such as the establishment of a mandatory job vacancy registry and job matching system through Canada Employment Centres and the establishment of adjustment committees for employees in positions where significant lay–offs are anticipated, to facilitate counselling, re–training and employment services for workers who are or may be laid off.

It is necessary as well to provide for examination of the impact of all federal fiscal policies on employment, including the mandate of the Bank of Canada.

These examples are all in the bill, and I think it is very important for a committee to consider the ways in which this part of the bill can be implemented.

[*English*]

One of the most important aspects of this bill is it will ensure that the government reports unemployment targets to the House of Commons as it now does with deficit reduction targets. By law the plan would be reviewed annually against targets for achieving full employment with adjustments required to meeting the targets of the plan to be reviewed within six months of the end of the year.

The point of this bill is that the government must be as accountable for the reduction of unemployment as it is for the reduction of the debt and the deficit.

There is a clear linkage between the policies of the government and the ability of our economy not to have a jobless recovery but to have a real recovery with jobs. Canadians who are now underemployed or unemployed would have work.

When I speak of labour market policies there are a number that must be taken into account. For example, in recent statistics we see the largest increase in the number of jobs has been in part time jobs. Many people may wish to work part time but others work part time because they have no option. There must be policies in place to ensure that part time workers receive benefits and that they receive full recognition for part time work. Saskatchewan has brought in benefits for part time workers. The federal government and other provinces should follow that model.

• (1110)

Other adequate labour market policies are absolutely necessary. I would like to mention some of the recommendations which have come out of the labour movement. In particular, the Canadian Labour Congress addressed the issue not only of job creation but of the need to ensure that the existing work is more equitably spread. Many people work many hours of overtime while others rest without employment at all.

I would like to mention some of the recommendations of the Canadian Labour Congress. It specifically addresses the issue of how we attain full employment and the labour market policies which the government can put in place to facilitate that.

For example, there is the reduction of standard weekly hours to less than 40 hours per week. In the past there was a huge battle about limiting work hours. There is a requirement for employers to keep a log of all hours worked and more stringent limits on overtime, both weekly and annually.

We know many employers would rather pay overtime than to create a new job and take on a new employee because there is less book work and less hassle for the employer. We have to facilitate making it possible for the employer to do that. In some recent collective agreements, for example in automative manufacturing, a whole new shift with a number of new employees has been employed and other employees have reduced their overtime.

The government should take the initiative in looking at those kinds of issues. Clearly in doing this we have to look at not simply reducing pay to workers. When looking at the work week and reductions in overtime and the accompanying labour market policies we must also ensure that benefits and other recompense are respected. Many kinds of these ideas are there. They can be acted upon by a government that really wants to deal with the issue and not simply speak about it.

I would like to speak briefly about the Minister of Human Resources Development's ongoing social policy review. It relates very closely to this plan for full employment. The goal of the review should be to make social programs more efficient but also more equitable. Accordingly the Minister of Human Resources Development in the context of his social policy review must consider adopting a comprehensive policy of full employment.

Lower unemployment means a lower deficit. The two are inextricably linked. That is the purpose of this bill: to say that the government of the day must give equal emphasis to reducing unemployment as to reducing the deficit because they are inextricably linked.

We do not need to cripple our social programs and marginalize the unemployed to reduce the deficit. That is like chopping up the furniture to heat the home. Let us start dealing with the fundamental structural problems of the bad economic policies we have seen pursued in this country.

Let us also get rid of the myth that unemployment is free. It is impossible to reduce a budget deficit when there is widespread unemployment. Official direct costs of unemployment to government were $47.5 billion in 1993.

• (1115)

The Canadian Council for Policy Alternatives estimates the direct costs of unemployment at $109 billion for 1993 if we include unemployment insurance costs, lost salaries, additional UI premiums paid by employed workers, lost profits and lost tax revenues. Unemployment is not free: it is not free financially, it is not free in human terms, it is not free to communities and to families.

If every unemployed worker had a job tomorrow, the federal government would collect some $5.5 billion more in taxes. It would spend at least $16 billion less in income support. High unemployment is a human tragedy, the federal government's most wasteful expense and its biggest unnecessary tax loss.

Official unemployment is now at 10.3 per cent. Youth unemployment is at 16.4 per cent. More than one worker in four is now forced to draw unemployment insurance benefits at some time in the year and one in three exhaust these benefits before finding other jobs.

Most recent statistics indicate that 42 per cent of workers are employed part time. Many of those are only employed seasonally. Only 20 per cent of working women hold full time, permanent jobs that pay more than $30,000 per year. Taken as a whole, only 31 per cent of all workers have full time, year round jobs that pay more than $30,000 a year.

The 25–year trend of increased participation of women in the labour force has been reversed, especially for young women. More women have been pushed into part time jobs and outnumber men in these positions by almost three to one.

The current government has continued to pursue the policies of the past, in particular, those introduced by the former Conservative government. These policies do not come to grips with permanent, structural unemployment.

In this bill, I outline a number of ways that might be considered. There are many others: the labour market policies that I spoke to earlier; the kind of recommendations of labour bodies and other groups to working toward this objective.

A clear commitment to full employment and to a strategy of full employment; building partnerships, setting goals and meeting them, putting tools in the hands of working people, protecting our environmental capital and understanding and rising to the challenges posed by the world economy; these should be the cornerstone of an economic policy.

This bill would be one step toward that cornerstone. I urge the support of this House.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege for me to take part in the debate on this extremely important issue. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. member for her work over a number of years. I think she has a well earned reputation of striving to better the lives of working Canadians.

I paid attention to her comments. As a government, since the October 25 election, we have worked extremely hard in the past 11 months to bring positive change to the lives of Canadians.

No one in the House has a monopoly on the concerns of the number one priority in this country, which is job creation. That priority of jobs, of achieving employment growth, of ensuring meaningful, well paying jobs for all Canadians, is something that all of us, regardless of which side of the House we sit on, should be concentrating on.

No hon. member, no one party in this House has exclusive interest in improving our economy. The government has truly created an environment where job creation can take place. We are committed to reducing unemployment and opening up the labour force to those individuals who want to participate in it.

• (1120)

The government has taken and is taking steps at this very moment to ensure that Canadian workers from coast to coast to coast have an opportunity to participate in rewarding and lasting employment. From the very beginning of its term in office it has been implementing a well laid out plan to promote economic growth and establish long term, rewarding jobs for Canadians. It has to be done in an orderly step by step fashion.

We started rebuilding at the foundation. We have launched an infrastructure program in co–operation with the provinces that is addressing local needs. This infrastructure program is successful because it focuses on the local needs of the community. It speaks to the issue of effective partnerships, a model for all governments to follow.

The $6 billion national program showed to Canadians that different levels of government, when they are focusing on the big picture which is to provide opportunity, to restore hope and improve the quality of life for Canadians, can work. Government can be a force for positive change and by facilitating the process of change and the process of building communities we can return to Canadians the feeling that something is getting done for their communities and for future generations.

We are, through the infrastructure program, investing in our future. We are building our roads. We are building better communities. We are investing in those things that Canadians have called for and most of all—I underline this point—we are doing it in partnership.

For example, we are working hand in hand with the Government of Saskatchewan to upgrade the province's rural roads over the next two years. This federal–provincial partnership will invest $30 million and will create more than 500 full time jobs. That is not all.

The spinoff from this project will result in hundreds of additional jobs for Saskatchewan. Residents in the construction, technical and professional trades will have opportunities to work instead of sitting in the unemployment lines.

Those of us who represent the province of Ontario will understand the hurt and pain the residents have gone through in the recessionary years when their so–called Canadian dream slipped away. They question the future and what kind of future their children will have. We have established an infrastructure program in co–operation with the province of Ontario known as the Canada–Ontario Infrastructure Works. We estimate it will create approximately 37,000 direct and indirect jobs.

• (1125)

These are facts and figures. They speak to the commitment the government has toward bringing back jobs, creating economic growth and, more important, giving back confidence to the people of Canada, confidence that was shaken during our recession.

I can talk about other projects in the regions of York or Waterloo where investments have been made so that we can once again regain the strength required at the local and community levels to drive the economy and give confidence to the people so that we can push forward.

These are fine examples of how partnerships can work, how we can foster a strong and productive partnership together. The government expects to create approximately 90,000 jobs for Canadians both on site in construction and off site in providing supply and services. Beyond that several thousand of more jobs will be created indirectly from the program's impact.

That is not all. One starts by building the foundation. We addressed infrastructure. We then moved forward to strategic initiatives with the provinces. There again the theme is of partnership and regional concerns, bringing about the type of co–operation that is required if we are going to introduce a new way to govern.

We have allocated $800 million strategic initiative funds for the next four years. This investment will enable us to build a Canada that is consciously job oriented and reflects a prosperous, enterprising society.

The minister has already announced a number of projects under the strategic initiative programs. They include job link with the province of Ontario, a $50 million investment to help thousands of welfare recipients get employed. Is this not what governments should be doing, providing opportunities to people that historically have been trapped by the same system that should be helping them?

We will be operating in 10 to 12 communities and job link is transforming existing programs into one co–ordinated system to help people move away from welfare into work. We want to get people off the welfare rolls and on to the payrolls of this nation. This is what people are asking for.

We were all campaigning for the October 25 election. Every door we knocked on people were saying: "Give us hope. Give us a job so that we can look to the future with confidence". This example of job link with the province of Ontario speaks to that. It speaks to the understanding of a fundamental principle that government's role is to provide opportunities for people and the individual's role is to make the most out of those opportunities.

If I may review, the government is moving into a social security review that will once again give to many Canadians the tools required so that they can compete locally, nationally and globally. We are working very hard to make sure that the dream of a job is realized from coast to coast to coast.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Madam Speaker, I would like to mention, although this will be underlined further this afternoon, that we are sitting today for the first time minus one of our colleagues.

I was very pleased to start off the session with a debate on full employment. However, the debate taking place in the context of this particular bill, my pleasure turned to displeasure, to bitter disappointment as regards the nature of the provisions put forward by the New Democratic Party.

A full employment policy, as anyone who has looked into the subject would know and as far as I am concerned, includes basically two main components: so–called macroeconomic policies concerning employment and policies at the regional and local level which, because of the ownership of the local and regional players, allow maximum job–creation benefits to be derived from national policy, whatever the nation, at the regional level as well as from a more local and regional policy.

I would like to mention in passing, as time is short—but I hope we can come back to it later on—that Diane Bellemare and Lise Poulin–Simon, two university professors have looked into these matters extensively since the 80s in Quebec. They have worked so hard in fact that they influenced not only the central labour bodies, which they criticized in a way, but also management, which was also criticized, and governments to such a

point that in Quebec, we now have some essential tools such as the following.

I will not address macro–economic policy, as it is Ottawa's responsibility. And in Ottawa, contrary to the government member's claims, concern for employment is not obvious to say the least. An infrastructure program was introduced. Fine, but we must also consider all that was not, and we will come back to this repeatedly over the course of the session. In spite of all the idle talk and the campaign promises, this government cannot be said to be concerned with employment.

At the other level however—and it may be fitting to mention this here—the second component I referred to earlier is basically an involvement policy. Such a policy can, especially in Quebec but in other provinces also, as we will see, be developed at the local or provincial level.

Let me read you two sentences. On what basis do Mrs. Bellemare and Poulin contend that micro–economic employment policy should come under provincial jurisdiction? First, provincial governments are at a definite advantage for political considerations when it comes to implementing such a policy.

• (1135)

In fact, the constitutional division of powers—and as far as I know the Constitution has not been changed, but, of course, it is convenient to forget this—gives the provinces considerable jurisdiction with respect to work and labour relations, education and training, and development of resources. And I would point out that it is Diane Bellemare and Lise Poulin–Simon who are saying this, not the Bloc.

Secondly, there are cultural, linguistic and ideological considerations—to which, it seems to me, the sponsor of this bill could have been sensitive—which put the provincial governments in a better position than the federal government to implement a micro–economic employment policy effectively.

It seems to me that what we are seeing here is the complete failure of the federal policy to achieve what one would expect of a full employment policy, that is economic, financial and budgetary policies at the macro–economic level from the government of the country. And having failed in that, it now wants to become involved directly and with all the necessary control over what is, in this Constitution—but I will say more—the very nature of a full employment policy, something which should be left to the provinces and to the regional and local levels.

I would add that the current globalization of markets, which has not waited for the FTA or NAFTA, is forcing all countries to give the best of themselves to achieve an employment policy. In fact, it is at the level of the people, businesses, unions, groups in each of the municipalities, in collaboration with the level of government most closely concerned and with the closest access to the constitutional powers that the project and the implementation can be carried out.

That is where it becomes easier when we know that we in Canada have not even been able during all these years to agree on manpower training, which is absolutely essential, and when the NDP bill does not refer in any way to what the provinces do better. That is true in any country. Why do at the federal level what would be done better at the regional and community level? Why? Because of a lack of confidence in the ability of our communities, our regions and, in the case of the Canadian Constitution, our provinces?

There is plenty of goodwill and good intentions that I share. I, however, think that the means used are totally inadequate and cannot work in Canada under the current Constitution. But there is more than that. In Canada—and I think this will last for a long time given Canada's current geography—it is impossible for a full employment policy to be "controlled, implemented and developed from Ottawa". The federal government must have employment–conscious fiscal, budgetary and financial policies, but it must let the provinces, the regions and the municipalities do what they do better, and give them the means to do so. At the present time, the means derive from the spending powers controlled by Ottawa.

• (1140)

I would like us to re–examine this issue, but I am clearly very disappointed.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, before I get into the main body of my remarks I would like to deal specifically with a couple of points that the member for Mercier made in her remarks.

She talked about this motion not dealing enough with the macroeconomic factors in this equation of creating an environment for full employment and focused very much on the fact that all of these jurisdictions such as training and education be the exclusive jurisdiction of the province.

I would like to remind the member for Mercier that trying to get the macroeconomic factors in the equation right is very tough to accomplish when there are members in this House whose constant barrage dealing with the dismantling of this country affects our markets in terms of the way foreigners invest in this country, which ultimately affects the rate of our dollar, which causes great stress on our deficit and debt reduction programs.

If the member for Mercier is truly committed to getting the macroeconomic side of this equation in place, then I would ask the member to review the impact her party and its dialogue are having on that part of the equation.

To the hon. member who raised this motion, I agree that it is the most important issue facing this House of Commons today. I wish we could have this debate going non–stop around the clock until we grind this issue down and get a number of concrete and doable ideas on the table. I, like the hon. member, believe that this is the priority for all of us.

We on this side of the House are trying to work in some concrete ways in addressing this problem. I think it is important for Canadians to understand that, because it is easy to create the perception in the public's eye that not a heck of a lot happens in Ottawa and in this House of Commons.

We stated during the last election that the greatest hope for putting Canadians back to work rests with the small and medium sized business community. Not only on this side but all members have been working very hard in the industry committee on a study called access to capital for small business which essentially will challenge the banks to become more accountable in their actions toward small business.

That report hopefully will be tabled in this House in the not too distant future for all of us to debate. Members from all parties worked on that report, not just for the last six months but during the summer. It is in its final edit stages. Canadians should know that commitment of challenging the banks, that report which we said in the last budget we would undertake, is very close to becoming a public document for all of us to debate. I think that is important.

I would also like to remind Canadians that my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka worked all last spring with many other colleagues and they travelled every region of Ontario on an access to capital report. That report is in fact finished. It contains some fabulous recommendations. It is available to all Canadians. They just have to write to the office of the member for Muskoka—Parry Sound who has said repeatedly that he would be more than happy to send it out.

• (1145)

In specific terms, small business needs capital if it is going to put people back to work. That is something concrete that we are working on.

There is something else happening. I do not want for a second to suggest to the member for Yukon that what I am saying is enough. I do not think we are doing enough. I think we should be more accountable. It is important to show that we are doing some specific things.

There is another thing we are working on in a very specific way. There is a joint Industry Canada—Finance Canada study on how to reduce the paper burden for small business. This is another reason why a lot of entrepreneurs have a feeling of frustration and are holding back. That study, which is being worked on, is something we must address in concrete terms.

Another issue that Canadians want us to take on this fall especially as we head toward the next budget is the whole issue of tax reform. We have a system of taxation in this country that is inefficient, complex, and obviously not fair. I support many of the recommendations of the member for Yukon. She has talked about many of these issues over the last number of years. I believe that we have now reached a point in this House and in the country where Canadians are going to be pressing us harder than ever to deal with the whole issue of taxation.

I believe taxation is an integral part of putting Canadians back to work. The harder you work, the more you make and the more you tend to want to invest or spend. The current tax system is a disincentive to investment and a disincentive to spending. In fact many of our best and brightest, our real achievers, are leaving our country. If they are not parking themselves offshore, they are parking their investment dollars offshore. Putting Canadians back to work and dealing with the very concrete and real numbers that the member for Yukon talked about in terms of deficit and debt costs cannot be done without dealing with the entire tax regime that exists in this country. That will be another one of our very important challenges.

Mr. Riis: Let's get going on it.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Members are saying let's get going. It is the first day back from the summer recess and we are going. We have a tremendous turnout of interested members this morning. It is Monday morning and we are going at it. I am not asking you to be patient. In fact, I hope you keep pressing harder than ever. I think members are raising a very important point. This is the sense of urgency.

I was working on a project this summer in the Toronto waterfront corridor. According to provincial studies—

Mr. Riis: A casino.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Yes, a casino was included as one factor in the equation. It was only 2 per cent of it. Last week some municipal politicians were saying that we are too aggressive in our actions in trying to get this project going. I do not know how you can be too aggressive in trying to put people to work, especially when you come from a city where there are close to 400,000 out of work.

That deals with my final point. We as members of Parliament have to understand the sense of urgency that Canadians feel. It is something that we really must address.

• (1150)

I know that in the private sector when times are tough you work two shifts a day. Sometimes you work six or seven days a week. Not only in this government but at all levels of government we should possibly consider setting up a public service

arrangement where they work two shifts a day, seven days a week, not unlike the way members of Parliament work.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on this bill. I join the hon. member for Yukon in her sincere desire that no Canadian ever have to suffer the anxiety and the stress of being unable to find a good job with a good income sufficient to provide for themselves and their family. I commend her for her compassion and for wishing to devise a way to relieve this and other difficulties faced by all too many of our citizens.

Unfortunately the measure she is proposing in the bill before this House today simply cannot achieve this ideal. It would be wonderful if people through their elected representatives could by putting the right words on paper eliminate difficulties and uncertainty in the economic, political and social spheres of our society. In my view it does not work that way. That view is based on observations of government actions both past and present, some in our own country.

Creating a state bureaucracy which will somehow create jobs for everyone is certainly not a new idea. The well known slogan of the old Soviet Union was: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need". What that led to was summarized in the typical black humour of the Polish workers who used to say: "We pretend to work and the government pretends to pay us".

To suggest to Canadians that governments owe them jobs or are even capable of providing them with jobs in every case would be a cruel deception. This is particularly true for this government, already over half a trillion dollars in debt and spending $41 billion and rising every single year just on interest on that debt.

The tax burden on working Canadians simply to sustain the present level of spending is already a crushing load. Where will the money come from to create the ministry of plenty envisioned in this bill? Governments have no money of their own. They must work with money taken from citizens. Even if they recovered some revenue in the form of taxes this proposal would still require an enormous additional expenditure in terms of the bureaucratic handling fee that would be made necessary by this new initiative.

If government programs, spending, borrowing for more programs and increasing tax grabs to fund it all could give people jobs, there would be enough programs and spending in Canada to give every single citizen three jobs. It has not worked out that way.

Since big government, big government programs and interference in the economy are what have brought us to today's fiscal mess I am frankly amazed that anyone would be advocating more of the same today.

Allow me to outline some of the obvious flaws in this bill. Clause 3 of this legislative proposal calls for governments to give priority to the undertaking of sufficient measures to achieve full employment in Canada and establish programs that ensure that employment opportunities are available to all adult Canadians who seek work.

These suggestions are vague and they are optimistic. The shortage of specifics with intent to achieve idealistic goals seems to infer that the government should spend tax dollars to create employment without creating wealth or economic growth to support it.

It seems to me that we have tried these measures before in countless forms throughout our history without creating any possibility for long term employment. The most recent example is this government's initiative to assist unemployed Canadian youth. These programs amount to a redistribution of tax dollars to our young people in exchange for performing routine tasks. It does nothing to give them long term jobs and skills.

The premier of Ontario tried to spend his way out of recessionary times during his first year in office. We know the results there. This type of mentality has already plunged Canada to the brink of fiscal collapse. Investor confidence has weakened and with it has come a loss of jobs and a shaky economy.

High interest rates are another result of this type of government policy. The vicious spiral of government spending leads to a high level of taxation which in turn contributes to inflation which stifles entrepreneurship.

• (1155)

The best way to create employment and thus achieve this bill's objectives is to eliminate government waste, remove barriers and regulations that hinder commerce, cut spending and reduce taxes. In this environment there would be a streamlined bureaucracy serving the real needs of Canadian entrepreneurs. Canadians would have more money left in their pockets to start and build businesses and there would be enough profit left to make their work and risk worthwhile. Only when individuals are prepared to risk their own capital can we expect to have a strong and vibrant economy.

Studies have shown and indeed the hon. member opposite just mentioned that an enormous percentage of real long term jobs are created by a healthy small business sector.

We need to get government off the backs of people and keep governments' demands from obstructing their dreams and work. There is no need to further encumber the people of Canada with yet another government department and still more regulations to stimulate employment.

This bill also calls for a draft plan that will include an estimate of the number of jobs expected to be created in Canada as a result of the plan and a timetable for its implementation and

for the achievement of full employment. This suggestion poses some very serious questions.

First, experience has amply demonstrated that governments by their nature cannot be trusted to forecast the economic capacity of a free market. Their attempts to do so have only led to some type of a planned economy. I am sure we are all aware of the outcome of such strategies as practised in other countries.

The omniscient role for government as advocated by this proposal would be best replaced by enhancing the resources of the private sector which has the most at stake. Other countries have recognized that economic decision making must be centred not on periodic pronouncements and decrees from a distant bureaucracy. This type of top–down policy would only cost Canadians jobs by stifling initiatives and creating obstacles.

There is a need for government policies that promote competition and choice. This would foster a market culture predicated on efficiency and ingenuity. These in turn will generate more activity in the marketplace which will create more jobs. It would be of great benefit if government was more user friendly and more accessible. Canadians want more personal responsibility and less imposed government dependency.

This bill's plan unfortunately seeks the opposite. Every able and willing Canadian should be able to find suitable employment but that can only happen when the nation's wealth is left in the hands of entrepreneurs, investors and business people rather than taken from them to be spent by bureaucrats, politicians and grant recipients.

Clause 6 of this bill itemizes 22 regulatory protectionist or expenditure related measures which the sponsors hope will ensure full employment. Most disturbing of all is the consideration of the establishment of a department of full employment that would include a mandate to achieve full employment. It is almost incredible that as our fiscal crisis looms larger, ideas involving yet another increase in government spending and thus an increased tax burden are still being promoted.

Still others of these measures would close doors to Canadian drugs and restrict our markets to imports. To tie this all together, an intricate web of new agencies would also be created to carry out the policies.

What fascinates me is that there is no mention of where the funds would come from to realize these goals. This is one of the best examples of a recipe for disaster. We must instead strengthen co–operation between business, government and labour to ensure sustainable environmental development, the development of training programs which will meet the real demands of industry and work for tax relief and reform.

The Reform Party supports a general program of expenditure reduction, not increase, leading to a lower level of taxation, a lower cost of doing business and a lower cost of living. We need to get the deficit and debt under firm control while reforming the tax system in order to create a level playing field which would allow private initiatives to stimulate the economy.

To this end we will work toward a simple, visible and flat taxation system. I was glad to hear the member opposite support that in the speech before me. Investment consumer confidence in a market economy are directly related to the cost of participation. Canadians should be allowed to spend their hard earned dollars as they see fit, not in funding endless government programs.

• (1200)

In conclusion, Bill C–209 reads like another attempt at a planned economy which historically has never achieved its objectives. This legislative proposal does not allow society to harness the initiative of individuals. It creates structure and dependency, trade, profit—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) moved that Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, a warm welcome to my colleagues on all sides of the House as we get back to school, as it were, today.

Whether our ancestors landed by boat in Montreal or touched down at Vancouver International Airport, we are for the most part a nation of immigrants. Of course there were people here before the boats and the planes arrived, but since the beginning Canada has been the rainbow for those looking for a new way of life, indeed a new lease on life, and Canada has not let them down for Canada has been a rainbow for those new hopes, of those new aspirations and of those new dreams.

We must admit there is a bit of rust on that rainbow for a criminal element has infiltrated an immigration system that was built on hard work, hope, faith and justice. The actions of a small group of people are causing Canadians to question the very limits and the very merits of a system that has done much to build our nation as we know it. In short, the deeds of a few have cast a shadow over the reputations of many.

Immigration has provided the very lifeblood of our country. It was the immigrants that carved our forests, worked in our factories, raised our skyscrapers in our cities and provided our

jobs. They did it yesterday. They do it today and we are confident they will continue to do it tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

The amendments to the Immigration Act that we are dealing with today in Bill C–44 are designed to help get the undesirables out of the system and put some of the gleam back in the rainbow. Abuse of the system by a few has been cause for alarm. While the numbers of those causing the problem are small, the damage they have done is large.

We have read the reports, heard the stories, seen the pictures or maybe even attended a funeral. A criminal minority has used the immigration system to its own advantage. There has been slow enforcement and some of us have watched with growing anger while a justice and immigration appeals system was used as a stalling tactic to delay departure orders.

[*English*]

The problem of immigration enforcement is not unique to Canada. It did not start with this government or even the previous one. Instead it is a worldwide problem. To the south our neighbour has ongoing and very well documented enforcement problems. When Cuban jails opened, for instance, Florida was inundated. Barbed wire and armed men guard the Rio Grande. Africa has witnessed war, pestilence and famine resulting in the vast migration of peoples. Only a tiny portion of that tremendous movement of people comes to our shore, but it is significant nonetheless.

• (1205)

Last year almost 110 million people in Canada came through primary inspection points at our points of entry. In 1993–94 immigration officials examined over 3 million in detail, handled more than 100,000 immigration applications, conducted over 30,000 investigations and removed at the end some 9,000 people from Canada. In 1993 at the same time we also admitted some 81,000 skilled and/or business workers, some 24,000 refugees and reunited 134,000 people with their families.

We cannot and should not dismiss what is happening as a global phenomenon or excuse it as inevitable when large numbers of people overwhelm a system. When even a small number slip through with false papers, lies or simple misdirection they can cause tremendous pain and suffering, not to mention a backlash on the entire immigrant and refugee community.

It is a Canadian problem that demands a Canadian answer. Now is the time to face the issue and to provide Canadians with the answers.

We have before us today an accountability session in a legislative form for both the government and members of Parliament on all sides of the House. A number of MPs, as they should, here today pride themselves on listening to their constituents. I hope they have been listening hard because I too have been doing a lot of listening. I know Canadians expect their members of Parliament, all members of Parliament regardless of their political affiliation, to move swiftly with this bill and get it right.

I hear immigrants and refugees telling us and the government to stop that tiny minority of criminals from reflecting badly on everybody else. I hear police chiefs and police officers telling us and the government to change the law to ensure that it is the innocent that are protected, and not the other way around.

I hear, as does my government, people from all across Canada telling us to prevent foreign criminals from infiltrating our country disguised as legitimate immigrants or legitimate refugees.

If we do not deal swiftly and crisply with both the perception and the reality of abuses to our immigration and refugee system, the integrity of the entire process is in jeopardy. When drug dealers or other thugs slip through the cracks of the enforcement or screening net they discredit a program that has made Canada the envy of the world.

[*Translation*]

So it is up to us to fix it. We do not have to take the system apart. We do not have to stop having one of the most progressive immigration and refugee policies in the world. We simply have to fix the system and make it tougher for criminals to claim they are refugees and to prevent thugs from using red tape or muddled intra–government communications to extend their stay in Canada.

When it comes to enforcement of immigration issues, we have to do a better job. The public expects better, the public deserves better, and the public will get better enforcement of immigration issues.

[*English*]

In a moment we can discuss how better enforcement procedures have already started to take place, but the amendments to the Immigration Act before the House are legal arrows for an enforcement quiver. The amendments help protect the true refugee and the average law–abiding immigrant should has no fear of Bill C–44. However the felon that has mistaken Canadian hospitality for a chance to loot the bill will find the doors to our country swing both ways. By strengthening the integrity of the system we will go a very long way toward restoring public trust and take ourselves further down the road toward building a better and a safer Canada. When the House approves these amendments I believe we will see a significant improvement in our enforcement procedures and the speed in which we can remove foreign criminals from our soil.

• (1210)

The bill before us presents amendments in more than a dozen areas. I would like simply to touch on a number of them that are more significant in terms of their impact on the current system. Among those are amendments that would stop serious criminals from claiming refugee status simply to delay their removal from Canada.

The legislation will put an end to the ridiculous spectacle, for instance, of an immigration and refugee board having to troop off to Kingston penitentiary to listen to a convicted murderer claiming refugee status. Average Canadians, average members of Parliament, know that is an abuse. However under current legislation the IRB is mandated and has no option but to respond to such a claim for refugee status.

I submit, as does my government, our refugee laws were not put in place to promote that kind of a claim. Rather, those laws are there to protect the legitimate fears of persecution for which Canada has won a Nansen medal, the only country and the only people on the globe to receive that distinction.

At the same time Bill C–44 will permit us to remove the most serious and dangerous criminal from a refugee process that may have already been commenced. If the system found either a serious act of criminality abroad or in Canada and the process had started the system was incapable of doing anything about it. Under Bill C–44 the amendments would provide that where warranted the system would be able to remove an individual from the refugee process and place the individual before an immigration inquiry to deal with the act of serious criminality.

I believe this is a common sense change. The system is not designed to protect the serious criminal. Nor should it be built on incapability of reacting to information once it is discovered by our officials. The time and energy spent dealing with serious criminals slows down the response of the IRB to real problems facing real refugees. That is why we have chosen to act.

When approved the bill will take away the power of the immigration appeal division to allow major criminals to remain in Canada on so–called humanitarian or compassionate grounds. I underline this is not a restriction of rights; it is more a matter of accountability. I also underline this is not an overreaction to a few isolated incidents. Instead it is a reality of the world in which we live. We should never forget the goal is to ensure that the interests of Canadians are protected.

The public across the country wants some balance of the scales of justice in a certain sense, in a common sense and in a fair and equitable way.

• (1215)

People want a sense of protection offered to those who seek it. At the same time, when someone contravenes that tolerance and crosses over the letter of the law, then there is a public that expects some kind of balance and some kind of accountability rather than a system that is indifferent to it, rendering a public that is frustrated, cynical and indifferent.

The minister and the government and indeed Parliament must deal with the consequences of any decision to allow a serious criminal to stay in Canada for either humanitarian or compassionate reasons. I believe it is both appropriate and reasonable that the minister and senior officials of the department make that decision.

The immigration appeal division will continue to have jurisdiction for all individuals on questions of law and fact. What we are trying to address is the accountability that the Canadian public demands of us and of its systems. As the law stands now, there is nothing to stop the citizenship process even though a person may be subjected to an immigration enquiry.

If citizenship is obtained the person cannot be deported. Once again we have tried to reflect the feeling of the public that clearly this is not in the best interest of the system. The right hand must know what the left hand is doing in government. Why should a citizenship process continue to move blindly on without due recognition for an immigration enquiry which may or may not be serious?

This bill automatically stops the citizenship process until the immigration inquiry resolves the matter for which that enquiry was caused. The bottom line once again is the protection of our interest and the safety of our country and Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Other changes mean that two summary convictions—in Canada or elsewhere—will make anyone ineligible to be an immigrant to Canada.

Madam Speaker, let me stress that we are talking about crimes as measured by Canadian legal standards and not political persecution for what some foreign regimes might attempt to disguise as a crime.

[*English*]

Bill C–44 would also give immigration officers the authority to seize documents from international mail such as passports, driver's licences and credit cards which could and are being used to circumvent immigration requirements or forge documents. This amendment does not apply to domestic mail and is limited to packages weighing more than 30 grams.

There is absolutely no question that the mails are being used to forward identity documents. We would expect the volume to

drop as soon as these amendments are passed. Last year in Toronto, for instance, about 70 packages containing status or identity documents were being located every week. In Montreal the volume was approximately 10 packages. In Vancouver officials found roughly 25.

This flows from a common sense application. Some months ago there was a *Globe and Mail* article that discovered officials from the Department of Justice telling officials from customs and immigration that they were in violation of the law for basically defending our borders through the interdiction of certain mail and fraudulent documentation.

We have moved to bring the law up to speed in order to render the system more accountable to its citizens. The amendments will also allow arrest warrants to be issued for no shows at immigration hearings and will provide an immediate loss of permanent resident status with all removal orders and not some of them.

It will also eliminate the possibility for any one person to have more than one refugee claim processed at the same time.

• (1220)

Why should that be any different? We have a good system and people should have one kick at that good system rather than taxing the system and taking away a place for another legitimate individual.

The legislation will also authorize the minister or his officials to approve or reject requests for rehabilitation rather than having the matters go to a full cabinet. In plain language this cuts down the rubber stamp aspect of rehabilitation and treats each individual on their proper merits. This will be far more cost effective, cut back the time needed to make a decision and prevent the issue and the individual from getting buried in a much larger cabinet agenda.

As I mentioned at the outset, there are other elements of bill C–44 that are very positive, valuable and worth supporting. I hope we will have an opportunity to discuss these issues not only in debate form in the House of Commons but with careful scrutiny in committee following second reading.

There are also other elements to limiting abuse within our immigration and refugee network that do not fall under any act or legislation. In this regard I believe it is important for all of us to remember that C–44 should not be seen in isolation but instead should be seen as a part of a more comprehensive package of initiatives to try to come to grips with the minority of those who wish to abuse the right of the many. Some of the fixes simply mean bolstering internal procedures and changing priorities.

Enforcement of immigration issues have been tightened and toughened in recent months. As always we remain cognizant of the rights of the individuals of due process upon which our society is firmly founded.

Our government has already started to streamline its own administrative system. Immigration has speeded and strengthened its liaison with the correctional services of Canada so that foreign offenders will have fewer opportunities to stay in Canada after they have served their time in jail or prison. Once again common sense dictates. Why was it not in place years before now, that somehow immigration Canada was more in sync with corrections Canada so that when those individuals were released from our provincial or federal facilities they could be deported?

Why is it that those individuals serving time in our penitentiaries who ultimately will be deported or served deportation orders enjoy day parole? That is an issue I have raised with the Solicitor General and with my colleague, the Minister of Justice. Again it flows from common sense. If there are individuals who are deportable upon completion of time in prison, why is day parole instituted for those individuals as well? They are not easing into the community. They are easing out of Canada. Therefore I question why day parole should be applied to those individuals.

My colleague, the Minister of Justice, has also made a commitment that the parliamentary committee when reviewing the Young Offenders Act as part of that mandate will also look at how the Young Offenders Act will apply to those young individuals within our country facing deportation. Again, this not a knee–jerk reaction but a studied reaction in this case together with the other issues that certainly will draw the attention of that committee.

Enforcement is a priority of my department. It is not an obsession of my department, it is a priority; a priority that is roughly 10 per cent of our budget which translates roughly into $56 million for the year 1994–95.

Our system for blocking the entry of criminals has been for the most part been vigilant and effective. Last spring a special operations unit was set up, targeting members of organized crime groups and geared to improving our ability to prevent them from entering Canada.

• (1225)

For this purpose we have focused on Asian gangs, the triads, and the yakuza, as well as gangs from Russia and the Caribbean.

I am sure members are also aware of the special joint task force involving immigration officials, members of local and regional police forces, as well as provincial and RCMP forces. They have operational units in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, and their prime directive is to remove foreign criminals from our midst.

I believe that the concept of the joint force is the right approach, not because this minister or this government has deemed it so on July 7, but because in leading up to that decision we discussed the whole concept of the joint force with those who

knew best, the police officers and police chiefs whose mandate it is to serve and protect us and our communities.

I hope we have the patience for this force to be allowed to do its job and as I mentioned in Montreal last month to the police chiefs association there are two things that can endanger this type of joint force. One is jurisdictional squabbling which has not been the case, and I take my hat off to the four different forces that have converged in the joint forces. The second aspect is the whole thirst or appetite for what I would refer to as number crunching or bean counting. At the end of the day the mandate of this force is to get the job done, but also not to ask these professionals things that are also irresponsible of some of those who ask it of them in order to say how many did you get today, how many did you get this week, did you get them all last week.

The mandate is a very difficult one for these individuals but they are professionals and they will get the job done. In the United States the joint force concept has run into problems for those two reasons. It is my hope, not for the short term but for the long term, that we allow this force to work and not only work in terms of removing the individuals that we all believe ought to be removed but also to render us through the experience and the information that they will get in how enforcement is best done and by whom.

If the professionals come back and tell this Parliament that enforcement is more of a policing discipline and not an immigration one, then so be it. Let us answer the riddle once and for all but let us allow those professionals to do the job they are capable of doing.

There may be other improvements that we can usher in to the system and one such recommendation for instance coming from some of the police chiefs is to permit judges to not recommend deportations at the time of giving sentence but to order deportations at the time of sentencing so that the system is leaner, so that the issues of that individual are all dealt with at the right time, and that there is full due process for the individual's counsel and lawyer to react to that judge's ordering of a deportation rather than recommending and then having it go back to immigration and before an immigration appeal division and so on.

That will necessitate not a change in my act but a change in the Criminal Code. As parliamentarians we should be interested in this issue and prepared also to look at making the relevant amendments if we think those amendments will work and if we think those amendments are fair.

[*Translation*]

There have been difficulties with some removals from Canada to some countries because of problems obtaining foreign travel documentation. Senior officials are dealing with this problem and it will be resolved soon.

The immigration department is continuing to step up its international efforts to prevent undesirables from entering the country and is working closely with the RCMP and a number of foreign control authorities and in partnership with airlines.

• (1230)

[*English*]

Having acknowledged the problem and having attempted to define the scope of the problem, there is certainly something else to be said. If we do not deal with these issues now in the light of day, there are those who would appeal to the darker side of our character and use the excuse of public safety to cloak a negative and hurtful agenda aimed at shutting off all immigration. I say and my government says that we cannot allow this any more than we can allow criminals to wipe their feet on our welcome mat.

It is important that every one of us in this Chamber work toward exploding the myths surrounding our immigration and refugee process.

[*Translation*]

Yes, there are problems and I have just acknowledged what some of them are. But to those who claim that immigrants are bilking our welfare system, we have to say that this simply is not so.

Statistics show that native–born Canadians are more likely to use the social assistance safety net than are immigrants.

[*English*]

For those who fear we are in the icy grip of an immigration crime wave, we have to tell them and those individuals among us that this too is far from reality.

A recent research paper prepared for a law conference at Carleton University in our capital said bluntly that immigrants were under represented in the criminal population. Researchers found that the so–called immigrant crime appeared primarily to be less serious crime. Social scientists say that a likely explanation for this so–called under representation among the criminal element is due in some part to the screening process that takes place before the immigrant arrives on our shores.

I also know equally that it is difficult and sometimes impossible to compare the dull, dry figures from a research paper with the heartache and anger that comes with the story at the top of our supper time news. As parliamentarians we must stress again and again that there is a lot more to immigration than a news story about a thief in the corner store, as important as that is, to the safety of all our neighbourhoods and communities.

Look over your back fence. What do you see? The chances are you see a neighbour who is an immigrant or is a son or daughter of an immigrant. I see the crime stories in my clipping service every day at 6.30 in the morning but I do not hear quite so often stories about people like Kim Loan Hua. Who is Kim? She is an immigrant. She came here penniless in 1979 as part of the

100,000 Vietnamese boat people Canada received. She was one of those. She has now opened four restaurants in Toronto and employs over 20 people. Kim was a refugee and is now a Canadian entrepreneur.

What about Shan Chandrasekar? He came from India. He overstayed. He obtained permission years ago to be able to stay legally in Canada and in the process founded a television network to serve the Canadian–Asian community.

What does that say? It says that for every criminal named in the press with an immigrant tag we can give 10,000 cases of immigrants and recent Canadians who are anything but a problem for or a drain on the country and who despise the antics of troublemakers and the lawlessness of hooligans as much as anyone in this Chamber.

• (1235)

Are we courageous enough to say so? How about the guy who coaches your kid's little league? Some of our Nobel prize winners have been immigrants. Our novelists, opera stars, painters, politicians, teachers and even some of our best journalists were not born in this country.

When we hear the word immigrant we should not automatically think crime. We also should not automatically think superstar either. Instead we should think of a neighbour, of a colleague, of a husband or a wife.

When I met with the Canadian association of chiefs of police last month, I told them I expected speedy passage of this legislation. I reiterated that this morning because we must act decisively and expeditiously. The law must be changed quickly in light of the public concern for the well–being of our immigration refugee system.

I am convinced that this legislation will go a long way in protecting those so close to us from the stigma of criminality brought on by a tiny minority who have slipped through the cracks. Madam Speaker and colleagues, let us get on with it and seal up those cracks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Madam Speaker, this is my first speech in the House today, after the summer recess. Before speaking to Bill C–44, however, I would like to congratulate the Parti Quebecois on its splendid victory on September 12, and also the new Premier of Quebec, Mr. Jacques Parizeau, a man with the stature of a true statesman.

I also want to congratulate the 77 members elected for the Parti québécois, the 47 members of the Quebec Liberal Party and Mr. Mario Dumont, leader of Action Démocratique. Some, like myself, belong to the ethnic community.

I will now speak in this debate on second reading of Bill C–44, which proposes to amend the Immigration Act, the Citizenship Act and the Customs Act. These amendments, according to the authors of the bill, concern 14 specific points. For instance, some changes will have the effect of stopping a person convicted of a major crime—that is, punishable by a maximum prison term of 10 years—in Canada or outside Canada, from claiming refugee status to delay his removal from Canada. Immigration officers will have the power to seize from international mail documents that could be used for fraudulent purposes. In the case of serious criminals, the Immigration Appeal Division will no longer have the power to allow appeals on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Grounds for appeals before the Immigration Appeal Division will from now on be limited to questions of law and fact. A person for whose arrest a warrant has been signed by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Solicitor General of Canada, because he represents a threat to public safety, will lose the right to appeal.

• (1240)

Processing of an application for citizenship may be suspended, pending the outcome of immigration proceedings. A person convicted of two summary conviction offences—a minor offence punishable by a prison term of not more than six months—whether the offences were committed in Canada or outside Canada, may be prevented from immigrating to Canada. The minister, instead of the Governor in Council, will have the authority to approve requests for admission on the basis of rehabilitation, and the minister may delegate this authority to employees of the department. The obligation to conduct a new inquiry in the case of a person who has been ordered to leave Canada has been removed, so that a person loses permanent resident status as soon as he is ordered deported.

We in the Bloc québécois agree with the general, underlying principles of Bill C–44, that is to say, the government has the right and a duty to protect Canada and all Canadians against criminals. We agree with preventing immigrants and claimants from taking advantage of Canada's reputation as a host country to leave their country of origin where they have committed serious crimes.

We must eliminate or at least reduce the ways in which immigrant refugee claimants who have been convicted of serious crimes can stay in Canada legally.

We agree with restricting the admissibility of convicted criminals. We must ensure that serious criminals who manage to escape removal are deported as soon as possible. In 1993, Immigration Canada deported 1,200 criminals; between January 1 and May 31, 1994, 600 criminals were deported. This effort

must be pursued for the safety of the people of Quebec and Canada.

We have many more questions and concerns regarding Bill C–44. This bill is an excessive response to certain problems and situations that have arisen over the past few months in Canada. It is the Liberal government's response to the strict, right–wing stand the Reform Party has taken concerning immigrants and refugees.

The minister's speech today only confirms this shift to the right the minister and the Liberal Party have made. I have read the speech he had made as the Official Opposition Critic for Immigration. He was much more of a humanist back then. I endorsed his ideas and objectives in those days, but not any more.

The Bloc Quebecois has condemned and still condemns the murder of a young woman in a Toronto restaurant and that of a Toronto police officer. The unfortunate fact about these two murders is that they were committed by immigrants subject to a deportation order. The media gave far too much notoriety to these incidents.

On July 7, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration launched a blitz to deport out of Canada some 600 criminal immigrants. To this effect, he set up a special task force of immigration officers and members of the RCMP and the local police, to identify, trace and hasten the expulsion of foreign criminals from Canada.

Based on information from *La Presse*, this special task force has found, after going over the various cases, that only 90 of the 600 immigrants with serious criminal records were in Quebec.

• (1245)

It also found that half, or 45, of them were already in jail. Seven of the 45 still at large had left Canada of their own free will. Of the 38 cases remaining, 5 have been resolved; three criminals had been arrested and deported, and the other two had been summoned before an immigration officer. As of July 19, in Quebec, there were only 33 cases pending and as we speak, I trust these too have been settled.

The special task force was manned by 4 RCMP officers in both Montreal and Vancouver and by 12 officers in Toronto. In addition to creating this group, the Standing Committee on Justice is reviewing the question of how young offenders who are not Canadian citizens and who have been convicted of crimes should be treated. Finally, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and Correctional Service Canada for expediting the deportation of foreign criminals.

Again, we urge the government to take the measures required to prevent abuses and protect Canadians and Quebecers against criminals, but we cannot endorse Bill C–44 as it now stands.

In our opinion, some provisions of this bill violate the Geneva Convention on Refugees as well as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Furthermore, it restricts without justification the mandate of the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Unlike the Geneva convention, this bill does not distinguish between refugee claimants who have committed political crimes in their native countries and those convicted of non–political crimes. In determining refugee status, the first thing to be considered should be the nature and purpose of the offence, in particular whether it was committed for political or other reasons.

On the other hand, there should be a certain balance between the seriousness of the crime and the danger to Canadian society. The Geneva convention, confirmed by Federal Court jurisprudence, states that this element of comparison must be considered.

Professor James Hathaway writes that the seriousness of the crime must also be weighed against the possibility that the life or safety of a person sent back to his or her native country may be at risk. The bill does not address this aspect of the issue.

The purpose of the bill is to prevent people convicted of serious offences for which a term of imprisonment of ten years or more may be imposed from claiming refugee status. This means that the actual seriousness of the offence will not be taken into account, which we think is unfair and arbitrary.

In our opinion, the actual sentence imposed and not the maximum sentence should be considered. Every offence can be committed in a great variety of circumstances, some of which call for the maximum sentence while others only call for the minimum sentence. Our Criminal Code does not specify a minimum sentence for most offences. Therefore, a person could be convicted of a crime for which a term of imprisonment of ten years or more may be imposed without being jailed or fined.

• (1250)

He would only be given a suspended sentence or put on probation. Despite all that, the minister can issue a certificate declaring that person to be a public danger, which I think is unfair and arbitrary.

This situation could violate the Geneva convention. Indeed, the manual of the High Commissioner for Refugees says that in evaluating the nature of the crime allegedly committed, all relevant factors, including extenuating circumstances, must be considered. Do not forget that we are talking about refugees

here, human beings for whom being deported to their country could be very dangerous in some cases and even fatal.

Under the bill, many decisions that were made by the IRB will now be made by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and his officials. Despite all the criticisms we have of the IRB and the mistakes it has made, I prefer that tribunal to be fully in charge of determining refugee status. It is a quasi–judicial specialized tribunal, whose duty it is to hear the parties. The minister's decision is purely administrative and often politically motivated. Thus, many decisions will be based solely on foreign policy considerations and the state of relations between Canada and the refugee claimant's country of origin. We think that Bill C–44 is a government attack on the IRB's independence.

Obviously the minister did not like some of this administrative tribunal's decisions. So what does he do? He removes a large part of its jurisdiction. This is a blatant contradiction of the Davis–Waldman report, which the minister said reduced the need for him to intervene in the refugee determination process. Bill C–44 does the opposite and considerably increases the minister's involvement in this field. It prevents not only refugees but also permanent residents who committed crimes outside Canada from going to the IRB. This bill must be denounced, for it attacks one of the fundamental principles of our legal system, namely the right of appeal. It takes away the right to appeal to the Immigration Appeals Division for humanitarian considerations following a deportation order based on the commission in Canada or abroad of a crime punishable by ten or more years in prison.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to all. Basic rights to a fair and impartial procedure should also apply to foreigners. I agree with the position expressed by the Canadian Council for Refugees that refugees and permanent residents must be able to apply to the appeal division of the IRB.

This bill is also contrary to the right of family reunification. In some cases, a person will be deported even though his whole family stays in Canada. It is really regrettable that this fundamental aspect of Canada's immigration policy, which is part of the program of the Liberal Party of Canada, is being attacked in this International Year of the Family. This might violate conventions signed by Canada, such as the convention against torture, the principles of the United Nations on arbitrary arrest and detention, the Geneva convention on human rights in wartime, the declaration on disappearance and missing persons, etc.

• (1255)

In that context, the bill might also violate sections 7 and 12 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. I also oppose the provision which provides the right to search international mail and authorizes immigration officers to seize identification papers and other documents sent by international mail or other means, in an attempt to circumvent the Immigration Act. This could lead to abuse. It is to be noted that immigration officers already have the authority to search those seeking to be admitted to Canada, as well as their baggage.

The bill also authorizes immigration officers to request a warrant for the arrest of any person who does not appear at the meeting to which he was summoned. The police will arrest that person and his name will be filed at the Canadian Police Information Centre. Under normal circumstances, police will arrest a person only under the authority of a warrant delivered by a judge. We know that a person will often not show up because he moved and did not get the notification to appear. On September 13, I attended the National Conference on Immigration, in Ottawa. Working group no. 7, which was set up by the minister during the consultation process, looked at control and law enforcement, which are the issues dealt with in Bill C–44. Why did the minister not hold consultations before tabling this legislation?

I am asking that this bill be referred for review by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. Lawyers specializing in immigration law, as well as the organizations working in the field of immigration and with refugees, including the Canadian Council for Refugees, should have the opportunity to be heard by the committee. I am also very interested in hearing from the IRB. For all these reasons, the Bloc Quebecois will oppose this bill at second reading.

I want to take this opportunity to raise other issues related to immigration and refugees. In Quebec, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration closed four regional offices in July to concentrate all its services in a single centre located in Montreal. This decision must be strongly criticized and this is what we are doing today. We must oppose these closures which have resulted in lost jobs, in Quebec as well as in the rest of Canada. There is another problem I would like to mention, namely the new rates recently imposed by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Many people who were granted refugee status by the IRB are unable to pay $500 per adult and $100 per child to secure permanent residence in Canada. I made representations to the minister and his department in the hope of finding a solution to this problem but so far with little success. How can you demand immediate payment in the amount of $1,400 from a newly arrived family in a state of total despair and often without any money whatsoever?

If I may digress for a moment, I would like to salute the employees of Ogilvie Mills Ltd, especially those of ethnic origin, who have been on strike since June 6 last. Located in Montreal, this mill manufactures Five Roses flour.

• (1300)

Today, they are protesting on the Hill and I will meet with them later on. I take this opportunity not only to express my solidarity to them but also to ask the Minister of Human Resources Development to table a bill amending the federal Labour Code by including an anti–scab provision. Such a provision already exists in the Quebec Labour Code and is very successful.

[*English*]

As you well know, Madam Speaker, I came to Quebec in 1974 following a military coup which took place in Chile on September 11, 1973. My wife, my two children, then five and three years old, myself and thousands of other Chileans were very well received by the people of Quebec who were profoundly generous. We worked and continue to work hard to ensure a better life for our children and our grandchildren and to make our contribution to the progress of this society.

However, today I am profoundly sad because of this anti–immigrant sentiment in Canada and because of this anti–refugee sentiment in Canada.

[*Translation*]

It is appearing in Canada as in rich nations all over the world.

The contribution of immigrants to all sectors of the economic, social, cultural and even political life of this country is immeasurable.

I am proud to have been elected, last October, to the House of Commons by a majority of francophones in Montreal–Nord, with the support of the labour movement and various ethno–cultural communities, twenty years after coming to this country. I am even prouder of the fact that my leader asked me to be our party critic for citizenship and immigration.

I believe that this bill, even though it contains certain positive elements, will be perceived as linking immigration and criminal activities and will therefore exacerbate xenophobia and racism in Canada. Statistics clearly show that new immigrants are more law–abiding and that their crime rate is lower than that of Canadians by birth. This bears repeating.

I ask the minister to immediately launch a comprehensive awareness and information campaign to apprise all Canadians of the facts regarding immigration including the benefits that flow from it, as well as the huge contribution immigrants have always made to this country.

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin my evaluation of Bill C–44 by saying it is a small step in the right direction.

For several years Canadians have been saying they have a deep concern about Canada's immigration system. These concerns have included the fact that many Canadians consider immigration levels to be too high. Other concerns are the skill and education levels of immigrants entering Canada and the effectiveness of the immigration department in enforcing government policy.

• (1305)

If the Liberal government wants Canadians to place faith in the system and the elected officials who administer it then the government has a moral obligation to look at these concerns and to act in the interests of all Canadians.

One of the chief concerns of Canadians in this area is the relationship between immigration and crime. In the past year there have been several high profile cases in which immigrants to Canada were involved in criminal activity which could have been avoided had proper action been taken. The result was an increased focus on the relationship between immigration and the criminal justice system.

Confidential government documents leaked to the media revealed: "There is a sense that the immigration program is out of control". This is the public perception of Canadians who feel and again I quote: "Immigrants need to be better selected". Very clearly Canadians want to see changes in the way the immigration system in Canada operates.

Perhaps not very surprising, this is the view that has been put forward by my Reform colleagues and I for some time. I believe this is because our party has a policy of first of all understanding the wishes and desires of grassroots Canadians. This means our party pays very close attention to what our constituents are telling us. They have been telling us for a long time now that they are losing faith in the immigration system because they believe it is being poorly administered and poorly enforced.

I am pleased to see that the Liberal government is finally listening to the common sense solutions that the Reform Party has been putting forward on this issue for some time. As I mentioned before, I see the bill as a step in the right direction. But our party has chosen not to lend support to this bill for two main reasons.

The first is that the legislation is not properly structured to keep immigrants with criminal backgrounds from entering into Canada's refugee system. The second is the fear that the Liberal government will use the passage of this legislation as an excuse to take no further action on the concerns the Canadian public has about the immigration process.

This bill does take a step in the right direction. One of the elements of the bill which my party is in support of is that it empowers the senior immigration officers who are the first contact applicants have with the immigration system. The bill would allow these officers upon discovery of a criminal back-

ground to stop the processing of an individual's application to enter into the immigration or refugee process.

This will serve a number of purposes. It will save Canadian taxpayers money because they will not have to pay for the processing of cases which would be appropriately rejected in any case. It will save immigration officials time which can be better spent processing the claims of applicants without a criminal background. More time spent studying these routine applications means fraudulent claims are less likely to be approved, giving the immigration department more credibility in the eyes of Canadians. Finally, the measure makes the common sense move of protecting the Canadian public from foreign born criminals who want to come to our country. All of these are excellent goals.

Unfortunately, this legislation does not go far enough to ensure they are achieved. The problem is that immigration officers are still not being given the tools to do their job. Officers now have the power to refuse to process applications if they discover a criminal background. At the same time, they are not being given the power to do background checks on those applicants. In fact it was recently revealed by a member of the Canada employment and immigration union that refugee claimants are not given security screenings before facing the refugee board. The proposed legislation gives the immigration officers necessary new powers but does not grant them the means to exercise them. An illustration of the problem was a news report by the *Canadian Press* published September 12. The report stated that there are very severe guidelines which restrict immigration officials as to what they may ask refugee claimants. The report also stated that this could mean people who should not get into Canada may be slipping past the immigration and refugee board.

• (1310)

Here are a few examples of those guidelines. Officials cannot request information from the immigration department about a refugee aside from identity papers and passports. This means officers cannot check statements made at a hearing against the claims made when the refugee first entered Canada. Officers cannot investigate claims through sources such as the police. Only board officials can now use public record sources.

Officers may not press reluctant claimants for answers on particular issues because that could be perceived as being adversarial.

The effect of this bill is to grant powers to officers without giving them means to exercise these powers. It would be like giving a highway patrolman the power to arrest speeders without allowing him to use radar to detect those speeders.

This leads us to the second major reason why the Reform Party is opposing this bill. That reason is enforcement.

One of the intentions of this bill is to detect problems early in a system so that deportation orders can be issued to those who do not qualify. However, as we have seen over the past year, there have been serious problems with those deportation orders.

Several high profile cases have demonstrated that the issuing of deportation orders does not ensure removal. The numbers indicate that of 25,000 deportation orders last year, only 8,200 were verifiably carried out. Despite the fact that 1,200 criminals were deported last year, 3,000 more deportable criminals disappeared and have not been found.

Immigration enforcement officers are so overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of deportables that they are unable to execute a removal order unless the individual voluntarily turns up.

In Toronto there are 30 enforcement officers charged with the execution of deportation orders or investigation of legal residency of 40,000 cases. More deportation orders will likely only increase the backlog rather than actually clear many more people out of the country.

The greatest benefit of this legislation is that it would prevent some criminals from getting into the immigration and refugee system, but should the aim of the government not be a bit higher than this? A few simple changes could put some real teeth in this legislation.

To begin with, how about granting more power to individual immigration officers? This would mean giving them the power to do background checks and giving them greater access to data banks. This could save Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars as well.

If I understand correctly the intentions of the legislation before us today, the government is interested in adding an element of common sense to the process. This legislation is saying Canadians do not want immigrants or refugees with criminal backgrounds to come into this country.

Why do we not give the immigration officers the means to find this out before their cases come before the immigration refugee board? It would save all involved time and prevent costly hearings which would only result in the dismissal of the application in any case.

Another measure which would give this legislation teeth would be the beefing up of the enforcement of deportation orders. I am aware that in response to public pressure the minister did appoint extra staff to deal with this problem. Is this handful of extra officers really having an effect? The government needs to devote even further resources to staff and to the enforcement of deportation orders. Warrants should be issued so that the whole police network can enforce these immigration laws.

• (1315)

When 3,000 deportable criminals disappear into Canadian society in just one year, the potential for harm to the general public is tremendous. Justice cannot be served when the law cannot be enforced. If the deportation orders issued cannot be carried out then the immigration system has very little credibility in the eyes of the Canadian public.

These are the two main reasons other Reform MPs and I cannot bring ourselves to support this bill. But do not get us wrong. We think the intentions of the bill are dead on the mark. We are very pleased the government is listening to Reform Party members and putting some of our ideas into effect. We have been listening to the Canadian people on this issue and we are pleased the government is finally starting to do the same thing.

To be quite frank, my colleagues and I did consider giving qualified support to these measures. Our party believes the parliamentary system does not necessarily require opposition parties to always be adversarial. However, after scrutinizing the legislation we came to the conclusion that we could not in good conscience support the bill. We cannot give our support to legislation without teeth. If we fail to oppose this bill the government could claim to have dealt with the issue and simply moved on to other business. But the truth is that the Liberals have not dealt effectively with this bill. Their failure to do this could have terrible ramifications for the people whose interests we are elected to represent.

This bill is definitely well intentioned but it does not go far enough. The Canadian public expects elected officials to deliver a lot more than good intentions.

I believe I speak for the majority of Canadians when I say there are a number of problems with the current government's approach to immigration. The shortcomings of this particular legislation are just a small part of the larger problem. Quite frankly, public support for immigration policy in this country is at an all time low. Canadians have little faith in the current system and want to see changes made. This means that governments must stop serving special interests and instead make decisions in the interests of the country as a whole.

There are four main areas of immigration policy which the government must reform if it is to win back the trust of the Canadian people. These four areas are: enforcement; the growth of the so–called immigration industry; economic self–interest in selecting applicants; and the unacceptably high immigration levels.

I raised the topic of enforcement earlier in reference to deportation orders, but the issue goes much farther than that. When it comes to immigration there are many areas where the government has a policy to protect the needs and the interests of Canadians but simply does not follow through on enforcing this policy. An example is the breakdown of sponsorships.

Sponsorship is one of the cornerstones of the government's current immigration policy. It consists of an individual in this country supporting an immigrant and vouching that the immigrant will not become a burden on the Canadian social safety net. Sponsorship is an excellent idea. It remains a key component in the success of many newcomers coming to Canada. Unfortunately, sponsorship is just one component of our immigration policy in which an enforcement component is almost entirely lacking.

Mainstream media organizations such as the *Toronto Star* have been reporting on breakdowns in sponsorships for some time now but nothing has been done. What generally happens is that unable to find work, recent immigrants turn to Canada's social safety net rather than to the person who agreed to sponsor them. What are the ramifications of this? To my knowledge, very little is done to counteract this avoidance of responsibility. The end result is negative for all involved.

• (1320)

For the Canadian taxpayer the promise of a productive contributing citizen is broken. It is replaced with yet another individual who will require the expenditure of already scarce government resources.

For provinces and municipalities, it is yet another form of offloading from the federal government. Provinces and municipalities bear the brunt of providing services such as social assistance. When an immigrant sponsorship breaks down, the responsibility falls to the province. It is forced to take responsibility for a situation it had no hand in creating.

The breakdown in immigrant sponsorship is especially an insult to the majority of immigrants who come to Canada, work hard to contribute to this country and remain true to their promise not to become a burden on Canada's social safety net. As is often the case, wrongdoing on the part of some members of a group results in the perception that the entire group is guilty.

That is why the federal government must make the enforcement of immigrant sponsorships a priority. It would greatly raise the credibility of the immigration system in the eyes of the Canadian public. It would also honour the efforts of those sponsored immigrants who work to maintain their sponsorships and remove an unwelcome burden from all taxpayers, both those who came to Canada and those who were born here.

Another area in which a lack of enforcement calls into question the credibility of the immigration system is business class immigrants. These are immigrants who have lived in this country because they have capital to invest and have promised to create new enterprises. This is another case where the government policy has the correct priority.

This country needs the influx of capital and the enterprising spirit brought by business class immigrants. The problem is there is not a very stringent enforcement of these regulations. Promises of investment and new jobs do Canada very little good

unless they are acted upon. It is once again the case that immigrants are asked to keep a pledge but face very little reprisal if that pledge is not kept. Again the credibility of the system is called into question and the reputation of honest business class immigrants is sullied by those who fail to fulfil their pledges.

It is understandable that immigration bureaucrats would not invest the time to look into these areas of immigration policy. After all, it would simply create more work for the agency's already overburdened enforcement arm.

These are the words of one federal audit: "Poorly run sector of the immigration department is what is ultimately responsible for carrying out government policy". The August 1993 study of the enforcement branch obtained under the Access to Information Act portrayed the branch as racked by inadequate management systems, poor communications and inadequate safety for its officers.

One of the key criticisms in this report was the procedures that stood in the way of officers getting easy access to unemployment insurance, citizenship and social services records. The report said that allowing immigration officers access to this information would facilitate enforcement activities and increase effectiveness. This is exactly what I was speaking about earlier. Immigration officers need to be able to access information on immigrants and potential immigrants and refugees in order to make the system work. This issue is almost entirely overlooked in the legislation we are debating now. It is one of the major reasons we could not bring ourselves to support it.

One of the demands the Canadian public is making of the immigration system is that it be effective. In order to be effective the department must be able to enforce the policies it operates by. Failure to enforce these policies means a loss in credibility which is why so many Canadians are cynical about the immigration process.

• (1325)

If the minister of immigration would like Canadians to once again have faith in this department, he must take steps to strengthen enforcement. This is not being done by the current legislation.

If the government is going to re-establish the faith of Canadians in this country's immigration system, the second area it must make a priority in reforming is ending the support for the burgeoning immigration industry. I am talking about the bureaucrats, the lawyers, the academics and the social engineers who rely on a high immigration rate to either further their own careers or justify their own jobs.

The people I am referring to here are not necessarily bad people. Often times they feel they are doing what is best for all involved. Unfortunately, however, they have ended up creating a system funded by taxpayers in which the primary benefits go to those who collect salaries and not to the immigration needs for the Canadian public as a whole. I am referring for example to immigration lawyers who are paid to try the cases of the huge backlog of refugees.

The amount of money spent on these lawyers and on the commissions they appear before is astronomical. The cost of the Immigration and Refugee Board alone is $250 million a year. Think about that: one-quarter of a billion dollars for a system which deems only 15 per cent of refugees inadmissible to this country. To contrast this the Canadian government gives only $30 million a year to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the organization responsible for caring for many of the 20 million refugees who currently exist on this planet.

I ask members of this House which would be a more utilitarian use of this money: paying lawyers to spend countless hours preparing appeals of board decisions or providing fresh water and medicine to war ravaged refugees in Africa?

I recognize there is a need for due process in the admission of immigrants and refugees to this country but I maintain there has to be a better way. This bill takes an important first step by stripping the appeal division of the Immigration and Refugee Board of its ability to overturn deportation orders on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. I suspect this will have little effect on the $250 million spent every year on hearings and appeals.

I spoke to several constituents this summer who expressed their anger over the amount they correctly assumed this department must cost the Canadian taxpayer. Their common sense solution was to find a way to speed up the process to better serve the interests of genuine refugee claimants and immigrants and the Canadian public as a whole. The people I spoke with are not angry with immigrants. They are angry at the immigration system.

The annual expense of this immigration industry to Canadian taxpayers has never been properly calculated but we can safely assume it is tremendous. It involves a myriad of expenses. What is the cost to the provinces of immigrants who use social housing? What is the cost of English as a second language programs in different school districts? Getting this type of information is difficult because the provincial and federal governments rarely share this data.

What must be understood is that all of these expenses are the result of federal immigration policy. Therefore it is the responsibility of this House to consider these costs when making its decisions.

I must again stress that the increasing anger of Canadians over immigration policy is not with the immigrants themselves. It is anger with the system that administers this policy in a way which is not in the best interests of Canadians as a whole.

A big part of the problem is that Canadians see a large and rapidly increasing sum of money being spent on immigration programs at a time when funds are being cut back for health care and education. They are asking if this money is being spent unnecessarily. They have every right to ask without being called racist or small minded. I say this because proponents of the current approach to government policy often refuse to enter into a debate about these issues, preferring instead to attempt to sully the reputation of those who raise the issues in the first place.

• (1330)

Does Canada really need the immigration industry we have built up over the years? About 15 years ago Canada, along with other countries in the western world, was asked to respond to the plight of Vietnamese boat people. These were genuine refugees who because of their political situation were forced out of their homes.

Canadians opened their doors wide to these people but in a very different way than we do today. Community groups and churches took it upon themselves to sponsor individual refugees and families. They made sure they had a place to stay, taught them English and French, and helped them integrate into the fabric of society. These immigrants in turn laboured to quickly adapt to their new home, learning English and French and furthering themselves through education and hard work.

Today instead of community groups and churches we have subsidized housing and government sponsored language training. Instead of inviting immigrants and refugees into our social circles we stick them in downtown high rises and housing projects and ask why these groups have so much trouble adapting to the Canadian way of life.

The only explanation is the growth of the immigration industry. It is a well intentioned and highly paid group of individuals whose own self–interests are reflected in the decisions they make for everyone. Proper enforcement of immigration policy and curtailing the growing immigration industry could go a long way toward re–establishing the faith of Canadians in our immigration system.

A third and equally important consideration is ensuring the admission of immigrants to Canada is done with the best economic interests of the country in mind. Current statistics vary on how many immigrants come to Canada based on their ability to contribute to the country economically.

In his column in the July 14 *Globe and Mail* Michael Valpy said: "Immigration policy used to be selective. Now only 15 per cent of it is selective. The rest is determined by family reunification and a policy of refugee acceptance that is the most liberal in the world".

The Canada immigration facts and issues publication put out by Citizenship and Immigration Canada noted: "About 15 per cent of immigrants are evaluated for their potential economic benefit to Canada". The same publication noted that over half of all immigrants, 55 per cent, were admitted either as family class immigrants or refugees.

Quite frankly the government is giving too little priority to admitting immigrants to Canada based on their potential economic benefit to our country. This is especially disturbing because, as the government has often pointed out, we are now a part of a global economy and this is changing the nature of our economy at home.

There is currently little demand for an abundant supply of unskilled labour. Education is now the key to the success of individuals. There is little opportunity for employment and advancement for anyone with less than a high school diploma.

A good example of this point can be seen in my riding of Cariboo—Chilcotin, specifically in my hometown of Williams Lake. When I was growing up jobs were relatively abundant in the area as there were many mills, ranches and mines. A capacity for hard physical labour was often just as important as any type of education one might have.

Today the area is much different. Employment is hard to come by if one does not have a proper education. The jobs once performed by a large payroll of semi–skilled labourers have now been replaced with machines and technology. On the positive side this has meant an increase in well paying jobs for highly skilled workers such as engineers, agriculturalists and technicians, and a better quality of life for those employed in these industries.

In the past immigrants were drawn to Williams Lake because of the economic opportunities provided by resource based industries. However over the years less and less of these opportunities have been available.

• (1335)

The lesson to be learned from this experience as a parent and relevant to the debate we are having today on the topic of change to the Immigration Act is that the government must place more of a priority on attracting immigrants to Canada that have the necessary skills and education. I would suggest this be accomplished by reducing the number of individuals admitted to Canada as family class immigrants.

A confidential report prepared for the immigration minister and leaked to the media suggests this very idea. It has recommended family class immigration be redefined to grant automatic acceptance only to spouses and children sponsored by Canadians or landed immigrants. I would suggest the shortfall made by reducing this category be replaced by immigrants that

have the economic skills and education to make a greater contribution to this nation.

We should also remember that family reunification here often means family disunification in the immigrant's native country. I am sure, Madam Speaker, you and other members of the House are familiar with the Statistics Canada report entitled Canada's changing immigrant population. The report noted how immigrants compared in many respects to native born Canadians. It found that a higher percentage of immigrants, 19 per cent, than native born Canadians, 13 per cent, had less than a grade nine education.

With the requirements of the Canadian economy changing to demand a stronger educational background in workers the government must place more of a priority on admitting people to this country that will be employable and competitive in our markets.

Proponents of unbridled immigration would probably argue against this policy. They would suggest tight restrictions on the sponsorship of family class immigrants are unduly cruel and uncaring. I am sure they would also suggest that emphasis on attracting immigrants to this country based on their potential economic contribution would be crassly materialistic and greedy.

I would say to these people that they are out of touch with current economic realities. Canada needs skilled workers if it is to remain competitive. By the same token what it does not need is further pressure placed on the social safety nets which are stretched to the breaking point at this time in any event.

Grassroots Canadians have been telling the Reform Party for a long time that they would like to see more emphasis placed on admitting to the country individuals with job skills and education and less emphasis placed on admitting individuals with little to offer. If the minister hopes to restore the faith of Canadians in the immigration system, responding to these desires would go a long way toward doing this.

Finally, I believe reducing current immigration levels would go a long way toward re–establishing the faith of Canadians in immigration policy and in the immigration system.

Before I begin making my argument for a reduction in immigration levels I must point out that it has been the policy of the Reform Party for some time to pursue lower immigration levels than are the current Canadian norm. Our party policy, which is based on the wishes and desires of our members, states that current immigration levels should be reduced to approximately 150,000 people per year.

Despite our opponents' attempts to label us as anti–immigrant we are in fact pro–immigrant. We simply believe current immigration levels are high and are not based on providing social or economic benefits to this country. It is clearly the desire of a majority of Canadians to see immigration to the country lowered from current levels.

In March a survey commissioned by the federal government found that an unprecedented clear majority of Canadians, in the words of the *Globe and Mail* columnist, Michael Valpy, thought immigration levels were too high. As the same columnist noted, other research found the decision to set high levels was based on increasingly unrealistic economic expectations of immigrants.

It is very clear the majority of Canadians would like to see lower immigration levels. By refusing to lower the government's current level of 250,000 people per year the federal government and the immigration minister are quite clearly denying the will of the people.

I believe it is because of our emphasis on consulting our constituents that Reform became the first party in the House to pursue a policy of lower immigration levels. The government is beginning to see the wisdom of this approach. It is my sincere wish that the Liberal government and the minister of immigration soon alter their own policy.

• (1340)

Senior advisors working in the immigration department have recently recommended that immigration levels be reduced by 20 per cent to 200,000. This information was contained in an 18–page confidential report prepared for the minister of immigration. It notes that as a result of public consultations there was a sense the immigration program is out of control and urges that immigrants be better selected. Now that the minister has completed his tax funded study of public opinion on the issue of immigration I hope he will act on the knowledge he gained in the process.

The minister and the Liberal Party have a distinct disadvantage in this regard. Unlike Reform they do not believe in voting with or in some cases representing the interests and opinions of their constituents. The Reform Party has a distinct advantage in this area. We truly believe in listening to our members and constituents and voting with their interests despite our personal stance. This means during times the Liberal caucus met to discuss how they felt Canadians should be governed the Reform Party was out asking those same Canadians how they wanted to be governed. This meant very early on the Reform Party knew very clearly what actions Canadian people wanted to be taken.

I do not understand why the immigration minister and the Liberal government remain so irrationally committed to maintaining high levels of immigration. Canada continues to have the highest immigration level in the industrialized world. The result of this is that Canada has the highest growth rate in the west and ex–Soviet block at 1.4 per cent a year. That is a higher growth rate than Argentina, China, Thailand, Korea, Sri Lanka and Uruguay. This growing population requires an increased quantity of government provided services every year at a time when

governments at every level are finding it difficult to raise sufficient revenues.

One of the best ways to judge what should be our current immigration level is to look at the immigration levels in countries similar to our own. A good example would be the United States. Americans have long prided themselves on being a country which welcomes immigrants with open arms by saying: "Give us your poor, your tired, your hungry". Another common phrase used in describing the immigrant experience is the melting pot. This terms implies tremendous ability on the part of Americans to welcome and assimilate newcomers from different countries.

The Canadian public has spoken loudly and clearly in its desire for lower immigration levels. I hope the minister recognizes that Canadians will continue to display a notable lack of faith in the government's immigration policy until those numbers coming into Canada are reduced.

I am going to move a motion at the end of my speech, but I conclude by noting that in all decisions it makes regarding immigration, and indeed in all decisions it makes regarding any government business, the government must take into consideration the economic implications of its actions.

We are a country of immigrants. Canada was founded and was settled for the most part by peoples from every nation on earth. The result has been growth and creation of a very spectacular country with a tremendous amount of history and accomplishment and an even greater potential ahead of it. However, our party would find it necessary to go much further. Consequently we find ourselves unable to lend unqualified support for the bill. Despite a number of appealing features it ultimately lacks the substance necessary to meet the needs and desires of the Canadian public.

● (1345)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Would you put the motion to the House please?

Mr. Mayfield: Madam Speaker, I move:

That all the words after the word "That" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

—this House declines to give second reading to Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act, and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act because of its failure to bar, prior to a refugee hearing and an application for permanent residence, those who have been convicted of a crime that would carry a sentence in Canada of 10 years or more and those individuals who fall under the category of persons listed in section 19(1) and (2) of the Immigration Act.

We cannot abandon our public—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. I will take this under advisement.

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, my remarks today will focus on the important measures that are before us from the perspective of a person who immigrated to this country more than 30 years ago.

I came here from the Caribbean island of Grenada. I was a teacher in Grenada looking for an opportunity for further education and self–development. In Grenada one goes overseas. Overseas means having money to do so.

The Canada domestic worker program offered me the opportunity to work for one year with a Canadian family in return for landed immigrant status and life in Canada.

I came with great anticipation and with high hopes. I looked forward to my responsibilities as a domestic because I saw them as a stepping stone to something better. I saw my initial job as an opportunity to support myself through honest work.

I resumed my career as a teacher while earning a bachelor of arts degree and master of education from the University of Toronto. I became an elementary school principal and went on to chair the Metro Toronto Housing Authority, serving over 100,000 people in the metropolitan Toronto area. Now I have the responsibility of serving the great constituency of Etobicoke—Lakeshore and working on behalf of the men, women and children who come to Canada to share identical dreams.

I relate my experience as an immigrant because I want to place the provisions of Bill C–44 in their proper context. I want to make it very clear to everyone who is concerned about immigrants that the vast majority of people who come here are just like I am, with credentials, hard working and committed to a future in Canada.

They may not come from Grenada. They may not look the same as me. They may have a different accent and they may cherish different customs. Most of us share identical dreams. We dream of making a better life for ourselves. We dream of building a better future for our families. We dream of crafting more challenging prospects for our children and we aspire to serve our communities.

We want to contribute to the betterment of our neighbourhoods. We want to create conditions where our loved ones can thrive and prosper and last, but hardly least, we want to rid our streets of crime and violence.

All of us have heard countless stories of successful immigrants to Canada. Even before Confederation was a gleam in the eye of Sir John A. Macdonald waves of newcomers swept into this land. Many were willing to do the most menial labour under

incredible conditions in order to scrape a living and to survive. Others were escaping persecution and seeking freedom. All were intent on building a new nation.

• (1350)

The examples abound. History has recorded the extraordinary contribution of immigrants from many backgrounds, races and cultures who have built this country. From the Montreal harbour to the Toronto skyline, from the building of the railways to the development of our prairie wheat fields, immigrants' labour helped to build Canada.

Where are today's success stories? Are there no such success stories today? Are we now bereft of immigrants improving and enriching Canada?

What I find distressing in this discussion is the lack of recognition of the continuing contribution of newcomers to this country. What I find disturbing is the emphasis that is placed on the negative, destructive aspects of the modern immigration experience. What I find unacceptable is the distorted impression that this lack of recognition and negative depiction of immigrants sometimes leaves in the minds of the Canadian public. Think about it.

Where can we read of present day success stories? Where can we learn of the accomplishments and contributions of recent immigrants? Where can we find out about the achievements of newcomers? Not on the front pages of our newspapers. It is not standard news on the radio and it certainly is not the ordinary fare of television newscasts.

If positive information ever appears it is on the back pages. It is a late radio filler, it is an afterthought buried deep in a television program on a low rating day. Apparently good news about immigrants is not a good enough sell. It is simply not marketable news, and because they are not glamorous, another more sensational picture of the immigrant experience receives the lion's share of the media spotlight.

It is the minuscule minority of immigrants who operate as petty hoods that grabs the media attention and dominate the headlines. It is the small number of immigrants who enter the criminal world that captures the radio news clips. It is the tiny band of fraud artists who come here under false pretences that catches the attention of television reporters. A distorted public picture of modern immigrants is the unfortunate result.

The real story, the whole story, is either too big or too boring for the tabloid headlines. The real story is really about hard working immigrants, entrepreneurs providing jobs and benefits to this country, immigrant students winning scholarships, or it is about immigrant scientists pioneering innovative techniques to alleviate pain and suffering. It is the negative story that most often dominates public reports and it is this information that confounds the public's understanding of immigration and its impact on Canada today. It is the kind of story we hear from across the way.

I doubt very much that any of us can persuade the media away from the idea that bad news should dominate good news at every turn, or even now and then. What we can do is change what is out there about immigration to report, and that is where Bill C–44 comes into play.

Bill C–44 promises to play a pivotal role in diminishing opportunities for the minority of criminals who immigrate to Canada to steal, to deal, to intimidate, to extort, or even to injure and kill. Quite simply, Bill C–44 makes it easier for us to remove unwanted elements that none of us, whether we be descendants of immigrants, old immigrants or relatively new immigrants, want here in the first place.

I would suggest that the changes incorporated in Bill C–44 will not solve the problems of crime in Canadian society but it will help us accomplish our goal of preserving public confidence in Canada's immigration program. More than that, the measures in this bill will also help us rid our country of those people who have little interest in contributing to our society in a positive way.

• (1355)

All our statistics show that newcomers are, if anything, more law–abiding than Canadians born here, even though the scanty minority of exceptions loom lopsidedly large in the public eye and in the media. As the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration explained to the Canadian association of police chiefs in Montreal this past August, his department has been directed to use three means of strengthening our enforcement activities; legislative changes, administrative reforms and closer co–operation with other law enforcement agencies to locate people who would abuse our generosity.

At the same time, I was particularly pleased to see the minister declare that the Immigration Act will continue to serve as the foundation of our system. This act was amended with utmost care. It was altered only after it was determined that the amendments would both protect the public and promote continued public confidence in our progressive immigration policies at the same time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary but I have an announcement to make. She will have 10 minutes left at the end of Question Period.

The amendment presented by the hon. member for Cariboo—Chilcotin is acceptable.

S. O. 31

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

AIDS ACTION NOW

Mr. Barry Campbell (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, as part of the annual meeting of the Canadian Association for HIV Research this summer, AIDS Action Now, a Toronto based AIDS advocacy group, organized a demonstration highlighting promising new AIDS research opportunities which are, in its opinion, funded inadequately.

At that demonstration I was presented a petition with over 300 signatures. Technicalities preclude the tabling of this petition, however the message it contains should be made public. It calls on the government to "increase funding for AIDS research so that Canadian scientists can contribute to understanding the disease, improving treatments and finding a cure".

It also requests the government to "make clear a commitment to long term, sustained funding of AIDS research at least proportionate to the HIV population base and Canada's relative wealth".

While members of the House know that the government has allocated significant funding for the national AIDS strategy, we must always strive to do more. We cannot forget that for too many Canadians it is a matter of life and death.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAINTED BLOOD

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond–Guiral (Laval–Centre): Mr. Speaker, on September 13 we heard the sad news of the death of Randy Connors. Mr. Connors was one of many Canadian victims who contracted the AIDS virus following a blood transfusion.

• (1400)

In fact, according to a recent study published by the Department of Health, nearly 1,500 Canadians, including 400 Quebecers, have been infected by contaminated blood. This kind of negligence on the part of those responsible for Canada's blood supply system must never happen again. Already too many people have suffered as a result of a mistake that will cost them their lives.

[*English*]

The Bloc Quebecois MPs would therefore like to join in a tribute to the courage and determination of Mr. Conners who never ceased to defend the rights of the victims of the contaminated blood scandal.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, since the budget in February there has been growing concern in Calgary regarding the cost of the government's plan to transfer the Lord Strathcona's Horse and the First Service Battalion from CFB Calgary to CFB Edmonton.

Initial government estimates placed costs at $23 million. However, the government has now admitted revised costs of an additional $21 million for construction and renovation. Another $30 million is likely needed to clean up existing ranges. The cost for defaulting on leases will probably be around $16 million and of course there are other costs.

Recently released documents indicate that DND's primary rationale for this is to compensate Edmonton for the loss of three AIRCOM squadrons.

I call on the minister to obtain an independent cost assessment in light of all new information and to hold this decision in abeyance until that time. A failure to re–evaluate this decision can only be interpreted as contempt for the intelligence and the money of taxpayers.

* * *

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, this month Sikhs around the world are celebrating the 390th anniversary of the installation of the holy book *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. This historic event was undertaken by the fifth guru Arjan Dev Ji.

The compilation and subsequent installation of the holy book has ever since served as the fountain of spiritual wisdom and has helped foster good will and harmony among all people.

I am sure that all members of the House of Commons wish to join me in congratulating the Sikh community.

* * *

TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, as of this morning our neighbours to the south can receive two new Canadian programming services, each owned and operated jointly by the CBC and Power Broadcasting. Newsworld International will focus on top international news, presenting a uniquely Canadian view of major world events while the second channel, TRIO, a family oriented television service, will provide the best of Canadian programming to its U.S. audience.

[*Translation*]

These two channels will be distributed in the United States via cable and Direct TV, a new satellite service for direct broadcasting, offering consumers programming that will include films, sports broadcasts and special events.

[*English*]

Exports to this new market will build on Canada's traditional programming strength and supplement the revenues of Canada's national public broadcaster.

* * *

MRS. LISETTE BARSALLO–WARD

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, one week after she had been held by airport security officials under Peru's special emergency decrees, Mrs. Lisette Barsallo–Ward, a well respected Vancouver teacher, was able to return safely to her family in Canada. Her speedy release represented a classical exercise in quiet diplomacy by our foreign ministry in Ottawa and our diplomats in Lima in the best tradition of the Canadian foreign service.

We extend our congratulations to all of them.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Mr. Speaker, not long ago some statistics were published on the painful impact of the 1993 unemployment insurance reform on Quebec workers.

The newspaper *Le Soleil* reported that more than 22,000 Quebecers had been excluded from the unemployment insurance system since the reform came into effect. In addition to the restrictive measures of the Conservatives, we now have those introduced by the Liberals, which will affect, and are already affecting, tens of thousands of Quebecers and Canadians.

I want to ask the Minister of Human Resources Development, who is now preparing a thorough overhaul of the social safety net, to look behind the figures at all the people who are severely affected by the measures being taken here in Ottawa. Perhaps he will find the compassion which has been clearly lacking since he took over the department and launched the reform of the social safety net.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

FEDERAL DEBT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, this morning at 7.44 a.m. our debt was $531,045,850,207.24. With every passing day the federal debt in this country grows by more than $100 million.

Canadians are alarmed. They are concerned not only for themselves and their futures but for their children and their grandchildren. But what of the government? How concerned is it? Not very apparently when it defines success as going in the hole another $100 billion over the next three years. Even if it achieves that goal, it has failed the people.

I say to the government that it has an obligation to preserve and enhance opportunity, not to spend it away. I say to the government that it has an obligation to do what is right, not what is easy.

In the time that I have taken to deliver this statement I point out that our debt has gone up $80,000.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUÉBEC ELECTIONS

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by extending my sincere congratulations to Daniel Johnson on his outstanding campaign. His message, sincerity and convictions were such that he was able to win a splendid moral victory. However, this is only the beginning, and I am sure that he is the man we need to win the battle.

I also want to extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Parizeau. I commend him for repeating his promise of a referendum within the next ten months, and I hope he will keep his word. In fact, I hope the referendum is held as soon as possible and that the question is clear and unambiguous. And when Quebecers have said no, once and for all, to the separatist option, I hope Mr. Parizeau and his followers will give up on the idea and forget about it, because, Mr. Premier Designate, democracy means accepting the choice freely expressed by the majority.

* * *

WORLD CONGRESS OF ACADIANS

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, from August 12 to August 20, Acadians from around the world gathered in New Brunswick for the first World Congress of Acadians.

It goes without saying that this event had a tremendous success. There were lots of activities including shows, family reunions and conferences. I wish to congratulate the organizing committee of Retrouvailles 94 as well as the conference organizing committee for a job well done. I would also like to thank our Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, who paid a visit to the Acadian Congress. His presence was highly appreciated and it demonstrates his commitment to the Acadian community.

[*English*]

LEAD

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, it is a well known fact that lead is dangerous to human health because it is a poisonous substance. We have made some progress by eliminating lead from gasoline and paints but many other uses of lead continue, thus causing a threat to human health.

In Canada lead is spread into the environment when a hunter shoots or an angler loses a fishing weight. When ingested by wildlife, lead is the cause of a slow and agonizing death. In the United States the use of lead shot for waterfowl was banned in 1991. In Denmark and in the Netherlands the government banned lead in shots for all game and fishing weights.

In Canada we have a long way to go in ensuring that lead does not enter the environment as in the case of imported children's crayons which will be the subject of another intervention soon.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC ELECTIONS

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, on September 12 Quebecers elected 77 members of the sovereignist party to the Quebec National Assembly. The new government has therefore received the mandate to prepare a referendum on the sovereignty of Quebec. I would like to congratulate the leader of the Parti Quebecois, Mr. Jacques Parizeau, the elected members of his party and the others, as well as all the good candidates who failed in their bid to be elected. All have expressed their desire and willingness to serve Quebec. Whatever the Prime Minister may think, it is clear that Quebecers are not satisfied with this wonderful country that Canada is supposed to be.

• (1410)

Determined and persistent, they know that they are a distinct people and a distinct society. Quebecers demand full control of their social, cultural, political and economic development. With the coming referendum, Quebecers will finally have the opportunity to choose between the status quo and sovereignty.

* * *

[*English*]

REFORM PARTY

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, so the government is taking over Reform's turf, at least according to Rosemary Speirs of the *Toronto Star*. I would like to take this opportunity to challenge the Liberals on this mock takeover of our turf.

Indeed, during the past year the Reform Party has been effective in setting the national agenda. I ask, why is the government focusing constantly on deficit reduction, criminal justice and immigration? It is because Reform members have brought these issues to the forefront time and time again. Because of this debate Canadians are aware of the ineffective status quo system and are demanding changes.

On closer scrutiny, these well informed Canadians will soon realize that these cosmetic changes have not changed the system fundamentally. The Reform Party would be delighted to see its policies being implemented. But please take the entire package, not just the label.

The Liberals cannot claim to have taken over Reform's turf. In fact this is no more than astro turf, a poor substitute for the real thing.

* * *

FUNDY REGION

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the Fundy region of my Carleton—Charlotte constituency endured great hardship in recent weeks. Not only was the wharf located at St. Andrews, New Brunswick devastated by fire on August 31, but the Labour Day weekend brought great winds and waves, destroying numerous herring weirs along the Fundy coast. Both of these tragedies will have disastrous effects on the economy of the region.

The town of St. Andrews depends greatly on the tourism industry, the traditional fishery and aquaculture industry. Needless to say the loss of the wharf will damage these industries to a great degree.

Likewise, the weir fishermen along the Fundy coast rely on their weirs to maintain the flow of herring to processors. The destruction of these weirs will shorten their season, throwing many out of work and bringing tremendous reconstruction costs to the weir owner–operators.

I am optimistic that several departments, both federal and provincial, will pool their resources to help the people who suffer from these natural tragedies.

* * *

PROVINCIAL DEBT

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a once great nation that is slowly dying in a sea of words, warring factions not unlike two great elk locked in mortal combat. When finished both are too spent to ward off the ever present wolves. The wolves are the growing jaws of debt, money borrowed not to support investment but rather to support unearned lifestyles.

I would like to talk about strictly provincial debt, nothing to do with the federal government. The highest is in Quebec where they owe $9,498 for every man, woman and child. Over 40 per cent of this is owed to foreigners. Other provinces are not far behind.

As we clash among ourselves, an artery here and an artery there becomes dismembered. These slashes are the ever spiralling interest rates which are borne from uncertainty.

For every Mary Smith and Jacques Tremblay, let us get on with the wolves at the door.

* * *

SWEDEN

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I would like today to join in congratulations as many of the media have done on the election of a Social Democratic government in Sweden.

The *Globe and Mail* says: "After three years of Conservative government characterized by rising inflation, 14 per cent unemployment and an enormous public debt" voters swung back to the left and elected the Social Democratic Party of Sweden.

Despite the many proclamations that the left is dead, this election is evidence that there is not only one way to go. There is an alternative to the destructive policies of the right.

The left is alive and well in Canada and abroad. There are more than 60 Social Democratic governments worldwide and in Europe Sweden joins Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain and Hungary which already have Social Democratic governments. Just this summer Sri Lanka and Japan also became governed by Social Democrats.

* * *

• (1415)

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, rail service between Saint John and Sherbrooke, Quebec, both passenger and freight, is well used and important to both the people and the economy of Saint John.

The citizens of Saint John and most of the province of New Brunswick came together and fought for the preservation and need for rail passenger service in the early 1980s. We were told by the government of the day that we could retain our passenger service but we must use it or lose it. It has been used. Ridership has steadily increased and there is a three–month waiting list for reservations on VIA.

As Saint John is a port and an industrial city, it is also imperative that efficient and affordable freight service be maintained to both the port and the businesses of Saint John.

While I understand that negotiations are under way between CP and the private sector for a portion of the line, I urge the Minister of Transport to take steps to see that the remainder of the line from Brownville Junction to Sherbrooke remains operational.

* * *

THE LATE BILL BUSSIERE

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario): Parliamentarians both past and present from all parties, and certainly you as well, Mr. Speaker, were deeply saddened last Wednesday at the sudden death of our very dear friend, Bill Bussiere.

For 25 years Bill was an integral part of the weekly parliamentary prayer breakfast group and was instrumental in organizing the annual National Prayer Breakfast which most of us attended.

[*Translation*]

The importance that Bill attached to our spiritual needs can be measured by the respect and admiration we had for him.

[*English*]

On behalf of this House I extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Sandra and his three daughters Lori, Wanda and Linda.

Bill's presence and friendship will be missed but his memory will stay with us.

Perhaps in final recognition of Bill's strong personal commitment I can humbly say for all of us, well done thy good and faithful servant.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Honourable members, we lost one of our colleagues during the summer, a member of this House.

[*English*]

We will break for just a bit as we will hear tributes to Mr. Péloquin, un de nos députés.

[*Translation*]

We will then extend Question Period beyond three o'clock by the number of minutes we will have spent in doing so.

* * *

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE GASTON PÉLOQUIN

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we were all saddened and dismayed to learn of the accidental death of the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi. He was not in this House very long, but he made many friends here.

He was a hard worker. He always turned his attention to the needy. On behalf of my party and the government, I would like to offer his son and his family our sincerest condolences. I would also like to take the opportunity to remind the public of what a member's life is like. The member is at least the third of my colleagues who has died in an automobile accident. After

working for long hours weeks at a time, they died in car accidents on the way home. I am thinking of Mr. Fortin from Lotbinière and Mr. Lonsdale, a member from northern Ontario.

In their criticisms, people too often forget that members of Parliament sometimes have impossible hours. They work here, have to return to their riding and come back to Ottawa. They take enormous risks. They are always criticized. Unfortunately, Mr. Péloquin died tragically. On behalf of my party and the government, I would like to offer his colleagues and his family my most sincere sympathy.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the Prime Minister for his deeply felt words about our friend, Mr. Péloquin, and members like him who died in similar circumstances.

Gaston Péloquin, the member for Brome—Missisquoi, was our friend and his tragic death has greatly saddened his family, his constituents and his colleagues. He leaves behind his 16-year old son Pascal and his close friends, Denise and Gilles Duval, to whom he has entrusted his son. During his professional career, in education, in politics and in social life, Mr. Péloquin was always concerned for the most disadvantaged, those who are excluded and left behind. That is what motivated him to work for Haitian children.

• (1420)

He was respected by all for his commitment to his constituents and his deep convictions for Quebec's full development. Everyone recognizes the work he did to serve his fellow citizens in the Eastern Townships and the determination he brought to the task.

Mr. Péloquin was very human and modest, very giving of himself. The most important value for him was volunteerism. His great availability, his commitment of time and energy to his constituents, made him very well liked and many mourned his passing. He was very sorry about the difficulties facing the families of laid–off Hyundai workers in his riding. His concern and the comfort he gave them show his compassion.

Quebec and Canada have just lost an honest, warm–hearted parliamentarian for whom it was difficult to accept the fate and suffering of others. Members will understand that because of his Haitian experience, he was particularly affected by the painful situation in that country. Shortly before he died, he was devastated to recognize on television someone he had known who had been killed by the military junta.

Mr. Pélonquin's career was one of service for the good of his fellow citizens. First as a teacher, then as a school principal, missionary and member of Parliament, he was involved in many organizations. A committed believer, he dedicated himself to many religious and parish activities. His faith in young people and concern for their future were very important to him.

Allow me to repeat the message which he always wanted to give to his fellow citizens, a message of tolerance, of openness, of respect for what democracy in Quebec and Canada will decide. On behalf of the members of the Bloc Quebecois, I extend our sincerest condolences to all those who are affected by this tragedy. Like them, we feel the emptiness left by the passing of Gaston Péloquin.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, fellow colleagues, I was deeply saddened to learn of the tragic death of our friend and colleague, the hon. member for Brome–Missisquoi.

[*English*]

In the first days of the new Parliament Mr. Péloquin and I developed a friendship that transcended our political differences. We agreed to maintain our friendship throughout the travails that lay ahead of us in Parliament. We both looked forward to enriching our own lives by learning more and sharing experiences with each other.

Gaston was a gentle man, a person of character and resolve. He wanted to do right and on occasion was genuinely perplexed when his motives were questioned from a purely political perspective.

Like many of us, Mr. Péloquin was a new member and we all did not get a chance to know him as a person. Had we had the opportunity to know Gaston, we would have learned of his life's work as a teacher, we would have known that he wrote a children's book and that he adopted a young Haitian orphan, Pascal, his son.

[*Translation*]

Perhaps the untimely death of our colleague will cause us all to give some thought to the bonds that unite rather than divide us, to think first of each other as individuals with hopes, dreams and aspirations, than as politicians.

[*English*]

On behalf of the entire Reform caucus, I wish to express to Gaston's son, Pascal, our sincere condolences. Nothing we do or say now will lighten the burden of grief you bear today, but may you find peace in the certain knowledge that your father, Gaston, rests with those who are a force of good in this life.

[*Translation*]

Canada, Québec and Parliament are poorer for his passing but were enriched by his presence.

• (1425)

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Official Opposition and my colleague from the Reform Party in expressing, in my own name and on behalf of our Party, our sorrow at the passing of Mr. Gaston Péloquin.

Previous speakers have already noted some of his achievements. I must admit that I did not get to know Mr. Péloquin very well. In fact, I believe the first time we ever met was on the floor of the House and we did barely more than exchange greetings.

Nonetheless, I have realized like everyone else, as we set aside our partisanship under the present circumstances, to what extent his life brought a ray of hope. Like my colleagues, I was greatly impressed by his contribution in the field of education, by his colleagues' tributes which, incidentally, were very touching, and also by his personal commitment. At this time when coincidentally we are witnessing extremely important events taking place in Haiti with regard to the stakes of democracy, Mr. Péloquin, by the way he lived his life, reminds us that there are among us individuals who are prepared to take very concrete action. As a matter of fact, the wish was expressed that in his memory donations be made to charities for Haitian children. I realized then how much of a difference his life will have made for these people.

As Mr. Péloquin's riding was next to mine, I had the opportunity to hear personal accounts of those he rubbed shoulders with and I can tell you today that these people had only good things to say about him, his work and his great sincerity.

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I rise today in this House to pay tribute to a colleague and a friend whose loss affects us all. The accidental death of our colleague Gaston Péloquin is a terrible blow to his son, his family, his friends, his constituents and to us all. Quebec and Canada have lost a member of Parliament who was honest and very dedicated to the cause in which he believed above all. Gaston Péloquin, who was elected to this House in October 1993 as the member for Brome—Missisquoi, did his job with loyalty. He defended his constituents' interests with his usual determination and paid special attention to the needs of the poorest. We all recognized his legendary availability to these people. His approach to politics never raised any doubt about the sincerity of his personal convictions.

He always believed in Quebec and was never afraid to denounce the injustices suffered by Quebecers. I knew Gaston Péloquin personally for many years. He was a warm and endearing person, as I realized while touring the Eastern Townships during the 1993 election campaign. We spent several days travelling through five ridings. Gaston was the leader of the group informally set up in the motor home of his friend Jean Bégin. He took pleasure in doing his job well.

• (1430)

I shared an apartment in Hull with Gaston for 10 months during the last parliamentary session. We had many opportunities to confide in each other. His always lively comments and well–expressed ideas showed him to be extremely sensitive. The closing of the Hyundai plant was a striking case in point. I saw all the efforts that he made in this matter so that families would not lose their livelihood. He was very sorry for these workers when this plant closed, but he had done all he could. As a former teacher of English as a second language who maintained a lifelong interest in education, he very often talked to me about the school he headed for two years in Haiti. He shared the Haitian people's problems and human misery, and he was very proud to bring back from that country his son Pascal who is now 16 years old and had become his main reason for living.

Gaston Péloquin leaves a big void that will be hard to fill not only in the House of Commons but also in the riding of Brome—Missisquoi. On behalf of Bloc members and the great region of the Eastern Townships, I offer our heartfelt condolences to his son Pascal, his family and his friends. We share with them the sorrow of losing a loved one. Goodbye, Gaston.

Mr. David Berger (Saint–Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, it is in my role as chairman of the industry committee that I had the opportunity to work with Gaston Péloquin during the winter and spring of 1994. As you know, Mr. Speaker, more often than not committees conduct their work in a non–partisan fashion. We are removed from the media and the atmosphere is very different from the one during question period, for example. Mr. Péloquin participated in all our proceedings on the financing of small and medium–sized businesses. He was assiduous and his comments were always serious and well thought–out. He was interested in every aspect of our review, whether it was the relationship between banks and small businesses, the mandate of the Federal Business Development Bank, or the role of the Superintendent of Financial institutions. Before entering politics, as was mentioned earlier this afternoon, Mr. Péloquin made a career in teaching. He was a single parent with an adopted child, Pascal, who is now 16 years old. I attended Mr. Péloquin's funeral in Cowansville and was able to see how much he was loved by his colleagues from the education sector because of his dedication, his generosity and his sense of humour.

Again, I want to express my sympathy to his son Pascal, to the other members of his family and to his friends, including the members of the Bloc Quebecois.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): On behalf of all my colleagues from the New Democratic Party, I want to express my sincere condolences to the friends and relatives of Gaston Péloquin, and particularly to his adopted son Pascal.

I had the opportunity to talk to Gaston on several occasions and I found him to be a man of compassion and integrity who was very concerned by the plight of the poor and the vulnerable in our society. Even in his maiden speech in this House he referred to social programs and, in particular, to the rights of handicapped people. A strong believer in an independent Que-

bec for many years, he was also very devoted to the well–being of his constituents of Brome–Missisquoi.

This is a terrible loss for them, for us his parliamentary colleagues, and especially for his family. We will all miss him.

The Speaker: As I said earlier today, we have lost one of our number. I think we should remember we have only one life to live and if we can do something for someone, for our neighbour, we should always do it as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Colleagues, it being 2.35 p.m., Question Period will go until 3.20 today.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

ELECTION OF THE PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, after nine years under a Liberal government, last Monday Quebec elected a Parti Québécois government, whose main objective is to achieve the sovereignty of Quebec. The federal government should realize this instead of hiding its head in the sand, as was obvious from the speech made yesterday in Quebec City by the Prime Minister before the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

My question is this: Does the Prime Minister really think his offer to co–operate with the new government in Quebec is a credible one, when at the same time, his stubborn insistence on a centralist approach in the proposed overhaul of the social safety net is causing a major confrontation, not only with Quebec but with other provinces?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it would make better sense to wait until the minister's plan is tabled in the House, instead of using the kind of epithets we have heard from the hon. member. We have had an election in Quebec, and the people wanted a change of government. But I know what people want. They want governments to work together to create jobs and bring about economic recovery, to ensure that the most vulnerable members of our society are protected. That is the purpose of our proposal, and I hope the Government of Quebec, like the other governments that have indicated they want to co–operate, will be prepared to co–operate in the best interests of all Canadians.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister agree that the best way to ensure genuine co–operation—the kind he has so fulsomely extended to the new government of Quebec—is to start by respecting the jurisdiction and responsibilities of Quebec, instead of trying to encroach further in this area through his minister's program for social reform which is a blatant attack on Quebec's constitutional positions?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the final version. I wish the Leader of the Opposition would show it to me. I have not seen it. In other words, he does not know what he is talking about. He should wait and see what is in the document.

[*English*]

Once the document is ready it will be available to everybody. It will be a discussion paper. I have discussed that with the premiers. They know we have a problem in this field and it is something which needs to be modernized and adapted to changing times. I am surprised the Leader of the Opposition wants to keep the status quo.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one of the benefits of politics is that you lose your naïvety, and when you stop being naïve, you understand the ulterior motives of a government that, in fact, is no longer trying to hide its determination to use this overhaul of the social safety net to save money and divert resources away from the pittance the needy are receiving now. They even admitted that the basic objective was to save money so that the Minister of Finance can balance his accounts, which are a disaster.

I want to ask the Prime Minister very sincerely, based on a concern for co–operation, as he himself said, whether we should take him seriously when he tells Quebecers that he wants to co–operate with the new government on job creation, and I want to ask him whether he realizes that he should first promise to transfer to Quebec full jurisdiction over manpower training, which would save a lot of wear and tear on the neediest members of our society. Is the government's real position not that this is just one of Quebec's whims?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the way government and federalism works, the central government is allowed to take money from people who are well off, including people who work in fields where there are jobs, and use it to help those who do not have that opportunity and who need training.

In our country, unemployment levels vary, and we take money from the people who work to give it to people who do not work. This has no connection with language but is directly connected to the need to help people who are unemployed to get more training so that they can have the dignity of work. That is the purpose of this reform, and we will discuss with the provinces how it should be managed, but we must not create a situation where the federal government is completely out of the picture and the principle of redistribution of wealth is eliminated in this

country. That would have a very adverse effect on the poorer provinces and regions of this country.

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CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, serious allegations have been made during the summer putting in question the integrity of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, better known as CSIS.

CSIS has allegedly used an informant to set up a Canadian racist group. The same informant is also alleged to have infiltrated the entourage of the Reform Party leader.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Given the seriousness of the situation, does the Prime Minister think it is acceptable for CSIS to infiltrate a democratically formed political party, collect information on the CBC and the Canadian Jewish Congress, and contribute to the foundation of a Canadian racist group?

Does the Prime Minister consider that this is right?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about what so far simply are allegations, some of which have been categorically denied by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

All of these allegations are being looked into by the Security Intelligence Review Committee which is an independent body created by this Parliament and operates at arm's length both from the government and from CSIS. I think we should wait to see its report. In the light of that report we will be prepared to take any necessary action on the basis of these allegations, if and when they are proven.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, would the Solicitor General not agree that the best way, in fact the only way, to shed all the light on CSIS's alleged actions would be to set up a royal commission with real powers so that we can find out exactly what CSIS did?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, first I want to observe that we are dealing with allegations about things that may have happened before this government took office.

The second point I want to make is that the Security Intelligence Review Committee in my view is something like a permanent royal commission with a permanent mandate to review the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. The Security Intelligence Review Committee is set up by order in council. It has full authority to question people, to examine documents, to do all the things a royal commission would do but focused on the activities, alleged or otherwise, of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

In my view this Parliament in creating the Security Intelligence Review Committee has in effect responded to what the hon. member is talking about. We have the equivalent of a royal commission looking into the allegations in question.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister responded to the first question by the Leader of the Opposition which affects the national unity issue by saying things he has said 100 times before.

• (1445)

Given the circumstances, surely a better and more vigorous response would have been for the Prime Minister to declare his intention to make Canada as attractive as possible to all Canadians by balancing the budget, by offering tax relief, and by changing social programs to make them both affordable and more decentralized. These are the hallmarks of good government, not the half measures that are being introduced in the House.

What new and bolder steps is the Prime Minister going to take in the cause of national unity to balance the budget, cut taxes and fix our social safety net?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate the Leader of the Reform Party on his promotion to the front row.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): I am very glad the member for Calgary West had the humility to change seats with the member for Calgary Southwest.

The member is right. The best way to keep the unity of the country is to have a good economy. That is exactly what we are working on at this time. When he looks at the results he will see that 265,000 new jobs were created since we have been in government and we have known a 6.4 per cent growth in the last quarter.

If we were to follow the Reform Party economic recipe we would immediately create a huge recession in Canada. If we were to take $40 billion out of the economy in one shot there would be twice as many unemployed as at this time. We do not want to go to the right wing doctrinaire solution or to the left wing doctrinaire solution. We will go the proper Liberal way, the balanced way.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's reply will not strengthen support for the federal system because the standards of his government are too low and his timetable is too long.

Producing a social program discussion paper is not good enough when the public wants action. Fixing our deficit target at 3 per cent of GDP is not good enough when our national debt is at 71 per cent of GDP. National unity will not be achieved unless the Prime Minister sets higher standards for his ministers and a shorter timetable.

Will the Prime Minister commit to raising his government's standards with respect to social reform and fiscal reform and accelerating his timetable for bringing in those reforms?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we were very prudent when we ran in the last election. We put everything in writing in the red book. So far it is working very well and we do not intend to change our goals.

Three per cent of GDP for the level of deficit in relation to GDP is a very ambitious goal. It is the one selected by all countries in Europe as the normal goal for European countries and none of them at the moment has achieved that.

We will achieve it. As we said and as promised, at the end of the third year of our mandate we will be at 3 per cent of GDP. It is written in the red book; it will be done.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I have a fear that history is repeating itself. Members that have been around the House and have observed it for a long time know governments that get elected, have a mandate and do not use it to make fundamental changes in the first year, ones that squander their political mandate on half measures, never end up getting the job done.

• (1450)

Why does the Prime Minister not use his political capital to make major fiscal and social reforms now instead of frittering it away on political half measures?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have to consult with the provinces in order to achieve reform. The son of a former premier who, I might say in passing, accepted a seat in the Senate says that we should not consult with the provinces. What kind of country does he want Canada to be?

We will have to consult with the provinces. We will do that. There will be measures in the House and reform will be achieved, but we prefer to do it with the collaboration of the provinces. The minister has spent a lot of time with ministers so far. The document will be tabled in the first week of October.

We will have other discussions with the public through the House of Commons. Legislation will come next year and you will be satisfied.

The Speaker: I know it has been a long summer but you have forgotten me again.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, last week the chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, Jacques Courtois, appeared before the Sub–Committee on National Security. When committee members asked Mr. Courtois about the allegations relating to the infiltration of the Reform Party, he refused to answer, saying that at CSIS he had learned to never say yes or no. That is a fine example of the transparency awaiting the parliamentary sub–committee responsible for shedding light on these allegations.

My question is for the Solicitor General of Canada. Does he consider as acceptable Mr. Courtois's deliberate refusal to answer the parliamentary sub–committee's questions relating to the allegations involving CSIS?

[*English*]

The Speaker: As a general rule the questions asked in committee are the work of the committee. Perhaps, if the question could be rephrased to make it a more general question directed to the Solicitor General, it would be acceptable.

The question relates directly to the work of the committee and I would rule it out of order. I would ask the hon. member to rephrase the question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase my question: Can the Solicitor General of Canada assure this House that this matter will be clarified once and for all and that the review committee will give clear and precise answers to the questions we asked during committee meetings?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, under the rules of the House I am not in a position to comment on proceedings in a committee before the committee has reported.

However I want to say that under the law adopted by Parliament the Security Intelligence Review Committee has been set up as a body independent of CSIS, independent of the government, and I think independent of parliamentary committees. Its duties are spelled out in the act passed by Parliament.

We should not jump to conclusions about the way the Security Intelligence Review Committee is going to do its work. It has promised to have a report by the month of October. We should pass judgment on its work only after we have seen it and had a chance to assess it.

I for one want to deal fully with the findings of the report so that if there is anything demonstrated by way of problems we can take corrective action even though the matters in question arose before we took office.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Supplementary question. I would ask the hon. member to formulate his question so that it concerns the department and its activities instead of the committees.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, the minister is obviously on the same wavelength as Jacques Courtois as he does not answer yes or no, even in this House. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister. By answering this way, does the minister not lend a little support to CSIS's way of operating and prevent the Sub–Committee on National Security from doing its job in this matter?

• (1455)

The Speaker: If the minister wants to answer the question, he can do so but he does not have to.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I want to assist the hon. member by giving him a categorical and clear answer. Yes, I will carry out the responsibility imposed on me by the CSIS act as passed by Parliament. I have no authority however to direct the chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee about the way he and his committee do their work. I am sure they are very conscious of the responsibility they have undertaken in accepting appointments to the committee. I am sure they are capable of following the proceedings of the House.

In light of that I look forward to their report so that we can deal with whatever they conclude in a way that serves the best interest of the country.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, in his last budget the Minister of Finance announced that Canada's debt would increase by 20 per cent or $97 billion over the next three years. He has planned to do that. Such an increase is the highest in the history of Canada for any three–year period.

Now the news is that even this target will not be met and that the debt at the end of three years will be $10 billion to $16 billion above the $97 billion already planned.

What will the Minister of Finance and his government do about this frightening problem of a runaway deficit?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, before answering I should like to congratulate my colleague on having been named one of the two co–critics. If it takes two I am a critic on ten. In all sincerity I should like to congratulate him on his appointment.

Certainly I congratulate him on the fact that he has moved to the front benches. I must say I find it amazing, knowing this particular member, that he has moved a little closer to the centre of the political spectrum.

The answer to the question is that the assumption upon which it is based is simply not well founded. The accumulation of past deficits and the fact of compound interest, as the member knows full well, have led to the tremendous increase in debt. Indeed had the party opposite, heaven forbid, been in office we would have had this compound interest effecting this tremendous increase in the debt. I hope the member understands that.

In any event the member asked what the government was going to do. Let me simply cite the Prime Minister yesterday. We are going to hit our targets.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance recently announced that the ministry was planning the taxation of RRSPs in order to hit those targets.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance whether this is true or whether the people of Canada who are already overtaxed can expect him to cut spending instead?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development–Quebec): Mr. Speaker, no spokesman for the Department of Finance made that statement.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HAITI

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We learned with relief yesterday that an agreement had been reached between Washington and the military junta in Haiti that allowed the peaceful landing of a multinational force to restore democracy in the country and thus enable the democratically elected president, Father Jean–Bertrand Aristide, to return.

• (1500)

Here is my question: Was the minister informed of the terms of the agreement between Washington and the military junta and, if so, can he tell this House what they are and when President Aristide is to return to Haiti?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Canadian government, I would like to say how happy we are at the turn events took, at the lack of bloodshed that could have resulted in the death of many Haitians.

There is no doubt that we must pay tribute to the efforts of the American special envoys who have managed, at the very last second, to convince the military to abdicate. It seems obvious to me that this last–minute agreement that averted the military action called for under United Nations resolution 940 provides that the military will not only have to hand over power, but also allow members of the multinational force that should land in Haiti within hours to gain control of the situation and bring about the speedy return of president Aristide.

One major factor to take into account is that under Governors Island arrangements, one legislative measure must be passed to provide for the general pardon of the military and another one to provide for the division of powers between the military and the police. In our view, it would be important that the proposed legislation called for in the original Governors Island agreement be implemented as soon as possible by the Haitian Parliament.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, does the Canadian government intend to contribute actively to the forces that will be put together to garantee the safety of civilian populations upon the return of President Aristide and, if so, what will this contribution consist of?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting President Aristide last week, at which time I reiterated that the Government of Canada was firmly committed to providing him with support whenever he requests it, to help rebuild his country at the democratic, social and economic level. We are confident that, as soon as he is back in Haiti, president Aristide will ask for support, large–scale participation, from Canada. I can assure you that we will be ready to respond to his request and will do so most positively.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Last week the minister committed personnel and money, lots of money, toward the rebuilding of Haiti. I believe the Canadian people need to know more about that plan. They need to know what the costs are going to be, what our commitment is going to be, and how long we are going to be there.

Also as parliamentarians we need to know if we are going to be discussing this in detail in the House.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the hon. member that Canada supports the UN resolutions with regard to Haiti. Indeed, we support the Governors Island agreement which calls for the sending of Canadian police forces to Haiti to train the Haitian police forces. This is a well known commitment by Canada. We are anxious and eager to fulfil this commitment. We will be following through as soon as the circumstances allow our police to go there.

• (1505)

Second, we have approved the UN resolutions, which will allow—in the second phase of the implementation of resolution 940 of the United Nations—the involvement of military personnel under the auspices of the United Nations. This has not yet been realized. When this second phase takes place, we will then respond.

The Speaker: In the interest of brevity, we would ask all members to have very brief questions and very brief answers.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, in the red book it says that we can be assured we will not be U.S. camp followers. Yet the minister makes a trip to Washington on Thursday and comes back with our plan.

Can the minister assure us that we will now take the lead and work with the OAS and the UN in a leadership role regarding the solution to the Haiti problem?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am very intrigued by the question of the hon. member because I thought I heard his leader on television a few days ago expressing a different point of view. I want to assure the House that Canada has an independent position which we have clearly expressed inside and outside the House with regard to Haiti.

We believe we can play a more independent, separate role than others because of the privileged position we have with the Haitian population. Certainly under the auspices of the UN, we could give leadership in playing a very constructive role.

I hope that in the near future the House will allow us to have a debate on the matter in order to permit members of both sides of the House to express their views in this regard.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RED CROSS BLOOD CENTRE IN TORONTO

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): My question is for the Minister of Health. In a press conference held last Monday, the Minister of Health tried to reassure the Canadian people following investigations conducted by the United States Drug and Food Administration, which revealed several deficiencies in the operation of the Red Cross blood centre in Toronto.

Although she has had the facts for a while now, why did the minister wait until the telecast to inform Canadians about the serious control problems at the Red Cross centre in Toronto?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question. First of all, let me reassure Canadians by saying that the inspections carried out by the FDA were the result of a change in its own policies and were not brought about by problems in the way the blood supply is handled in Canada. It is a question of harmonizing various policies, since the regulations differ. We are working with the FDA and will continue to do so in order to achieve harmonization. Our blood system in Canada is as safe as any in the world.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell us exactly when she took action to inform other centres of the serious deficiencies identified in Toronto?

• (1510)

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my answer once more.

The inspections that were carried out were the result of a change in the policies of the FDA. They were not brought about by any problems directly affecting our blood system here. Our blood system remains one of the safest in the world and we continue to do everything possible to improve it.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

For many people autumn means the arrival of the game hunting season. These people are concerned that the proposed gun control legislation will include provisions such as central storage, seizure of hunting weapons and possible expensive registration laws. A lot of misinformation is out there.

Does the minister have any words for these many hunters to calm their worries?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to address the issue.

In the weeks since the House adjourned in June I have spent time crossing Canada, visiting every province but one—and I will soon be there—to meet with Canadians and to discuss directly with them the issue of firearms and their regulation. I have met with dozens of groups, with hunters and anglers, with wildlife federations, with shooting clubs, with target shooters and with a variety of others who have an interest in firearms.

Among other things, I have tried to reassure them that the government is keenly aware that hunting is not only a long tradition but it is an important economic activity for many regions of Canada and that the proposals we will bring forward later this year will reflect not only the need for a safe society and a strong criminal justice system, but will also respect the legitimate interests of hunters, farmers and those who use firearms for subsistence.

The proposals we are now preparing will reflect the legitimate interests to which the hon. member referred.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, last week a confidential document was released by the minister of immigration's department outlining plans to cut the number of immigrants coming into Canada, to restrict family class immigration, to require security bonds from sponsors of relatives and eliminate automatic citizenship for the children of refugees.

We would like to acknowledge that the minister has recognized the merits of our party's initiatives and we would like to ask him when these very good ideas will be put into place.

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the government, pursuant to its red book commitment, began an unprecedented—

Some hon. members: Come on.

Mr. Marchi: There are lots of good ideas in that little red book, by the way.

We had an unprecedented eight-month consultative process which was rich with ideas, rich with the participation of Canadians from all walks of life and all regions. That is one important strand that certainly will impact on the ultimate decision that our government and this House will make in the levels announcement that must be made by law before November 1.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, poll after poll shows overwhelmingly that the majority of Canadians agree with the minister's department that immigration is out of control. Another document from the minister's department released earlier this summer actually agrees with that position.

When will the minister stop holding out as one of the last lone defenders of a policy that a vast majority of Canadians and even his own officials see as being out of touch?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly better than being out of mind.

That report was one of many where various departments in their policy directives certainly reflect on the things that were

said during that consultative process. It would be very unfortunate if we were to simply draw wild conclusions from every single document coming from any department.

• (1515)

Canadians are looking for and deserve improvements in how immigration is being managed and we have begun to deliver on that. In fact this morning we discussed Bill C–44. I hope the Reform Party sees fit to support that bill because it is an improvement in how we conduct and manage the program. We will continue to do this in the best interests of our country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. According to Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate rose by 0.7 per cent in Quebec last month and now stands at 12.2 per cent. In spite of a slight economic recovery, given the increase in population, Quebec still needs 210,000 jobs to reach its pre–recession level of employment.

Could the Minister of Finance, who recently claimed to be waging a world economic war, modestly try to create jobs by taking concrete recovery measures instead of pursuing his policy of laissez–faire?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, since we took office, we have not only expressed a desire but also a capacity to improve the employment situation in Quebec. In fact, as we have seen in the last quarter, this is why economic growth has been strengthened since the election. During the last quarter, the rate of real growth in Canada was 6.4 per cent, the highest among the G–7 countries. I want to tell the hon. member that, in Quebec alone, we have created 77,000 jobs since we took office. This is a record over such a period of time.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance realize that, at this pace, it will take at least three years just to reach the pre–recession level of employment, given the increase in population? Under the circumstances, is the minister prepared to give a boost to job creation by immediately reducing UI contributions, since there is a surplus, as the official opposition has been requesting since the minister himself raised these contributions?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the first initiative taken by the Minister of Human Resources Development was to announce that UI contributions would not only be frozen but reduced.

Clearly, we recognize that this situation, created by the previous government, is a very serious impediment to job creation. Consequently, we will correct the problem.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA COMMUNICATION GROUP

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that the Treasury Board internal investigation focusing on Canada Communication Group found that departmental managers throughout the government had illegally stashed $61 million in bank accounts to be spent at their whim without the purview of Parliament.

Can the President of the Treasury Board tell the Canadian taxpayers why all these ministers in the front row sit idly by while their departments blatantly break the law and stash that money in bank accounts without approval?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, we do not sit idly by even if it is in matters that were undertaken during the last government. We get to the bottom of them. This is a serious issue. I want to have this matter thoroughly investigated and in fact that is under way. I made an announcement to that effect earlier today.

The internal auditors in the various departments and of course the internal auditors in the Department of Public Works and Government Services are looking further at the matter of Canada Communication Group. We will get to the bottom of this and will take the appropriate corrective action. We will report further to this Parliament.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the President of the Treasury Board will not stand idly by. However, the Auditor General pointed this problem out to him in 1992.

• (1520)

If he feels this is serious, why would Treasury Board try to sweep this matter under the carpet rather than calling in the RCMP?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, I suppose if at the time the Auditor General had called the mayor of Toronto then maybe I would know about it today.

The deputy comptroller general in our department has issued very clear guidelines to various departments that Treasury Board rules and regulations must be followed. The deputy minister, the secretary of the Treasury Board, has also similarly sent a letter to various deputy ministers and has asked for a report within 30 days. When I receive those reports corrective action will be taken and I will be reporting further to this House.

FISHERIES

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

In the last eight months this government has taken extraordinary conservation measures to halt the destruction of fish stocks on both coasts. These measures include shutting down entire commercial fisheries, standing up to the Americans on the west coast Pacific salmon treaty, and even convincing the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization to have a moratorium on straddling stocks on the nose and tail of the Grand Bank.

Since NAFO is meeting again this week in my riding of Dartmouth to decide on next year's fishing plans, will the minister stay true to his course? What position will he be taking to the table to ensure that those stocks which are still perilously close to extinction are going to be protected?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, given that this important international multilateral meeting is being held in the member's constituency there is no question the resolve of the Government of Canada will be under his scrutiny as chairman of the fisheries committee. Therefore we will take a position of integrity and new ethics in conservation to the table. We will stand fast for strong rules to protect Canada's fish stocks to seek a reduction in Greenland halibut harvesting off our waters.

I thank the member for his continued strong and enthusiastic interest.

* * *

THE LATE WILLIAM BUSSIERE

The Speaker: Order. I have notice of a question of privilege and a request for an emergency debate and I am going to do that in just a moment.

First I would like to take just a moment on behalf of the House to pay tribute to a man who was not a member of Parliament but who served this Parliament for the last 25 years in a very special way. I refer of course to Mr. William Bussiere. He died on Tuesday of a heart attack.

All members should know that over the years he served the spiritual needs of hundreds of members of Parliament. For all of his friends here today and all who have known him over the years this Parliament owes a great debt of thanks and gratitude.

In your names I would like to send our most sincere good wishes to his wife Sandra and his children Linda, Lori and Wanda, always keeping in mind that his service to us was a service to Canada. He will be very much missed by parliamentarians who served here over the last 25 years and parliamentarians here right now.

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

EXPENSES OF SPOUSES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis–Hébert): Mr. Speaker, I came back yesterday from a trip to Denmark where I attended a meeting of the InterParliamentary Union. While I was away from Quebec, I was told that a Reform Party member had wrongly claimed to the media that my wife's expenses had been paid for by Canadian taxpayers.

• (1525)

I want to formally inform the House that my wife met all her travelling expenses, including those for transportation and accommodation in Copenhagen.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, earlier I asked the minister of immigration a question about his department and whether or not his own officials see his policies as out of touch. When he responded in kind the comments I believe he said were: "It is better than being out of your mind". I would like clarification as to whether that was intended as an insult.

The Speaker: Order. I did not hear the comments. I am sure that on our return in our exuberance sometimes we use words that should not be used. I will look into the matter and if need be I will report to the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 31 petitions.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN RADIO–TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 110(2) I have the honour to table in both official languages copies of certificates of nomination from the Minister of Canadian Heritage in respect of two part

time members of the Canadian Radio–Television and Telecommunications Commission which certificates should be deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

* * *

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table in both official languages a number of order in council appointments that were made by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1) these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTER–PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian section of the International Assembly of French–Speaking Parliamentarians regarding the meeting of the Co–operation and Development Commission which took place in Bangui, in the Central African Republic, from April 22 to 29, 1994.

* * *

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY ACT

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

[*Translation*]

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ACT

Hon. David Anderson (on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–47, an act to amend the Department of External Affairs Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (for the Minister of Natural Resources) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–48, an act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI–FOOD ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–50, an act to introduce a bill entitled an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

PETITIONS

VIOLENCE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, these petitioners want all forms of abuse and violence controlled and if at all possible to cease. They request the government to ensure that the CRTC regulate forms of abuse and violence on radio and television.

They point out that parents often feel that their efforts to raise and educate their children are denigrated by what happens on those particular media.

[*Translation*]

What they want is just to make sure that such violence and abuses stop.

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my honour to present a petition

relating to the Young Offenders Act on behalf of a large number of constituents of my riding of Mississauga South.

On May 15, 1994 Mr. Brian Baylen, a resident of my riding, was robbed and viciously murdered by two youths age 15 and 16. To more effectively deal with such serious youth crimes the petitioners call for amendments to the Young Offenders Act. They specifically ask for stiffer maximum penalties for violent crimes, a redefinition of the term young person so that persons who commit criminal offences when they are 16 years or older do not receive benefit of the act, and allow youths under age 16 to be tried in adult court if the crown deems it appropriate to do so.

• (1535)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to present this petition from people in my constituency of Fraser Valley West. They request that Parliament not amend the Human Rights Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

THE SENATE

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my pleasure to present to the House a petition signed by many of my constituents in Regina—Lumsden.

They believe that the Senate is an unelected, unaccountable institution which has become a home for recipients of patronage and which has discarded any notion of working for the best interests of Canadian taxpayers. They also believe that the cost of the Senate, which is $54 million a year, and the travel costs related thereto are exorbitant.

They call for this House to abolish the Senate.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): It is my honour to rise pursuant to article 31 of the Standing Orders to present a petition on behalf of numerous constituents who urge Parliament to ensure that the present provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicides be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no change in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding and abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I too have the honour to present a petition which is signed by hundreds of Canadian citizens from Kingston, Ontario, from Quebec, Nova Scotia and my own constituency which calls upon Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure the right of all Canadians to die with dignity by allowing people with terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to the assistance of a physician in ending their lives at a time of their choice subject to strict safeguards to prevent abuse, and to ensure that the decision is free, informed, competent and voluntary.

FIREARMS

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my honour to present the following petition from residents of the east end Saskatchewan district in my constituency.

Whereas except in police states there is no evidence that the incidence of criminal or suicidal misuse of firearms within any given socioeconomic environment is impeded by restrictive legislation, whereas law–abiding Canadian citizens are already overburdened by unnecessary and ineffective gun control legislation, wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to desist from passing additional restrictive legislation with respect to firearms or ammunition and to direct its attention to the apprehension and adequate punishment of those who criminally misuse firearms or other deadly weapons.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and on behalf of residents of the riding of Bruce—Grey I would like to table three petitions, two having to do with the rights of the unborn.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): My third petition concerns amendments to the Human Rights Act.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 36 it is my privilege to present a petition which deals with sexual orientation. My constituents have signed this petition praying that the Parliament of Canada not amend the Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way that would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

• (1540)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I consider it my duty as representative of the constituents of Simcoe North to present the following petitions. Four hundred and fifty–four petitioners from my riding request that Parliament take measures to protect the rights of the unborn child and another 392 petitioners ask that euthanasia not be made legal.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have two duly executed and signed

petitions representing the views of some of my constituents which I would like to present to the House.

The first petition calls on the government to enforce the existing provisions of the Criminal Code prohibiting assisted suicide. It also asks that no changes be made to those provisions which would sanction or allow assisted suicide.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, calls on the government to maintain the status quo with regard to same sex relationships.

On behalf of those concerned constituents, I am pleased to table these petitions in the House.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and duly certified by the Clerk of Petitions I wish to table two petitions signed by constituents of Lambton—Middlesex.

In the first the petitioners call upon Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code of Canada.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex): In the second petition, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that Parliament retain the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide or euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of constituents in Calgary North I would like to present a petition to this House requesting that Parliament not amend any legislation to sanction same sex relationships or to make the undefined sexual orientation prohibited grounds for discrimination.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 5, 8, 20, 31, 32, 52, 58, 59, 60 and 65.

[*Text*]

Question No. 5—**Mr. Grubel:**

What was the size of both public and private infrastructure spending from the years ending 1989 until 1993, for Canada as a whole, and by provinces, and how many workers are employed per million dollars worth of infrastructure spending, both directly and indirectly?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Public and private infrastructure spending for Canada and each province for the years 1989 to 1993 inclusive has been obtained from Statistics Canada. The current dollar amounts by province are set out in Table 1.

There are no survey measures of the direct and indirect employment impacts. However, rough estimates have been derived using Statistics Canada's input-output model: The overall Canada-wide calculated estimate is 14 jobs per million dollars of spending on infrastructure.

TABLE 1: TOTAL PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING 1989 – 1993 ($'000)

	NFLD.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	QUE.	ONT.	MAN.	SASK.	ALTA.	B.C. & N.W.T.	CANADA
1989	524,582	68,109	507,879	406,068	4,670,080	6,251,684	891,957	1,350,792	5,849,060	3,355,128	23,875,339
1990	574,118	68,050	626,175	620,096	5,389,110	6,721,228	1,084,584	1,613,321	6,671,627	3,290,975	26,659,284
1991	788,997	78,453	773,913	731,702	5,155,335	7,208,768	962,248	1,941,737	6,327,767	3,414,684	27,383,604
1992	961,051	83,934	523,304	872,029	5,796,833	6,952,373	922,199	1,429,168	5,183,590	2,970,257	25,694,738
1993	1,349,458	76,211	429,414	505,587	6,092,999	7,478,104	864,623	1,111,049	5,496,106	3,360,355	26,763,906

Source: Construction in Canada Cat. # 64-201

Question No. 8—**Mr. Solomon:**

Does the government plan to implement the recommendation on page 90 of the Report of the Auditor General of Canada, 1993, under the section "Observations on Tax Revenue, Departments of Finance and National Revenue", to clarify the regulation on the resource allowance income tax provision?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Litigation on the interpretation of the resource allowance provision concluded only when the Supreme Court of Canada denied the government leave to appeal in July 1992. On July 23, 1992 draft regulations were released by the Department of Finance that clarified the issues dealt with in the litigation. These regulations were released in draft form in order to permit consultations with industry and with other government departments.

Once promulgated, these regulations will be effective from July 23, 1992, the date of their release. Further draft regulations stopping abuse of the resource allowance through the use of partnerships were released on March 18, 1993. Consultations on

both sets of draft regulations have been held with industry, Revenue Canada and the Department of Justice. Every effort will be made to have these draft regulations finalized and promulgated in the near future.

Question No. 20—**Mr. Johnston:**

With regard to the Participaction program, (*a*) how long has it been in operation, (*b*) what are its components, (*c*) what is its annual budget and its annual advertising budget?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): a) Initiated by the Government of Canada, Participaction started 22 years ago, in September, 1971, as a non–profit organization.

b) This information should be requested directly from Participaction.

c) Participaction is an autonomous non–profit organization. Questions regarding its budget should be requested directly from the organization.

Health Canada contributed $650,000 to Participaction for the 1993–94 fiscal year for its annual public services announcements campaign which comprised its total advertising activities.

Support from Health Canada is for: the production and delivery of physical activity messages to the 3,327 media outlets across Canada; educational products such as videos, newsletters, posters and leader resource packages; the management of participation events such as Canada's Fitweek involving over 5,000 community events and over two million Canadians.

Question No. 31—**Mr. Wappel:**

For the years 1983 and 1993 (or the nearest year for which statistics are available), how many deaths in Canada, including as per cent of total deaths, were caused by the following: cancer; heart disease/stroke; diabetes; AIDS and AIDS–related complications; any others accounting for 10% or more of total deaths?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health):

DEATHS IN CANADA, 1983 AND 1991 BY SELECTED CAUSES

CAUSE OF DEATH	NUMBER OF DEATHS		% OF ALL DEATHS IN:	
	1983	1991	1983	1991
a) Cancer	42,864	53,963	24.6 %	27.6 %
b) Heart Disease/ Stroke	62,724	58,842	36.0 %	30.1 %
c) Diabetes	3,083	4,295	1.8 %	2.2 %
d) AIDS	29*	1,170	0.02 %	0.6 %
e) Others	None			

* May be an underestimate since this is the number of AIDS-related deaths actually reported to the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control.

Question No. 32—**Mr. Wappel:**

For the years 1983 and 1993 (or the nearest year for which statistics are available), how much money did the government contribute, in real dollars and as a percentage of total contributions, to research and/or education for each of the following: (*a*) cancer, (*b*) heart disease/stroke, (*c*) diabetes, (*d*) AIDS and AIDS–related complications (*e*) any others accounting for 10% or more of total deaths?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): The following tables describe the level of funding by the government to the four specified diseases. Please be advised that there are no other diseases that represent 10 per cent or more of total deaths. The data are split into the three directorates that are involved. 1983 and 1993 figures are not available for all the diseases in all the directorates. In the situation that a year's values are not available, the closest available year's figures are given.

HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTORATE:

The health services directorate has contributed the following amounts to professional training activities for the diseases.

	1983	%*	1993	%*
Cancer	$10,000	0.43%	$60,000	3.05%
Heart Disease/ Stroke	$5,000	0.22%	$60,000	3.05%
Diabetes	$5,000	0.22%	$25,000	1.27%
AIDS	$100,000 (1988)	4.10%	$600,000	30.5%

* percentages are based on non-salary operating budgets.

HEALTH PROMOTION DIRECTORATE:

[Health Promotion contributed the following:]

	1983	%	1993	%
Cancer	$65,864	1.55%	$68,000	2.0%
Heart Disease/ Stroke	$27,118	0.64%	$6,306 (1991)	0.18%
Diabetes	$53,203	1.25%	$60,866 (1985)	1.0%
AIDS	$50,000 (1985)	100%	$8,295,289	100%

Note: Cancer, diabetes and heart disease/stroke are funded by the Health Promotion Contribution Program. The AIDS Community Action Program uses its entire budget to fund AIDS activities and therefore in both years the percentage of its contributions is 100.

NATIONAL HEALTH AND RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS DIRECTORATE:

NHRDP contributed the following:

	1983	%	1993	%
Cancer	$1,701,027	10.6%	$1,972,200	7.64%
Heart Disease/ Stroke	$1,269,002	7.91%	$3,798,595	14.7%
Diabetes	$33,315	0.21%	$542,265	2.10%
AIDS	$26,888	0.17%	$5,780,050	22.4%

The Medical Research Council of Canada has contributed in real dollars to research and/or education for each of the following:

	1983	%	1993	%
Cancer	$3,200,000	2.8%	$6,900,000	2.8%
Cardiovascular	$7,300,000	6.6%	$15,700,000	6.3%
Diabetes	$3,800,000	3.4%	$6,300,000	2.5%
AIDS	0	0	$2,300,000	0.9%

Question No. 52—**Mr. Harper:**

For the last five years, (*a*) how many Canadian Forces members have filed an application for a redress of grievance, (*b*) what is the mean length of time to process a redress from date of filing to final resolution, and (*c*) what percentage of redresses are decided in favour of the applicant?

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): a) No statistical records are kept of grievances at levels subordinate to National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ). In the last five years, however, grievances received at NDHQ for consideration by the chief of the defence staff, minister or governor in council were as follows:

1989–259
1990–341
1991–361
1992–424
1993–366
1994–108 (to end April)

b) The length of time between the original submission and the final decision varies from several days to several years depending upon the level at which a reply satisfactory to the griever is given. Therefore, the mean time for grievances cannot be determined since no statistics are kept on those grievances that do not reach NDHQ.

c) It is not known what percentage of all grievances are decided, in whole or in part, in favour of the applicant, since such statistics are not kept for grievances not recieved at NDHQ. Of those received at NDHQ, the aurterly percentage granted in favour of the applicant, in whole or in part, during the last five years, was as follows:

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
1989	40%	43%	38%	43%
1990	55%	41%	50%	32%
1991	37%	45%	42%	47%
1992	50%	46%	33%	29%
1993	39%	29%	26%	50%
1994	49%			

Question No. 58—**Mr. Simmons:**

With respect to the Auditor General's finding in his 1993 report that the $200 million senior strategy "was renewed in 1993 without reliable, complete and timely information on the results of the first five years of spending", (*a*) what specific action is the Department of Health taking to clarify objectives and activities, and to ensure that renewal funds are expended appropriately and effectively, (*b*) how does the department ensure that recipients of funds for programs under the seniors strategy comply with the terms and conditions of the arrangements, and (*c*) what proportion of the total costs of each arrangement is administrative?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): (a) The key elements of the $170* million seniors strategy have now been combined under a single administration in Health Canada to improve co–ordination among the components and ensure more effective management of the overall strategy. All elements of the strategy establish annual priorities in consultation with other federal programs and with stakeholders to ensure the most effective use of the funds. All elements of the seniors strategy will be evaluated by the end of the strategy to determine their effectiveness in meeting their intended objectives.

(b) There are two elements of the seniors strategy which provide contribution funding. These are the seniors community programs (new horizons, seniors independence program and ventures) and the seniors independence research program. These programs all have clearly defined objectives, program criteria and comprehensive review processes. All funded projects are governed by an agreement between the project sponsor and Health Canada which contains details of financial obligations, record keeping, reports on progress and achievements and related matters. Projects are monitored throughout their lifecycle by Health Canada staff by various means including onsite visits and completion of progress reports. At the end of funding all projects must complete a basic evaluation and financial accounting report.

(c) Based on the allocation as originally approved in the seniors stategy, the proportion of administrative costs to program costs is 13 per cent for the seniors community programs and 18 per cent for the seniors independence research program. The estimated administrative costs for the seniors community programs and for the seniors independence research program are based on the approved strategy funds and predate the merger of the seniors directorate.

* Treasury Board approved a $170 million, five–year seniors strategy in April 1993. There was a small A–base for certain components (new horizons program and the national advisory council on aging). This A–base is estimated at slightly less than $51 million over the five–year period. These two amounts total $221 million.

Question No. 59—**Mr. Lavigne:**

With respect to the program to replace the 5/4 tonne vehicles built by General Motors for the Department of National Defence, (*a*) what is the cost of the new vehicle acquisition program, (*b*) what are the results of the tests carried out on these vehicles (i) by National Defence personnel and (ii) by civilian contractors, and (*c*) what is the value of the contracts awarded to civilian contractors to carry out these tests?

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): The light support vehicle wheeled (LSVW) is the replacement for the 1 1/4 ton trucks built by General Motors. The LSVW is being produced by Western Star Trucks Inc. (WSTI) with a contract cost of $224.3M.

The LSVW has undergone one of the most comprehensive and thorough test programs ever undertaken by the Department of National Defence (DND) with a wheeled support vehicle system. Throughout this testing, as problems were identified, WSTI developed solutions and fully validated those solutions to DND's satisfaction. Because of these problems, the LSVW was judged to have failed the initial reliability, availability maintainability and durability (RAMD) tests conducted by DND in Canada. To validate the final modifications, WSTI was obligated to conduct a second set of RAMD tests at its expense at a test site fully acceptable to DND.

To avoid delays in fielding the LSVW, it was necessary to change the test site to the Nevada automotive test centre (NATC) because snow conditions in Petawawa masked the test track terrain, in effect reducing its severity. The testing carried out at the NATC was more severe than that encountered in Canada. Furthermore, to thoroughly prove the modifications, operation was skewed so that the largest percentage of testing was over severe cross–country. The terrain at the NATC is rugged and temperatures varied considerably. The NATC is a top–notch test facility with a worldwide reputation which has tested some 1,000 systems for the U.S. Department of Defense and major vehicle manufacturers. It is noteworthy that the LSVW has undergone more testing over more varied and more demanding conditions than any other wheeled army vehicle. This testing was continuously supervised by three to four Canadian forces engineers and technicians.

RAMD has done its intended job of identifying problem to permit the Canadian army and the manufacturer to fully debug the equipment prior to final production. As a result of this second test by NATC, all modifications were proven out and the vehicle was found to be fully acceptable.

The contract to NATC was paid for and managed by WSTI.

Question No. 60—**Mr. Axworthy:**

How much money has the government, through every department, agency and body, provided the Royal Canadian Legion and each of its branches in the form of grants, contributions, loans or other means since January 1, 1985?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Soliciter General of Canada): I am informed as follows:

In so far as the Department of Canadian Heritage is concerned:

1985 to 1987	1987/88	1988/89	1989/90
Nil	$1,384.50	$2,990.00	$1,599.00
1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993 to 1995
$3,458.00	$1,757.00	$1,000.00	Nil

In so far as the Canadian War Museum is concerned:

In June 1994 the museum paid a total of $7,500 to the Royal Canadian Legion for the purchase of tickets to 1940's dance organized by the legion.

In so far as the Department of Health is concerned:

1985 to 1988	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91
Records destroyed	Nil	$74,653.35	$193,157.00
1991/92	1992/93	1993 to 1995	
$129,253.62	$96,812.03	Nil	

In so far as the Department of Transport is concerned:

In 1991/92, the policy and co–ordination activity made a $25,000 contribution to the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 143, Erickson, Manitoba. The contribution was provided under the conditions of the transportation of disabled persons program (accessible vehicle acquisition program).

In so far as the Department of Veterans Affairs is concerned:

Since January 1, 1985, Veterans Affairs has paid an annual grant of $9,000 to the Royal Canadian Legion for expenses incurred by the service bureau of the Legion. The service bureau is an organization instituted by the Legion for the purpose of preparing claim submissions to the Canadian pension commission, the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies on behalf of veterans and their dependants.

Question No. 65—**Mr. de Savoye:**

Has the government allocated an amount of money to the anti–smoking campaign and, if so (a) what is the amount; and (b) what proportion of that amount will be devoted to (i) research; (ii) television publicity; (iii) radio publicity; (iv) publicity posters; (v) the hiring of new peace officers; (vi) a market study; (vii) prevention and education programs; and (vii) other aspects?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): On February 8, 1994 the Government of Canada announced the most comprehensive anti–smoking campaign in Canadian history.

In the meantime the Department of Health has undertaken an extensive consultation process with the provinces, territories and the health community concerning the design and implementation of many of the elements of our overall strategy.

The Department of Health expects to present its proposals in the near future. Once the most effective and targeted strategy is finalized, funding for the various components will be allocated.

Also, resources for 349 additional RCMP officers to perform anti–smuggling duties were approved as part of the government's action plan to combat smuggling. This means that there are now to be approximately 700 RCMP officers doing anti–smuggling work, doubling the number of officiers working in the area previously.

[*English*]

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 26, 39 and 55 could be made Orders for Returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Questions Nos. 26, 39 and 55 be deemed to have been made Orders for Returns?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 26—**Mrs. Hayes:**

For 1993, what was the total amount of funds received by individuals and groups from the Department of Multiculturalism, who were these individuals and how much did each receive?

(Return tabled.)

Question No. 39—**Mr. Mayfield:**

What is the name and location of each National Park and, for each park and for each of the last four years, (*a*) how many people did they employ, (*b*) how much did they cost to operate, (*c*) what revenues did they generate, (*d*) how many people visited them?

(Return tabled.)

Question No. 55—**Mr. Strahl:**

During the last fiscal year, how many consultants did the Canadian International Development Agency employ, what are the names of the individuals and their companies, where are they from, what project did each consultant work on, and how much was each consultant paid?

(Return tabled.)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary to explain to this House why questions No. 33 and No. 38, listed in my name on the Order Paper, have not been answered within the 45 day period prescribed by Standing Orders? I do not know the meaning of the word "stand" but if it means that I will not get an answer, I object. Question No. 33 dates back to April 14, and question No. 38 to April 21.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I am told that the answer to question No. 33 will be ready to table in the House tomorrow. I hope to be able to do it and thereby help the hon. member fulfil her duties.

As to question No. 38, I understand the answer is being prepared and should be available shortly.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the House would give unanimous consent to revert to motions so that I could move concurrence in Motion No. 1 standing in my name on the Order Paper, being concurrence in the 28th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs dealing with the allocation of committee rooms.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to revert to motions?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved that the 28th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House on Friday, June 10, 1994 be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

• (1545)

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

WEST COAST FISHERIES

The Speaker: Before we go to orders of the day, I have a request pursuant to Standing Order 52 for an emergency debate on the mismanagement of the west coast fisheries, particularly in the light of recent news that 1.3 million salmon cannot be accounted for by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, you have indicated my intention to rise under Standing Order 52 regarding the alarm that exists now on the west coast with the alleged disappearance of 1.3 million salmon.

When fishermen see 1.3 million salmon disappear from their plans, it is fair to say a crisis is pending, if not already existing, on the west coast. Keeping in mind what happened on the east

coast, I suggest this is a matter requiring urgent consideration by the Parliament of Canada.

I ask for your leave to move the adjournment of the House on Tuesday, September 20, particularly in light of the fact that the minister is not present, being responsible for other duties at this moment, for the purpose of debating this very urgent matter.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I concur this is an important matter, especially to the hon. member because of the proximity of this to his riding on the west coast. I would like to thank him for his application. However, in my view the application does not meet with the requirements of the standing order at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, be read the second and referred to a committee; and the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: I give the floor to the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. I believe she has 10 minutes left.

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Canada's immigration program has contributed to a sense of Canadian identity and prosperity for more than 125 years.

Our challenge, as we consider Bill C–44, is to preserve public support for our immigration system, support that is essential if we hope to maintain the humanitarian traditions that have earned Canada respect around the world.

We must appreciate that the trust of Canadians is undermined whenever abuse, fraud, criminality raise their ugly heads. Quite naturally, failure to satisfactorily address the minority of cases of fraud and abuse will erode public confidence. It will inhibit a serious and reasoned discussion of immigration. If this happens, our future as a generous, open nation is in jeopardy.

That is why the provisions found in Bill C–44 are so important. When Canadians are confident that the provisions of our immigration program are enforced effectively, fairly and without prejudice or favour, they will continue to support a progressive approach to immigration.

Today there are only four countries around the world that receive immigrants in significant numbers. The four countries are Canada, Australia, the United States, and Israel, which is a special case. By almost any measurement, Canada ranks near the top in receiving immigrants and accepting people fleeing persecution. A major reason we have been able to respond with such generosity to migration needs and international crises is because we have carefully maintained public support for our broad objectives.

• (1550)

Canadians have demanded with reason that their immigration and refugee systems be not only fair and effective but also well managed. Once assured, Canadians have generously supported Canada's commitment to meet our international obligations even in the present unsettled economic times.

That is why the measures in Bill C–44 are so important. This bill pragmatically balances principles of fairness and tolerance with the principle of respect for the rule of law. It is an astute and sensible response to a situation that demands action. It closes the loopholes that unscrupulous people have exploited and gives our enforcement authority the tools to remove the lawbreakers who would abuse our system and our society.

In closing I would like to emphasize that Bill C–44 is not about revenge or punishment. Instead it is about preservation, preservation of the tolerance for diversity. The government is dedicated to the integration and preservation of ethnic cultures in Canadian society. We have continued to see this great country as richer because of the contributions immigrants have made and continue to make in Canadian society.

We will continue to promote and preserve ethnic cultures in a united and tolerant Canada. Bill C–44 will play a critical part in the preservation of the ideals that we hold dear.

In speaking in support of Bill C–44, I urge all members to consider the importance of the measures within the bill.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I have several questions for my colleague. In particular I have several quotes that I picked up from her speech.

In this day and age when we talk about immigration we sometimes get confused about what the intent of the issue is. Many sources in the Reform Party have said that we are not adverse to immigration, albeit we think there should be lower levels. That is a good issue for debate at any time in any country.

However, in many cases we are talking about the problems—and I will speak a little later on this—that we are having with refugee boards and so on. I hear the hon. member say we are dealing with petty hoods. The Liberal party has this tendency to downplay what are the problems with the criminal element in the refugee system that are getting through the bureaucracy and coming into Canada. These are not petty hoods we are talking about. These are hard core criminals in some cases.

When this party talks about how to deal with these individuals we are told things like: "Well, it's only a few. It's only a minority". We have to look at the Canadian victim, the Canadian citizen.

I would like the member to comment on how many criminal element refugees we get in this country. What makes it a majority? What makes it a significant number? When is the government going to start dealing with that problem? There are a lot of victims in the wake of some of these individuals. The government has to look at this. I would like a comment on what constitutes something serious.

Ms. Augustine: Mr. Speaker, maybe the member should be presenting the kind of statistics that he is asking for on the nature of the crime, the nature of violence and other acts committed by immigrants in our various communities.

• (1555)

The member also seems to be confused about the issues. On the one hand he says that we should do this, that we support this. On the other hand, he seems to be arguing against himself. It is important to note that what we see on the front pages of our newspapers on a daily basis is that the criminal acts committed by people who come into the system and people who abuse the system are not massive numbers of individuals.

The intent of Bill C–44 is really to ensure that the loopholes that allow those individuals in and the process by which we get the individuals quickly away from our shores, are the issues that are important for this discussion. There are so many other things that the member should want to deal with but chooses to make the connection between refugees and criminality or immigrants and criminality. To continue to put the two together all the time seems to me to be doing a disservice to Canadians who are contributing members of this society.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's remarks. Being a fellow Toronto member, I realize how much she has been seized with this issue. We spend about 70 per cent of our time dealing with matters relating to immigration. It is very important that we get this bill right.

The minister in his remarks this morning said that a criminal element has infiltrated the department of immigration and that we were going to clean up that criminal element and make some constructive amendments to this act.

What I am concerned about is the following. What happens to the legitimate claimant who might, as he or she is going through this process, run into one of those types who the minister described as the criminal element and that person feels that he or she gets unfair treatment? What will we do during this debate to make sure that there is also an accountability within the officialdom in the department of immigration?

Ms. Augustine: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me in reading the bill that the intent is really to take away the discretionary powers that are presently in the system.

When there are clear rules, when there are clear guidelines, when there are administrative processes that ensure that an individual acts in a specific fashion, those measures take away discretionary powers and what could be considered ways of dealing with individuals in a fashion that could be called unfair.

It is important to say that the situation we see in urban Canada, the situations that the hon. member refers to in terms of Toronto, the situations in which we could use, as the member across the way objected to, the terminology that they are really an element of a minority group of people whose activities are considered nothing more than hoodlum, whose activities could be considered nothing more than destructive not only to themselves but also to their community and society in general.

It is important that in looking at Bill C–44 we ensure that we support this so that fairness is in the system, the rules are clear, the procedures are laid out and there are members of the department and those who deal with the criminal element know precisely how to act.

• (1600)

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore on her speech. I have some concerns and I was wondering if the hon. member could briefly answer a few of them for me.

We all know that Canada is the envy of the world. The bill deals with serious criminals. It tells them specifically that they cannot come to Canada which I think is a move in the right direction.

If we are the envy of the world and if we have the ability within our immigration system to choose the best people to come to our country, ones who are willing to abide by the laws of Canada, why would we say we will not allow people in if they have committed a crime that would warrant a sentence of 10 years or more in Canada? Why are we allowing any criminals into the country? It seems ludicrous.

I heard the minister mention the word accountability several times in his speech. This is not accountability. This is not what Canadian people from coast to coast to coast are asking for. They want law–abiding people to come and live in our country without this ridiculous nonsense of 10 years.

Ms. Augustine: It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, to say that we allow criminals to come into the country and not to differentiate between conventional refugees is how the discussion gets into the emotional arena.

Immigrants go through police checks and all kinds of processes before they are even allowed to complete documentation. To roll everything together and to say that we are doing what we are asking for or what the member is asking for is to make certain kinds of judgments. We are the envy of the world, the number one country in which anyone would choose to live. We find it is an avenue most individuals outside our borders would like to enter.

It is also important to note that at this point in time we are not just an open system where anyone who wishes may come here. Too often we hear being tossed about across the way that the system is such that anyone may come here. There are guidelines. There are rules. There are things within the system. We need to be able to differentiate between refugees, people who are fleeing, people who are coming to our shores as a result of international agreements, and people who are coming here as a result of family reunification, support systems, applications and other things. We roll so many things together that the discussion becomes almost confusing.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for questions or comments.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois, I will attempt, at this second reading stage, to highlight some questions that Bill C–44 raises. But before doing so, I would like to discuss the philosophy underlying the legislative amendments that we are debating today.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced in June that he intended to make considerable amendments to the Immigration Act in order to, and I quote: "take all measures necessary to prevent abuses and to protect the Canadian public against criminals".

We are very pleased with that. Nobody, and least of all the members from the Official opposition, would blame a government for trying to protect its citizens. So, the ministerial position is that immigrants and people claiming refugee status cannot use Canadian laws or Canada's reputation as a welcoming country to escape their own country when they have committed serious crimes or to commit new crimes here. We agree with that measure.

• (1605)

We also recognize the importance of a quick and efficient enforcement of deportation measures if we are to prevent criminals from committing other crimes. Thus, there is in this House a rare and remarkable unanimity on the objective, that is the protection of Canadian citizens. However, as nothing is ever perfect, we will reserve our judgment for now on the means chosen by the government for reaching that goal. Many issues are not quite clear to us yet. For example, we wonder about the seriousness of criminality and the link between crime and the immigration process. We also question the motivation behind government's actions. Finally, we would like to see the proposed means analyzed thoroughly.

First of all, let me reassure my colleagues of the House and tell them that I share their indignation towards the crimes committed daily in Canada and in Quebec. All our efforts should be directed to abolishing, or at least reducing crime.

On the other hand, I do not feel it would be appropriate to take into account the public response to criminal acts, and particularly violent crimes, in order to adopt repressive and unjustified legislation. The question is of interest and deserves our attention.

Every day, in this House and outside, we hear detailed descriptions of crimes. We also hear about people denouncing the increasing criminality in our society. And then, some people make a connection between criminality and the immigration process. What is the reality?

Even if people have the feeling that the crime rate is increasing, such is not the case. It has been demonstrated in a study on victimization published by Statistics Canada. That document states that the possibility of being a victim of aggression or theft was the same in 1993 as in 1989. Moreover, another study from the same agency called *Statistics on Criminality in Canada, 1993* concludes that for the second year in a row, the crime rate established by police organizations went down in 1993. In fact, the 5 per cent reduction from one year to the next was the largest since we began collecting statistics on crime, in 1962.

The author of the study, who is the senior analyst for the policing program, explains that the very violent crime rate is slightly lower whereas a slight increase in less violent crimes was noted as well as a reduction of about 6 per cent in property crimes.

Therefore, we can see, in spite of popular belief, that there was no increase in the crime rate. As I said, I do not want to trivialize criminal acts, but simply set the record straight. I think, however, that we would be justified to ask ourselves why people feel that way. We can perhaps find the answer in the importance given by the media or the politicians to some individual cases.

Let us go back now to the subject of the debate, that is criminality among the immigrant population. An Angus Reid opinion poll published in June examined the perceived relationship between ethnic origin and crime rate. The results were interesting.

First, the pollster noticed a significant difference between the western and eastern parts of Canada. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 58 per cent of those polled saw a relation between a person's ethnic origin and criminal activities. This proportion dropped to 36 per cent in the Atlantic provinces. So there is a considerable geographic difference.

Another difference was perceived in the way men and women see the issue. While 56 per cent of men associated ethnic origin with criminal activity, only 45 per cent of women agreed. The division is almost the same between seniors and people under 35, that is 55 per cent compared to 46 per cent.

While the perceived association is well established, could it be mistaken? Such is the conclusion of Mr. Derrick Thomas, senior researcher for the Citizenship and Immigration Department.

• (1610)

Last year, Mr. Thomas published the results of research he had done on the relationship between ethnic origin and a tendency towards criminality. He found no proof that such a relationship exists. On the contrary, immigrants, who last year represented 20.2 per cent of Canadians, accounted for only 11.9 per cent of people in detention or on parole. This is a significant difference, and compels us to reject any attempt to link immigration to crime.

At this time, it is proper to remind the House that the minister of that same organization is the very one who wants to impose new standards with the express objective of preventing abuses of the system by immigrants.

Another point also deserves some consideration: the immigrants' level of education. Experts generally agree that socio-economic conditions can sometimes be criminality factors. So, the poor with a low level of education are more likely to increase the crime figures. Yet, according to Statistics Canada, more immigrants have university degrees than individuals born in Canada—3 per cent more. Moreover, immigrants who arrived between 1981 and 1991 had more schooling than immigrants who arrived before 1981.

From all these figures, we can draw the following conclusions: first, there is no real link with the perception that the crime rate is increasing in Canada. Second, there is no link between immigration and crime; on the contrary, immigrants commit fewer crimes than people born in Canada. Finally, if we are to believe that the more people are educated the less they commit crime, immigrants will be less and less represented in crime statistics.

As was already said, we wonder about the underlying motives for these legislative amendments. Is the government trying to put to rest the fears of the public? We know these fears are real. Indeed, according to the Angus Reid poll mentioned earlier, 82 per cent of the respondents believe our justice system is not strict enough. English Canadians rated crime as their second biggest concern, immediately following unemployment and job creation. In Quebec, however, crime rated much lower and only came after economic revival, education and social services.

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to mention how Quebec society is distinct, even in this area. This high percentage shows how much the public fears for its own security. The government took note of it and has introduced, since its coming to power, several pieces of legislation to strengthen the rules concerning criminals.

Fine. However, we have to ask ourselves if this is the most efficient way to curb crime. Since socio economic conditions are an important factor, we are entitled to wonder if real measures to create jobs would not be more appropriate. We are entitled to wonder if the direction taken by this government is not more political than functional. Why, indeed, is nothing done to ensure that young people can find jobs when they get out of school? Why is nothing done to provide poor families with decent housing? Why is nothing done to really ensure women are safe in our society?

The issue of women is very important here. Women whose security is often threatened know that the threat does not come from immigrants or young people. But the government is attacking these two categories of people. There is a problem here and it raises some questions.

We are also questioning the measures proposed to meet the objectives of protecting the public and preventing abuse. Bill C–44 focuses on four main subjects: crime among refugee claimants, the contraband of immigration documents, the right of appeal and the processing of claims coming from rehabilitated persons. For each of the problems identified, measures are proposed whose final purpose is to screen out persons who committed serious crimes or who try to abuse the system.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, we agree that the laws must be respected. However, the means proposed by the minister to promote that need a closer look.

• (1615)

We think that some of these need to be seriously re–examined to see if the government is not trying to kill a fly with a sledge hammer. First of all, it wants to limit access to our refugee status determination process so that a person who has been convicted of a serious crime in another country will not be able to apply for refugee status.

At first glance, this restriction seems logical. Nobody wants Canada to become a haven for criminals. But it raises some questions. Some experts in immigration law have expressed concern over this restriction, particularly in light of the Geneva Convention on Refugees.

We think that the bill will need to be seriously examined in order to ensure that Canada respects the spirit and the letter of the Geneva convention. Other questions have been raised concerning the right to appeal the Immigration and Refugee Board's decisions.

Another provision that could be a problem is the one concerning documents. Immigration officers will now be able to seize and open all documents and objects suspected of being used for fraud, and this will be possible anywhere in Canada. The first question that comes to mind immediately is the possibility of a violation under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

How will this new provision be received by the courts? How will they receive the reversal of the burden of proof in clause 18? We know that the courts have a tendency to resist legislative provisions in which a person is presumed guilty. Will the Minister not have any other solutions to reduce trafficking in immigration documents?

How do we justify seizing items without even trying to define their nature in any way? Those are, briefly put, the questions and concerns raised by Bill C–44. We do know that the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigrations will take them up one by one in order to improve this piece of legislation.

However, by way of conclusion, I would like to remind this House that all these legislative amendments seem to draw their first motivation from isolated cases such as that of Mr. Gayle, of Toronto. The objective pursued by the Minister is to ensure that criminals are not welcomed into Canada. Foreign criminals will be turned away and immigrants and refugees who commit serious crimes in Canada will be deported.

But we will have to deal with more contentious cases like those where a person has been living in Canada since childhood. Will we expel to his or her country of origin a person who does not have that country's citizenship? Surely not. How can we seriously think that a person who came to Canada at the age of three and is now an adult still has links with his or her country of origin? How will the courts apply such a policy?

We agree that the security of Canadian citizens must be protected. However, we believe that we have first of all to determine what is the source of this threat to security. We then have to determine what are the most efficient and the most respectful means to be adopted in order to protect citizens and to welcome people in need, a category to which bona fide refugees undoubtedly belong.

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont): Mr. Speaker and dear colleagues, the bill before us is an ideal opportunity to show Canadians that we take their interests to heart and that we abide by our electoral commitments.

I want to speak here not only to members of our government, but also and more particularly to members of the opposition. Since this bill was introduced, practically not a week has gone by without the media mentioning the immigration issue one way or another. Headlines are not heartening, because our system is not judged on its achievements but on its failures. That is unfortunate, because our system has its successes and plenty of them. For each case of fraud or crime that makes the headlines, thousands of cases of successful integration go unreported.

• (1620)

Most of the refugees and immigrants who live with us are so well integrated that nobody notices them. I do not need to give any examples. Just look around you.

The owner of your favourite restaurant, your daughter's computer instructor, your cousin's husband or your dentist, for example, may well be immigrants, but you probably do not notice it any more. Canadian society is often compared to a cultural mosaic, and I think this is confirmed in our everyday life. When you meet all these people, ask them what they think today of the cheaters and criminals who make the headlines.

When a person has left his country to start a new life, when he has started from nothing to build a future for himself, when he has finally succeeded in carving a place for himself in society, it must be insulting, to say the least, to be associated with someone who has committed criminal acts and who, in so doing, shows that he has no respect whatsoever for the country which welcomed him.

This explains why this bill is so important and so dear to our government. Of course, we must ensure that no one flouts our laws and our immigration system. But, more importantly maybe, we must protect the reputation of all decent people, those same people whom we represent, whatever our political affiliation.

Some will say that our bill goes too far, that it could be detrimental to refugees and immigrants acting in good faith. Others will say that it is too little too late, that it will not stop criminals from entering into Canada and staying here. Our government expects such criticism. However, as a responsible government, we had above all to avoid going to extremes, and I sincerely believe that we have succeeded in doing so.

Of course, the law must be merciless for cheaters and criminals, but it must not penalize those who are most in need of our help. The measures we are debating today are aimed at a very small minority of individuals. If we had the slightest doubt that they could be harmful to people acting in good faith, we would not go ahead with this bill, that goes without saying.

On the contrary, what could be most harmful to them is not the measures we are debating today, but the actions of a few criminals. Unfortunately, one instance is enough to tarnish the reputation of all refugees as far as some Canadians are concerned. One instance is enough to lead other criminals to think Canada is wide open.

We do not want to give the impression that immigrants and refugees are a threat to the security of our country. That is not true, and that is why now, as my hon. colleague said before, immigration is not the responsibility of a department of public security but a Department of Citizenship and Immigration. We want to show that we can be open when warranted but uncompromising when necessary.

We are prepared to open our doors to those who really need our help, not to just anyone. First of all, we must prevent criminals from claiming refugee status or appealing decisions by the IRB.

The system for recognition of refugee status was not put in place to delay deportation measures. We know what is going on out there, and we have no time or money to waste on criminals.

We also want to use this bill to deal with the problem of multiple claims for refugee status.

• (1625)

Anyone can make a mistake, and some claimants may assume that if they move, they have to submit a second claim. That we can understand. However, some people think they can confuse the authorities and delay their removal by submitting two or more claims. We must also be able to seize certain documents which those who cheat the system send by international mail. Immigration officers need additional tools to be able to do their job satisfactorily, and we, as a responsible government, intend to give them those tools. Customs officers must be able to search the mail and seize any forged documents they find.

We must also prevent criminals from taking advantage of legal loopholes. For instance, immigration officers can arrest a person who violates the Immigration Act, but in some cases, they cannot issue a warrant so the RCMP can arrest that person. In this area, we need all the help we can get. If cheaters set up networks, we must have the tools to deal with them.

Finally, we believe that the minister is still the best judge of whether dangerous criminals should be admitted to Canada on so–called humanitarian grounds. This makes sense, since in the final instances, the minister has to live with the consequences of his decision to quash a removal order which concerns a criminal. Under the bill, this authority will rest with the minister in the best interest of all Canadians. We believe that these new provisions are fair and equitable. To those who find that this bill does not go far enough, I say: tell us, tell Canadians who else should be included in this new legislation.

I know a few who would undoubtedly have a list as long as your arm of people to send back for reasons which I would call arbitrary. This is not the purpose of the government. As I said before, we are not extremists. This bill deals not with the number but with the kind of people to be deported.

We are going after people who defraud our social services and criminals who truly pose a threat to our security and that of our police forces whose job it is to protect us. The processing of citizenship applications is suspended pending the outcome of the immigration inquiry. People who have nothing to hide will have nothing to fear. Their application will not be turned down, its processing will only de delayed. People subject to an exclusion order, who had already been accepted as permanent residents, will lose that status. Up to now, this applied only to people being deported. It will no longer be true under the new bill.

To those who say that our bill goes too far, I say: Canadians are good–hearted but not weak–hearted. We would do a disservice to everyone, including bona fide refugees, by letting things drag on forever. No matter which side of the House we are on, each one of us represents Canadians who expect us to act now and in their best interest. They also expect us to take the necessary steps to enforce our laws. They are quite willing to open their doors to the victims of the various disasters which devastate our world, but not to criminals. They also expect that the efforts and resources that we spend to welcome refugees benefit those who need them most. The days of time and money being consumed by a handful of wrongdoers are gone forever. Canadians expect us to implement a trust–worthy immigration policy. To this end, we must show them that we know the difference between wright and wrong. In fact, we must show them that our government is a responsible one.

• (1630)

Our government has decided that it needed the means to respond to the expectations of Canadians. Bill C–44, presently before the House, is the one from which we expect the most. The measures we propose are aimed at providing specific solutions to specific problems.

This is not a bill prepared in a hurry, without any distinction between the majority of true refugees and immigrants, and a minority of abusers and criminals. Why go to such lengths for ten, twenty or a hundred unscrupulous individuals? Simply because one is enough to end the life of a person, ruin the lives of his or her family, upset their friends and relatives, and harm a whole cultural community. This is the objective of some of the measures in the bill.

The shock wave is being felt from one end of the country to the other, it reaches the ordinary citizens, as well as their elected representatives and their police forces. Who is to blame: society, you and me, our police? No, the culprits are the ten, twenty, or hundred individuals that we should expel without delay. If we do not do it, Mr. Speaker, ten, twenty or a hundred more will come in.

As you know, our government is convinced of the value of immigration for Canada. We believe that Canada should preserve its reputation of openness towards refugees, but we also believe that our policy towards immigrants and refugees should be strictly controlled in order to protect all Canadians.

I will conclude by comparing these abusers and criminals to the weeds that very often, not to say always, invade our gardens. They very quickly encroach on the space reserved for the vegetables we intended to grow and, when the time to harvest comes and the weeds have taken over, we wonder whether we should not have kept the lawn. Let us not deprive ourselves of the fruit we could harvest. Let us pull out the weeds that are trying to take root and let us make sure that we have the tools necessary to take care of our gardens. This is the way to build a better Canada.

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of my colleague from Outremont and I think that many people of immigrant origin will be very surprised at the tone of this speech, which seems to be anti–immigration. He tells us that ten or a hundred people cheat. Do you think it is worth passing a very controversial bill to solve five or ten cases that could have been solved administratively, without the need for a very controversial bill which is criticized by immigration lawyers, by the Canadian Council for Refugees and by the churches?

You mentioned mail from abroad. Customs officers will be able to examine such mail. Immigration officers will be able to seize such mail. Who will say, "We will open this letter and not that one"? Do you not think that there will be abuses? Throughout the world, the mail is inviolable. How could you go so far as to allow ordinary officials who are not judges and not trained in law to seize mail? Can you answer me?

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, listen, we are in Canada, in a society that is called free and democratic and we are also, first and foremost, in a society of law. I think that the bill before this House reflects the intentions of a responsible government.

As you know, some people in society demand the most extreme things on one side or the other. Of course, in this case, some people would not have wanted us to legislate and others would have wanted us to pass draconian legislation.

• (1635)

This Liberal government has chosen a middle way, a solution that we call reasonable. I am surprised that my colleague seems to be shocked by this reasonable solution or seems to find the measures that we are taking extreme. On the contrary, the measures we are taking are meant above all to protect as well those who apply to Canada as a land of refuge so that they can join the great Canadian family.

As I said in my speech, often a single instance of misbehaviour or a single criminal act is enough to tarnish or ruin the reputation of a whole community. As the member for Outremont, I must say that many new Canadians live in the western part of my riding and I am particularly proud of them; they have integrated very well into Canada and they are well integrated in Quebec and in their community; they live peacefully. From being with them, I know how fragile the reputation of these communities is, unfortunately.

I am glad—and I am pleased—to join the minister of immigration in promoting this bill by which people who really need Canada's help as a welcoming country, a land of refuge, will be able to find a fair and equitable society that can receive them well, a country of refuge that can screen out what I would call undesirables at its borders.

I do not fear abuses, far from it. I am still a little surprised that my colleague from Bourassa said that we are letting ordinary officials decide. I want to tell you, Mr. Nunez, that since my election on October 25, I have had the opportunity to frequent what we call public servants and I can tell you that in many cases they are extremely competent people who see things much better than you or I do. I am glad to give them a little more power, provided that it is not used arbitrarily, and the Minister of Immigration has been very careful about that.

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. member for Outremont be reminded that hon. members are not to be referred to by name but rather by the name of their riding. I know that this is our first day of sitting, and that he will give due consideration to this matter in future.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to speak on this bill today. This subject has been of interest to me over the last several months. Today I am going to speak about a particular case I have been involved with, a fellow by the name of José Salinas Mendoza and when I am through I think everyone will be quite appalled at what goes on in this country. Prior to talking about Mr. Mendoza, I should comment on some of the previous statements I have heard today.

Once again I am hearing comments that this is a very small minority of the intake into this country and of course it is. This Liberal government has taken in 250,000 to 280,000 immigrants a year. While we disagree with that high a number, we do not disagree with the basic fundamentals of immigration in our society. It seems every time we raise this kind of issue the government comes up with statistics and demographics to show it is such a small minority so why bother with it.

It reminds me of a discussion I had with a parole board member not too long ago. I actually called for the resignations of several parole board members after they let an individual out on the streets when he was supposed to be incarcerated for six

years. He was released after about 16 months and then proceeded to bludgeon somebody to death in our community.

On calling for these resignations I received a phone call from an individual whose response was that in that region there was an 83 per cent success rate. I told him that was commendable but the facts were that I deal with the failure rate. The victims come to my office. There are victims all over this country. I wish we could get off the discussion of the success rate and the rest of it is a minor issue because that is not the case.

Today the minister said we have a good system. We do not have a good system. It has flaws in it. So fix it.

• (1640)

Today the minister said that we have a tiny minority, a handful of criminals. The problem is that we have a serious, serious problem with that tiny minority of individuals who are disrupting law–abiding Canadian citizens. The minister said he is listening to his constituents. I think he is listening to the Reform Party because we are going to push and push and push again until it is changed.

Today the minister asked why this system was not in place before now. We should ask the Liberal government. It brought it in. Wake up over there.

We also have to ask where this legislation deals with the independence of the immigration adjudicators and how we deal with the independence of the refugee board. As I go through the José Salinas Mendoza case they are going to find they are too independent for their own good and they are going to have to be held accountable. It is the same as parole boards.

When we talk about the deportation of individuals, where does the legislation address the fact that people like Charles Dennis Martin were deported and escorted out of Canada nine times? Does the legislation address that? There are a lot more of them. This is only one and again he was in my community.

What about cases that are currently under way? Is this retroactive? There are many people in this system who are going through time and time again, hearing after hearing. We will cover that again in a moment.

While it is nice to talk about immigration and its positive influence on Canada I want to talk about the negative influence. One of those negative influences is José Salinas Mendoza who arrived in Canada from El Salvador in 1988. From February 22, 1989 until November 1992 he had 12 serious criminal convictions in this country including assault, resisting arrest, sexual assault, and on and on the list goes.

On September 23, 1993 a 19–year old young lady in my riding was raped. This young lady was convinced to have the charges stayed on the condition that Mr. Mendoza be deported and he was. He was escorted out of Canada. End of story?—not quite. On April 18, 1994, just a few short months later, Mr. Mendoza was back at the Douglas border crossing just outside Vancouver. He announced himself as a refugee into Canada this time around. The immigration officials processed his application and the story starts again.

Unfortunately the young lady in my neighbourhood virtually bumped into this fellow in a grocery store shortly afterward. She had not even been given the courtesy by immigration officials or anybody else of being notified that he was back in Canada after being deported. Why is he even back in Canada after being deported? Why do we not say: "Get out. We have already deported you once"? Maybe it is going to be like Charles Dennis Martin who was escorted out nine times.

Mr. Mendoza was arrested. His first hearing was on May 13 this year. He was told to report for another hearing on June 17.

• (1645)

By the way, all taxpayers should know that the people at the hearings are immigration adjudicators, an interpreter for Mr. Mendoza, a lawyer who I believe is paid by legal aid, a refugee hearing officer at refugee hearings and, at the request of the criminal, an individual from the United Nations as an observer. They are all paid with taxpayers' dollars.

Two days after his arrival and two days after this young lady saw him again in a grocery store, the RCMP advised her that he is back in the country. A friend of mine asked me to help. On June 17 I attended an immigration hearing at which Mr. Mendoza from El Salvador was considered a danger to the public. He was incarcerated pending a refugee hearing on August 18. This is a fellow who had already been booted out of the country. However, his lawyer appealed that decision to have him incarcerated as a danger to the public and brought in a new immigration adjudicator who seven days later let him out on the street.

What do we have now? We are into our third hearing on this fellow after he has been ordered deported. He is allowed to roam our streets. He has 12 prior convictions and an outstanding charge of sexual assault or rape.

On June 22 of this year he appeared in Matsqui court on relayed sexual assault charges. He was not ordered into custody. On June 24, I say again, he was released. On June 17 the hon. minister of immigration came out on his white horse to Vancouver and said: "I'll intervene in this. We'll take charge". We have not seen hide nor hair of him since. This is a question he will be asked here this month.

On July 5 we did a little research on this fellow. We found that a person involved in last year's election campaign of the failed Liberal candidate of North Vancouver who donated money to the Liberal Party was appointed by the minister of immigration to the refugee board. This individual is a past lawyer for José Mendoza.

What is happening here? Who gets appointed to refugee boards? Who gets appointed as immigration adjudicators? Liberal political hacks are the people who get appointed. What are their qualifications? Are the qualifications that we give money or we help the party? What are the qualifications? Is it who you know or how good you are at it? It happens all the time. Look at the last three senators, senators until age 75. It is who you know in the Liberal Party, is it not?

Let's move along. We had amendments to the Immigration Act in direct response to the issues that Reform has been bringing out. The presentation of the Liberal Party is: "Listen, don't worry too too much about this small issue over here. We have to think about the big picture of immigration. You have to think about both issues, the good people and the bad people".

August 18 was the date for the refugee hearing for Mr. Mendoza.

• (1650)

I found out that an application is going forth to have it closed to the public. I filed an application to have it open to the public. Instead of having a refugee hearing on August 18, we have a hearing to determine whether the public should be allowed in the hearing. Now we are getting ridiculous. We are already into the third hearing and this will be the fourth for this fellow.

The meeting again had eight people involved in it who were paid by the taxpayer. Before I was allowed into this hearing, I had to sign a document that said that I would not tell anything about what was going on on the inside. I signed it to get in. Once I signed the document, I got some documents back. One was a complaint from Mr. Mendoza and his lawyer that I had some information on him that I should not. It was a complaint to the privacy commissioner. Now I am under investigation by the very person who should not be in the country in the first place.

I checked with the privacy commissioner's office and was told yes, I would be investigated. I said: "Yes, maybe I will but you will do it in public, not behind closed doors". Then I checked with the refugee board and said this. "I got these documents after I signed the gag order. Can I show this to people? Can I show them what the charges are?" "No, you cannot". No, I cannot. I am not allowed to defend myself but he can. Why should I not be able to?

Mr. Hart: You are just an MP.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): I am just an MP.

I had our immigration critic come to the refugee hearing but he was not allowed in. He was told to get out. When I got into the meeting at nine o'clock in the morning a summons was tabled to make me a witness to that hearing and future hearings.

I found out that if I was a witness I could not attend the whole hearing. Therefore they got me out. I said that I needed some counsel. I was given 20 minutes in Vancouver to get it. This is a federally constituted refugee board. I went outside and gave our critic 25 cents and he was then my counsel inside. They were now stuck with the two of us in there and we were not moving out of there.

These hearings went on three times and there is another one coming up. We thought we would have one hearing to determine whether the next hearing could be in public but we found that we had three separate hearings. One, the minister of immigration filed an appeal on the decision that one of the second immigration adjudicators allowed this fellow out on the streets. That is going to occur September 28.

There is another one on November 3. That is a criminal court case for the sexual assault of the young lady. It is a separate one. On November 14 our Reform critic and myself will still be battling to get the public involved in the exercise.

The members on the other side sanctimoniously talk about how good the system is working, how well it is working. These people are a very small minority. Is this accurate? The members over there had better wake up.

Mr. Nault: Ask the question. I don't understand a damn thing you are saying.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): The comment I get from a Liberal member over here is he does not understand a damn thing I am saying. He is absolutely right. He does not understand what I am saying. The system is not working. Get it through your heads. This is an industry that is feeding on itself.

• (1655)

I do hope I have some questions because I am looking forward to a little debate on this with this weak minded Liberal group here. Let us go back to the basics. Let us go back to the fundamentals.

This individual has had far too many taxpayers' dollars for the good of the Canadian taxpayer. He does not deserve it. For anyone with 12 criminal charges who has been deported from this country to walk back in and have a young lady hiding and cringing is wrong. It is wrong to be spending dollar after dollar after dollar on this kind of exercise. We are sick and tired of it and we are not going to take that any more.

The Deputy Speaker: Before questions or comments it is my duty, colleagues, to read this notice before five o'clock.

Pursuant to Standing Order 38 I must advise the House that the question that will be on the adjournment debate this evening is the following: the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona—transportation subsidies.

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I must say I had trouble following the arguments of the member for Fraser Valley West as to why he would not support Bill C–44 which attempts to deal with some of the abuses that occur.

What we heard today from the member for Fraser Valley West is typical of the Reform Party. It is typical because all of last year we heard how there was a tremendous crisis and that the crime rate was going up dramatically. We heard it every day here in the House of Commons from the members of the Reform Party only to find out that crime has actually gone down.

This is typical. They want to take the worst possible scenario and bring it forward in this House. I think it is totally irresponsible. It is playing on the fears of Canadians. Why do they not talk about the contributions of immigrants to this community? Why do they not talk about the immigrants in this House who are contributing, as many of them are? Why does he not talk about them? Instead they want to take the worst possible examples, and this is the worst kind of politics of fear that you can have.

Ms. Clancy: Shame.

Mr. Dhaliwal: They should be more responsible in ensuring that we get the true picture of the reality instead of painting distorted pictures about immigrants who contribute tremendously to Canadian society.

The minister by bringing forward Bill C–44 is acting responsibly to ensure that where individuals are abusing the system they are dealt with in a constructive way, and I applaud the minister for bringing this forward.

Instead of hearing constructive suggestions from the member opposite he wants to give the most extreme examples, not to highlight the reality of it but to distort what the reality of the situation is. Knowing the riding that he comes from, I would think he would act in a much more responsible way, as expected by his constituents.

If he is truly interested in contributing, he will support Bill C–44, go along with the government side and get this bill through as quickly as possible so we can deal with abuses that exist. We have to recognize that that is a very small number when you look at the total number of immigrants that come into this country, immigrants who contribute and work very hard. In his own riding they are contributing to the farming community which is very dominant. The faster we can get this through the better so that we can deal with some of his concerns. I am sure he will see that through.

• (1700)

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it is discouraging when we get comments like those. I made a point of prefacing my remarks today by saying that we agree immigration is healthy. We agree with it.

I come from a community with a lot of immigrants. However I was talking about what we do not agree with. It is necessary to bring to the attention of this group here the problems involved in the refugee process. Yes, the bill goes some way toward that but there are still problems. I laid them out. I know the hon. member does not understand but that is what gets Liberals elected nowadays. They do not understand things.

Let us not cloak the issue of serious criminal immigrants in the country under the positive aspects of immigration. There are some serious concerns and they are in virtually every riding. I can assure the House that José Salinas Mendoza is not the only one in my community. In the wake of these it is not only one criminal immigrant. I have already said this guy has 12 criminal convictions. There is a string of victims. There are all kinds of them.

There is not much sense in talking further to the people over there. They have a majority government. They will put through what they want to put through. They will leave out the tough aspects as they did on the Young Offenders Act. There has not really been any toughness in anything they have legislated including the budget.

I tell them to go to it. We will see them in the next election. Then we will talk some real turkey on who is doing better, them or us.

Mr. Discepola: Is it 10 per cent?

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): I have to address this point about 10 per cent in the polls. I do not know who draws the polls, but I can assure them that if they take a little walk where I come from they will not even be on the map. They will not even be on the list of who is in a poll. They should not tell me about how they are doing. They are not doing so well in a lot of aspects. These laws they are trying to write here are weak. They are poorly motivated.

Ms. Clancy: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Did the hon. member use the word laws or was it another word that is unparliamentary? If it was the second I would be grateful if he would withdraw it. Was it laws?

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, what was I supposed to have said?

The Deputy Speaker: It was a four–letter word beginning with *l*.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): I thought I said laws.

The Deputy Speaker: I thought the hon. member was using the word laws. Am I correct in that?

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Yes, that is right.

The Deputy Speaker: Very well. The word of an hon. member is always taken.

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be able to speak today in support of the legislation to amend the Immigration Act.

Let me start by saying that it is interesting to hear the comments of the opposition. On the one side we are becoming heartless by going too far and on the other side we are not doing enough although at least we are listening. The bill is a balance struck between the two, dictated by common sense and the comments of concerned Canadians, and will cure situations like the one presented by the hon. member for Fraser Valley West.

In its very essence this is what Canadian democracy is all about. It is fairness and protection for all including the immigrant and the refugee. It is about swift justice for criminals that threaten our system. The legislation is about balance, fairness and justice. The bill will help deal with those few hoodlums with guns and knives that want to subvert our immigration and refugee policy.

• (1705)

Nowhere in the legislation will we find that the government has heeded the voices of reaction that would have us bar our doors and shutter our windows to the world because of the misconceptions of some and violence of a few.

Make no mistakes. We do not listen to those voices and we will not listen because we know our immigration and refugee policy has been just and sound. We know from what others around the globe tell us that Canadian policies are often seen as a beacon of hope in a world of gloom and doom. Bill C–44 is meant to keep that light shining.

[*Translation*]

When I first came to Canada as an immigrant, I found a free society in which each member was respected and immigrants considered as pillars of society. Canada is a huge country where more people die than are born. This means that the responsibility rests with the immigrants to provide Canada with the numbers required to ensure the efficiency of our society. In return, these immigrants must be guaranteed a dignified life and a future for their children, with the assurance that crime is not the norm but the exception in this country.

Our immigration policy is envied world–wide and has ensured Canada a dynamic and courageous immigration, one which has played a major role in building our country.

[*English*]

We are committed to maintaining a progressive immigration policy. We have seen the benefits it has brought this country. Immigrants create jobs. They do not take them. Immigrants are not likely to depend on welfare or to commit crime. We know that to be a fact. Statistics prove it time and time again.

We can also see other facts. Criminals have slipped through. Crimes have been committed. Compared to the thousands or indeed millions that come to Canada every year, those that commit crimes are in the minority. However the fact that they are small in number does not diminish the horror of some of these crimes.

[*Translation*]

As soon as this bill was introduced in the House of Commons, we started receiving comments from members, journalists, immigrants, refugees, citizens. We received letters, faxes, telephone calls. This goes to show how much interest was generated by this matter of great importance to everyone. This interest made it necessary to introduce changes to give a sense of security to our citizens.

[*English*]

The legislation is designed to root out criminals that have subverted our immigration system and broken our laws. There can be no equivocating on the issue because it quickly boils down to respect for Canadian law and protection for truly needy refugees and honest immigrants.

The minuscule number of criminals that have crept into the immigration system like thieves in the night do not make minuscule headlines when they go bad. It is those dreadful deeds. We have all seen the pictures and we heard our colleague. They start an erosion of trust in an immigration system that has served the country well.

If people feel they cannot trust a system they will not support it. If people feel a system is open to abuse or misuse they will turn their back on it. The government equates immigration with nation building. Immigrants built the country. They built our railways. They worked in our factories and broke sod for farms.

Because nation building is a process that never stops we need an immigration policy that is both progressive and effective. That in itself is a good reason for fighting to maintain public trust in the integrity of the system.

[*Translation*]

We must get rid of the criminal element. We must do so intelligently and without undermining the underlying principles of our immigration policy. As we know, all hon. members believe in the principles of confidence, honesty and justice, and I know that all of them wish the law to be changed to regain public confidence.

On examination, we see that the proposed changes cannot be rejected. Some would want more drastic changes, but this would be against the philosophy of our government as well as that of a majority of Canadians.

[*English*]

Can anybody really fault a proposal that would prevent serious criminals from claiming to be refugees to delay their deportation? I think not. We have a system to help refugees, not serious criminals.

• (1710)

How about a proposal that allows us to seize documentation from the mails that would be used to defraud our immigration regulations? I cannot find fault with that and I do not think too many people would either.

The bill smoothes out a number of glitches and bumps in old legislation that gave criminals a place to hide. For example, immigration officials currently have the authority to arrest someone who violates immigration laws, but they cannot issue a warrant for other agencies such as the RCMP to arrest that person.

Under our present system the immigration appeal division of the IRB can overturn removal orders against serious criminals on humanitarian grounds. However the minister alone must deal with the consequences of these decisions. The minister alone is the one entrusted with ensuring the interests of Canadians are protected. Therefore the minister should have the authority to make the decision.

[*Translation*]

The criminal element is not acceptable and premeditated crime must be punished for our protection and for the sake of justice. For too long, Canada has been a haven for the criminal element which often misused our country's all too flexible laws.

That is why liaison was established with the Correctional Service of Canada to help rid us of criminals immediately after their have served their sentence.

[*English*]

There have been management changes at the immigration appeals division which should improve efficiency and effectiveness in decision making. We are also making sure that IRB gets the information it needs involving war criminals, patterns of fraud or multiple identities.

The legislation before the House does not deal with removals and some might see that as a flaw. I would caution those who think that way to remember that we have targeted foreign criminals for a quick exit through a joint police–immigration enforcement effort.

Members are well aware of the special joint task force involving police from a number of forces and immigration officials. This task force is targeting serious criminals for removal and operational units are working as we speak in Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to ask those calling for more drastic changes to reflect on the fact that our immigration policy has served us well and should not be abolished. Of course, when we have economic problems, we try to find causes for these problems. We do not think about the fact that the economic crisis is a global problem. We respond right away by calling for an end to all immigration. We must, of course, solve existing problems as quickly as possible but this does not mean that we must close off our borders. Canada is the only country in the world with vast empty spaces and even if we closed off our borders, we could not stop immigration. We can only limit it and strengthen the laws controlling it.

[*English*]

It is interesting to note that in the research paper presented at a Carleton University law conference last year—and the same research was mentioned earlier by the minister—researchers noted that under our system immigrants are granted legal status and have access to the legal system. Illegal immigrants on the other hand become accomplices or victims of gangs because they cannot appeal to legitimate authorities.

The research paper also noted: "Tougher immigration laws might well drive more people into the arms of smugglers and the gangs". Of course we do need to be tough on abuse and those who manipulate our system and the intent of our laws. We must send a clear message that those who violate our laws will have to pay a price.

We are not a government that will punish the innocent just to get at the guilty. We have no intention of making people who really deserve Canada's protection pay for the actions of a small criminal element. We will not tar all refugees as criminals because we know they are not. We are not people who have the intention of labelling immigrants and refugees as security risks.

One of our first actions as a government was to take immigration out of a department christened, and unjustly so, by our predecessors as the department of public security and put it in a department called citizenship and immigration where it rightly belongs. We will fight with our every breath to prevent the word immigrant from becoming a synonym of the word criminal.

[*Translation*]

Look at the members of this House. As you can see, there are very few native people. All the others are new arrivals. They are immigrants themselves. They are the sons and daughters of immigrants. They are the descendants of recent immigrants and, as you know, this diversity represents the reality and the wealth of our country.

• (1715)

By proposing these amendments, the minister tried to eliminate current abuses in the system. He also wanted to indicate to the criminal element taking the place of real refugees and immigrants that crime is not acceptable.

This government's commitment to progressive immigration is reinforced by this bill. We think we can have both a progressive policy and an aggressive strategy supporting the integrity and credibility of our policy.

[*English*]

This bill addresses real problems with real solutions. The key to success is balance. As we have done for generations, we can continue to welcome immigrants and refugees to help continue building our nation. As soon as this legislation is proclaimed we can tell those few who exploit Canada's generosity that in the land of the maple leaf they have nowhere to hide.

I urge my colleagues in all parties to recognize the importance of this legislation and give it speedy passage.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Vancouver East will probably be interested in having the House know, she and I occasionally share time together on a radio commentary show on CBC out of Vancouver. I have grown to respect her and her qualities as I have with many people not only in this House but in Canada. They have come to Canada and made this country great. They have contributed to this country. I stand very firmly behind the people who have done exactly that. They come to Canada to make it the great country that it is.

Would the hon. member not agree there are some people in Canada, again a small minority I am sure, who might want to equate immigrant to criminal or refugee to criminal. The member spoke of confidence. I wonder if she would agree that by having more precise laws, by having a better law than the one we are currently debating, by having a law that has more teeth which would do away with the abject abuses that our member from Fraser Valley West was talking about, would accomplish exactly what she and I want to achieve, that is, to be able to say truly that people coming to Canada are coming to build Canada, make it stronger and a better place for all of us to live.

Mrs. Terrana: Mr. Speaker, I feel that this law has the teeth that are required. We cannot put together a state that has too strong a police force and are in control of everything.

What we have now are laws that cannot be implemented in the right manner because we do not have the system. The immigration law in Canada is very generous. I have been in other countries and by comparison Canada has an extremely generous law. It is so generous that we have people who come and fall through the cracks.

Every democracy has its pitfalls of course because democracy is difficult. It can be uncomfortable at times but it is a system that works. We have to have the element of freedom that we have to give to the people who come to our shores.

At the same time we have to have control because people who come and say that they are immigrants should be checked right away. If they are not immigrants as they say, they should be sent away. If there are any problems with their past, they have to be sent away again.

When I came to Canada in 1966, I was asked certain things: "Is anyone in your family insane? Are you insane? No, then you can go to Canada. Did you commit any fraud? Have you ever been to jail? Has a member of your family ever been to jail? No, then you can go". At the time, we were coming for six months.

At times it is really difficult to understand what the system has become and that is why I have faith in this bill. It can do the trick without becoming too stringent and too severe. That is not our style. That is not Canada.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the speech made by the hon. member for Vancouver and found it to be somewhat ambiguous and contradictory.

On the one hand she welcomes immigrants in a very compassionate way, but on the other hand she fully shows why this bill is unacceptable for several reasons. In my opinion, this legislation goes against the traditional policies of the Liberal Party. I remember that the Liberals were opposed to the sometimes excessively right-wing policies of Mr. Valcourt, Mrs. McDougall and other former ministers. Why play these little games today? You do not agree that there is a real problem in Canada, but I see it. There has been some abuse and there are a number of criminals. This is not an exaggeration; it is not a right-wing answer, but there is currently an economic crisis in Canada and this is the worst possible time to legislate on immigration. Why not wait until the public opinion is not so sensitive to this issue? Then we will be able to be more rational about the whole issue.

Mrs. Terrana: Mr. Speaker, if everyone was honest we could do it. Let me just give you an example. If your son was killed by someone who came to Canada as a refugee, that person would be a refugee but also a criminal and I think you would have a different opinion. I have seen too many tragedies and I continue to see tragedies. The problem is not with immigrants. I myself am an immigrant and I have a lot of respect for immigrants. I know what it means to be an immigrant. If someone is honest and comes to Canada as a refugee, then there is no problem. That person can certainly come here. However, if a person is not honest our society must have a system to keep that person from

coming in, otherwise there could be serious problems and even tragedies. We witnessed such a case in British Columbia.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Briefly please, the hon. whip for the Reform Party.

Mr. Abbott: That is caucus co–ordinator.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a question about the levels of immigration. Currently the Liberal government targets 250,000.

It has been shown throughout the year that this stretches and puts strain on the bureaucracy and a lot of the various classifications. Because of that there has been a lot of abuse by the criminal element, a lot of abuse under family dependency programs, a lot of abuse of the immigration business program. The department cannot catch them. We may appear to be attacking and criticizing and I agree we should stress the fact that our immigration program is a good one. However, we should look at the numbers.

Does the hon. member feel there is any merit in either putting a freeze on the immigration program for a while or reducing the numbers from 250,000 to 200,000 so that each and every one of these good programs we have can be controlled? In theory they are all great. But in actual practice there are some elements that are being incorporated into the program where the immigrants themselves are getting a bad reputation and it is not fair.

Like the member I am a first generation immigrant. I like to see immigrants come to this country, be happy to come here and be treated with respect. Because we are on this program of high numbers for whatever reason, the integrity of our immigration policy needs to be restored for the protection not only of Canadians but the very immigrants themselves. Does she not feel there is merit in addressing the numbers of immigrants that are being allowed into this country and reducing them even by 50,000 or 60,000 people?

Mrs. Terrana: Mr. Speaker, briefly I would offer congratulations to both members for being promoted.

The minister is going through this series of consultations and it is clear that there is some concern about numbers. The numbers are being looked at. Again as I said in my speech it is marvellous to have immigrants, but we also have to give them a future and we have to give a future to their children.

• (1725)

We are trying to get our house in order and through consultation we will know what the numbers will be. At this point I do not have any idea. It would be a real shot in the dark.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on this first day of our return to Parliament in what I feel will be a very historic session. We in the Reform Party will be here to make sure the government keeps the train on the tracks during this period.

Over the summer I had the opportunity to hold a series of town hall meetings in my riding. After those meetings it became quite evident that immigration is a priority in my riding. I know that members throughout the House have heard concerns from their constituents as well about immigration. I am certainly glad to see that Bill C–44 is moving toward fixing the problem. Unfortunately it has not gone far enough.

In addressing Bill C–44 I feel it is vital to stress the importance of immigration. It is one of the cornerstones of Canadian society. Cultural diversity has and will continue to be beneficial to our nation. Immigration provides us with an increased global awareness and has been integral to the development of Canada. We must take a constructive approach and work together to solve the many immigration problems, not just criticize, which unfortunately is all too easy.

We are considering a bill which the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has proposed, apparently to correct the all too numerous shortcomings and failures in our immigration system left by decades of ill–conceived, misguided Liberal immigration policy.

The bill would never have seen the light of day if Reform members had not presented the minister almost daily with an ongoing litany of outrage and complaints by the Canadian public.

We have an immigration system that is clearly almost as out of control as the $600 billion debt. The government has finally conceded that Canadians in every part of the country are fed up with an inadequate and confusing immigration policy that has allowed thousands upon thousands of unworthy immigrants into this magnificent land, a policy that has blatantly ignored the interests of the people.

What are the priorities for accepting immigrants into Canada? First, family reunification is a policy that has been so badly abused that it accepts people with no thought of whether they will be beneficial members of our society. The reunification of families should be a consideration, one of many in assessing an application, but not the main priority. Immigration quotas call for the largest single group of immigrants, some 111,000 or 45 per cent of the total, to be admitted from this class.

In addition, 11 per cent of immigrants or about 28,000 people will be refugees. In far too many cases these are people who just show up on our doorstep. We have no choice, due to our laws, but to grant these people a hearing, a process which can take up to three years. During this time of overburdened taxpayers, who foots the bill? The taxpayer foots the bill.

Way down at the bottom of the priority list is what the immigration bureaucrats call the economic class, in other words the fortunate few who have the financial resources to purchase their way into the country. Who says Canada is not for sale?

Whatever happened to the hard working, self–supporting immigrants who built this country, people who were admitted because they deserved to be here? Whatever became of the people who had the skills the country needed, who had dreams of freedom and self–sufficiency, who had the initiative and courage to make their own way in a brave new land? That Canada of 127 years ago depended on a sturdy, skilled, hard working immigrant to develop and prosper and to populate our empty lands. That they were successful is apparent in the prosperous, safe, free country in which we live today. Many here in this House have descended from these early immigrants. My grandfather was from Scotland, my grandmother was Irish and my wife's parents are from Italy. They came to Canada and they contributed. They raised children. They were and are law–abiding Canadians.

• (1730)

Today our needs have changed. Our economy no longer needs pioneers but rather computer experts, investment bankers, electronic engineers, experienced business people and traders, technicians, skilled trades people and educators. One thing has not changed. We need people who are ready to take the risk of moving to a new land, ready to seize opportunities, to move and develop some still empty spaces. We do not need those who have come to exploit or drain our social services, and we certainly do not need criminals.

Since that Liberal heyday of the seventies when Trudeau and his obedient officials opened the floodgates to immigration, based not on the needs of the country, not on selectivity or high standards, but on some seemingly intangible set of feel good principles, Canada has been on a backward slide. The Canadian public demands a tougher approach as to who we admit into this country, but this government shows no real intention of doing this or of listening to Canadians.

I have received letters in my office and I know each and every member in this House has received letters from constituents complaining about the immigration system. I would like to read a brief excerpt from a letter received the other day from a gentleman in Summerland, British Columbia. He writes:

> Our current immigration system is overlooking our social services, education, health services and policing. We believe we should be good to those we allow in, but we should not be seen as easy marks by any immigrants. There are so many deserving people who want to come to Canada and be good citizens. Why should we have the patience with those who are not willing to obey our laws? If we are tough but fair, we will do far more good overall.

It is noteworthy that Bill C–44 deals specifically with provisions which decide not whether criminals will be admitted as immigrants, but which ones. I put it to you that no criminals, none, should be admitted to Canada, period, not as an immigrant, not as a refugee, not even as a visitor—none.

A report drafted by senior advisers in the immigration department for the minister says that many Canadians think the immigration program is out of control and that major changes reflecting public opinion are needed. There is a sense the immigration program needs fixing. It urges that immigrants need to be better selected.

I further submit that all immigrants to this country must respect the laws and contribute their fair share. Any slip, any criminal conviction, should be grounds for deportation.

It is a privilege for people to be allowed to come to Canada to live, a privilege much sought after by many from other countries all over the world, even by people from developed nations.

Canada and its immigration policy have become the laughing stock of the world. It is no secret it is far too easy for criminals to come here. We are not even checking to ensure the people we do admit are not criminals. As a result, the people of Canada have been subjected to increasingly violent crimes. The bitter irony is that even when these criminals are apprehended and dealt with by our courts and even when deportation orders are issued, our immigration officers are impotent to deal with them, to send them out of the country, to ensure they never darken this land again. Oh, no, they simply file an appeal of the deportation order and disappear into the woodwork.

All of us have seen the devastating and deadly effects of this inept system. Now the minister with this sadly flawed legislation hopes to lull Canadians into believing this government actually intends to do something. Canadians will be fooled no longer.

• (1735)

The minister is proposing that we actually allow criminals into Canada simply because the crimes they committed would not earn a maximum sentence of 10 years in this country. Clearly, this is sending the wrong message. A criminal is a criminal. Those who commit small crimes can be inclined to commit more heinous ones. In what way does Canada or the people of Canada benefit from having criminals here? The only immigration policy that will work is one that allows people into this country solely on merit.

In a letter to me dated August 29 the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration states: "Protecting Canadian society from criminals is a top priority for me and my officials". Having the minister guard our gates against criminals is like having a fox guarding the hen–house.

Canadians are far from gullible and will not tolerate this Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde approach. Canadians of all stripes are demanding that the law get tough with criminals. That will prove to be an impossible task if we continue to import law breakers. We should bar all criminals. I will repeat that. We should bar all criminals, without exception. Canadians do not want an invasion of criminals. Canadians do not need terrorists hiding here and plotting violence in other parts of the world. Canadians do not need street gangs or the additional stress on our already struggling social programs.

Canada is also nearly bankrupt so how can we afford to admit these people? Before any immigrant steps onto Canadian soil, before they leave their native land, have their criminal record checked with all the resources at our disposal. I have been told that immigration officers are prohibited from checking criminal records through Interpol. Why?

Immigration officials have told me it would bottleneck the application process to check whether refugees have a criminal record. Then let it be bottlenecked. I say it is far better than having even one Canadian murdered or having violence erupt in the streets or making our own citizens live in fear in their own homes, their streets or their playgrounds.

What about immigrants who commit crimes while in Canada? Again, our Liberal created policies and laws have forgotten the sole reason for their existence. It is not to concern themselves with the welfare of the criminal and his or her family. Our laws were made to protect Canadians. The criminal should have thought of the hardship he would cause his family before he broke our laws.

If found guilty of a criminal act in Canada, anyone who is not a Canadian citizen should be put on the first plane out of the country. It would be simple enough to carry this out directly from the courtroom to deportation. Let the offender have the right to appeal. Everyone should have the right to appeal, but let it be from some other country, perhaps his country of origin, not in Canada and not for the taxpayers to pay the final bill.

In my peaceful riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt we have a particularly repugnant fellow, a landed immigrant who feels no particular need to respect this country's laws. He scorns our courts. He laughs at our law enforcement officers. This man eluded a murder charge on a technicality in our courts. Currently he is being tried for a string of burglaries, a crime he has served time for previously. He has a record as long as your arm, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps as long as all of our arms and a deep and abiding contempt for the citizens of our land. He has been ordered deported by immigration officials but he has exercised his right of appeal.

• (1740)

This man is a criminal. He has had a second chance and then some. Where is the compassion and the consideration for the innocent people who are his victims? Logic dictates that there is not even the remotest chance of his rehabilitation, yet we keep him here at the taxpayers' expense.

This individual is a burden on this country and will continue to be so. Why should Canadian taxpayers have to spend some $40,000 a year to keep this foreign national in our prisons? This person should be on the next plane back to his homeland where I understand the law takes a sterner view of this type of criminal conduct. Why are we not sending him home? Let us do it. Send him home.

This unacceptable situation is the end result of the current laws, laws that originated to a large measure with a Liberal government. The proposals before us are more of the same. It appears on the surface to be a step in the right direction. We are tired of hearing that. It is like the old saying: You cannot get there from here. The government knows this proposal will be almost impossible to enforce. It will be spun around and distorted by lawyers and judges and the immigration bureaucracy will find a way to thwart it. After all, this is the way the government deals with these matters with Canadians.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast have called loud and clear for tougher measures. This bill does not address the ills and dangerous inadequacies of immigration. It does not have a clear mandate for the Immigration and Refugee Board which increasingly acts as a law unto itself. It does not solve the problem of a department that cannot enforce its own deportation orders. It does not even have reliable knowledge of how many deported criminals and undesirables remain in this country. It is a typical Liberal answer to a problem: doing too little far too late.

This government, the minister and his colleagues, have exhausted the patience of the people of this country. Canadians are raising a hue and cry. Not only the people of the west but all Canadians demand that the minister do his job.

We Reformers have presented our proposed amendment to this bill and urge all members of the House to support it. This Reform amendment is what Canadians are telling us to do. It is time to start listening and not just pretend to listen. The ministry is out of control. The immigration department is out of control and Canadians will not pay the price for the minister's mismanagement.

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to the member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt. That is one of the most beautiful areas in British Columbia which I often have an opportunity to visit. I try to get there every

summer. The lake and the fruit trees make it a very beautiful area indeed.

I commend the member. He has made some important comments about immigration being very important for Canada and how immigration is very important for the economic development of this country.

He also talked about the pioneers. I can share some of his feelings because my own grandfather came here in about 1906. Luckily there was not a Reform government then. Otherwise he might have been deported because he did not have the skills or education. He was an uneducated man but he wanted to start a new life. He came to Vancouver, British Columbia after travelling extensively throughout the world. He obviously was a very smart man. He picked the right place to stay. I share in some of the comments of the hon. member as well.

• (1745)

I would like to say that in immigration there is a balanced approach. One of the areas the member talked about is family reunification. I think it should be known that when you look at the total immigration to this country, the percentage of family reunification has come down. It is actually reduced from what it was in the 1980s.

The members in the Reform Party have often brought up the situation of family reunification. It is about families coming together. I am very surprised that the Reform Party, with its stand on the family and how important it is to have a strong family situation, would be against bringing families together. I am really surprised considering how often the Reform members speak out about how important the family unit is, how important the support system is. Now I hear that they do not think that family unification should be looked at.

In fact, instead of bringing families together, instead of bringing the mothers and fathers together, they want to keep them apart. They do not want to bring them here. They want to set up barriers for them. This is quite surprising considering their stand on having strong families and how important that is in terms of reducing crime and support. I am very surprised.

In the area of refugees, Canadians are compassionate. I remember the refugees from Uganda. I know many of my people who were refugees from Uganda. They have contributed substantially to this economy. I can name lists of people who are now judges or now chair of major companies and so on who came here as refugees.

We did it as humanitarians but they have contributed substantially to our economy. If the hon. member wants to get a list of the many people who have come and who have contributed, particularly those refugees from Uganda, I would be happy to provide that.

The immigration policy has a balance. It says we want to bring families together. I am sure that the Reform people want to keep families together. About 45 per cent of all immigrants to this country are into family reunification in order to bring families together.

Then of course there is the economic class. There are entrepreneurs who want to start businesses here and want to develop our economy. We want to give them an opportunity to help create jobs. I am sure that the hon. member will say it is important to create jobs. It is important to make sure that Canada is working. It is important that Canada be competitive with the rest of the world. We do need entrepreneurs.

There is another matter I want to raise because the member on the other side has talked about it extensively. That is the crime factor.

I have a case in my riding, and I would like the member to respond to this, where a gentleman was deported because he assaulted someone. This gentleman has a wife and two children in Canada but he cannot come back. Imagine what they are going through because he assaulted someone.

I would like the member to tell us whether we should keep that person out of the country forever, away from his wife and two children. Should we say because this person assaulted someone he should never be allowed to come to this country to join his wife and two children? I would like the hon. member to address that and indicate how we should respond to that wife and those two children.

Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions. They are very interesting.

I am not a judge nor a jury but I can comment. Maybe the person who committed those crimes should have thought very carefully about the consequences for his wife and children before he considered the crimes. I think it is reasonable to ask that we be responsible for those types of things.

If he is after reunification with his family maybe that is an item for his country of origin to deal with and not a particular problem for Canada in this case.

With regard to family reunification which the hon. member briefly touched on, I would say that the Reform Party does very much stand for the principles of the family.

• (1750)

We do not have a problem entirely with family reunification, but I think it has gone a little bit too far. We are talking about family reunification for adopted children and children of adopted children. It goes on and on with cousins. Where does it end?

Family reunification in the close knit family is fine, but the laws in this country take it a little bit too far in my opinion.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if he has actually read this bill. I ask that question because during his remarks today he seemed to be talking about the fact that we were going to continue the flaw in the existing act that talks about criminals having access to our refugee determination system.

The minister stood in this House earlier today and highlighted that provision in the act that is being amended. I want to quote for the member. That is very important because the member is leaving a perception in the minds of Canadians that we are not dealing with this. "No immigrant and except as provided in subsection (3), no visitor shall be granted admission if the immigrant or visitor is a member of any of the following classes: have been convicted in Canada under any act of Parliament of a summary conviction offence, other than an offence designated as a contravention under the Contraventions Act, and there are reasonable grounds to believe have been convicted outside Canada of an offence that, if committed in Canada would constitute a summary conviction offence under any act of Parliament."

That is a specific amendment to the act. It is a very big improvement. I know the constituents in my community applaud that kind of amendment. I cannot understand why the Reform Party would stand up in the House today and suggest to Canadians that we are not amending that portion of the act.

Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I have read through this particular piece of mumbo–jumbo. It is a fact that in this bill we are saying that we will take criminals as long as they have not committed a crime that has a sentence of 10 years or more. That is what this bill is doing.

Why would we do that? Why would Canadians in their right minds say: "We know criminals are bad and we will not accept you if you have murdered somebody. We will not accept you if you have done a few other things that would have a sentence of 10 years or more in Canada; but if it is less than 10 years, if you have just broken into houses—"

An hon. member: Twice and you are out.

Mr. Hart: They can do it twice in Canada? I see. Clearly, this is not what Canadians have been asking for. Why are we admitting people with criminal records at all? They should not be allowed in the country.

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take part in this important debate on Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act. The proposed changes will expand the government's authority to deny serious criminals access to the refugee determination system and will simplify the procedure for excluding from Canada persons who have previously been deported.

At the same time, the bill in its balanced approach to solving a serious problem of criminals, though few in number, assures Canadians that Canada will continue to welcome legitimate and law abiding immigrants as full partners in the Canada of today and the future.

Indeed this bill means a great deal to me. My wife and I came to Canada as immigrants 26 years ago. Our four sons were all born in Winnipeg. We have all been very proud to call this country our home.

• (1755)

There are a number of other honourable colleagues in this House who chose Canada as their home and I would like to urge them in particular to take part in this debate because it is important to bring experience as well as compassion and intellect to our discussions of Bill C–44.

Firsthand experience is one of life's great teachers and we who have been through the immigration experience know of the urgent need to protect the integrity of the system that we have.

I want to relay to members the sense of unease I have felt of late when discussions turned to the topic of immigration policy. Recently, when listening to open line shows, talking to people on the streets or opening the morning mail I have detected an anti–immigrant sentiment in some of the comments.

It is not difficult to see where this comes from. There have been too many stories about criminal acts committed by immigrants. There have been too many tales of people who laugh at our laws or use the system to their own advantage. The anger is directed at those who have abused or who would abuse our system and our generosity. But sometimes that anger spills over and it hurts everybody, all of us.

We know there are a number of abusers, the criminals in our midst, although we do not know the exact number. By all estimates the number is small compared to the large numbers of honest, law–abiding immigrants in this country. But we also know that in our society acts of violence or crime are relayed over the airwaves far faster and further than acts of kindness and greatness. In other words, the actions of a few criminals can reflect badly on the good work of the many.

Of course this is wrong, of course this is unfair and of course it should not happen. But it does. In Winnipeg, my city, immigrants are angry when they hear stories about the few who thumb their noses at the laws of the land. We need to make sure people do not abuse our immigration and refugee system or break our laws. We need to stop the abuse and we need to root out the few who are making life difficult for the many.

When cheaters abuse the generosity of Canadians or when thieves or murders try to pretend they are refugees, we and this government should say to them: "Enough is enough".

The reality is that they are not only stealing from the Canadian taxpayer. They are also stealing from would–be immigrants and refugees who really need our help. There is a limit to the resources and energy that can be expended on immigration and refugee matters and when some of those resources and energy are squandered on felons and cheaters, it clearly takes away from those who truly need our help.

Bill C–44 will ensure that the immigration and refugee system provides the best possible protection for those who really need it. I know there will be people all across Canada in the immigrant community and elsewhere applauding this fair and balanced legislation. In fact, if this government had not moved now to fix the system, there was a very real possibility that citizens' trust in it would dissolve.

We need to have the support of all Canadians so we can maintain a sensitive and fair immigration policy. After all this policy has been key to the success of our country. There is a lot in this legislation to recommend to my colleagues across the floor. The fact that the bill will prevent serious criminals from claiming refugee status or from appealing a decision to the Immigration and Refugee Board as a way to stall their removal from Canada is very important.

• (1800)

I must stress that we are talking about serious criminals. We are talking about people who have been convicted of a crime either in Canada or abroad that would be punishable in Canada by a minimum of 10 years in prison, or of anybody the minister believes poses a serious threat to the public and to the security of the nation.

Bill C–44 also gives immigration officers the legal authority to seize documents sent through the international mail that could be used to forge identity papers or circumvent our immigration laws. Customs officers already search international mail and already bring such documents to the attention of immigration officials. However under the current law the immigration officials cannot do anything about these documents. The legislation will fix that problem once and for all.

All of us in the Chamber know that when loopholes exist there is always going to be somebody who will try to take advantage of those loopholes. That is another reason why the bill is necessary. It removes those loopholes. For example, immigration officials currently have the authority to arrest anyone who fails to appear before a senior immigration officer as required, but they cannot issue a warrant authorizing other agencies such as the RCMP to arrest that person. The legislation when passed will allow warrants to be issued so police across Canada can help to find suspects wanted for violating our laws.

This strategy for ending abuse of the system outlined by the minister earlier today impressed me with its fair and balanced approach. Admittedly some critics have complained the amendments do not go far enough. On the other hand there are complaints that the government is too tough and too harsh. When we hear those two extremes I think it is safe to say that we have struck a delicate balance. We can be tough and make it very clear to those who would abuse our laws that they will not be tolerated in Canada. At the same time we are being extremely careful not to destroy the very system we are trying to protect.

As we look for criminals we must make certain that we do not punish the innocent. This is like giving antibiotics to a patient with a serious bacterial infection or administering chemotherapy and radiation to a patient with cancer. We just give the dosage sufficient to cure the infection, control the spread of cancer or cure it if feasible, and not too much treatment so as to endanger the life of the patient himself or herself.

The minister has made it abundantly clear that the people who deserve Canada's protection, those who are fleeing war, famine or persecution, will not have to pay for the wrongs of a few. We must continue to remember that for the most part the people immigrating to Canada today are the nation builders of tomorrow.

I am very proud to say that immigrants have added a lot to the Canadian way of life. They built the railroads and tilled the great prairie farms. Today some of our most prolific artists and performers, distinguished educators, politicians, public servants, inventors, manufacturers and scientists are immigrants. We should never lose sight of their invaluable achievements. We should never let the crimes of a few paint a false portrait of all immigrants.

Most Canadians recognize the positive side to immigration. Many Canadian families can trace their roots back to an immigrant who landed here to start a new life. These positive facts are well documented and understood. Therefore it is very important that public faith and trust in the immigration and refugee process be reaffirmed. If people turn their backs on what we have built, if they lose confidence in the system that we had, it could take generations to gain it back.

• (1805)

I believe this timely legislation will go a long way to reaffirming that faith and trust. The bill will permit those who arrive and strengthen the social, cultural, political and economic fabric of our nation to continue to wear their immigrant status with justifiable pride.

In conclusion I urge members to give passage to the legislation without delay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand the government's, the Liberal Party's strategy of letting Liberal members of ethnic origin defend a bill that is considered to be anti–immigrant by an important part of the population.

I must tell you that Canada's crime rate has gone down in recent years and that the crime rate among immigrants is lower than that among Canadians who were born in this country. I repeat, the crime rate among immigrants is lower than that among Canadians who were born in this country.

This bill could be declared unconstitutional in several respects because, in my opinion, some of its provisions violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as the Geneva Convention on Refugees. How can the hon. member justify these drastic provisions?

[*English*]

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, the bill is a very balanced one. It has been so balanced to ensure that it withstands the challenge under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and sees to it that it fulfils our obligation under the Geneva convention. I can assure the member who is still worried that the bill will stand those tests.

I was taken aback when the member tried to insinuate—and I hope he did not mean it but he said it—that the government has a strategy to get ethnic Canadians to debate the issue. Irrespective of origin Canadians are Canadians by any definition. I must tell the member as a matter of fact that I was not sent by my government to debate the bill. I spontaneously volunteered to debate the bill even before the parliamentary recess.

To impute that motive is unconscionable in the Chamber and to impute that ethnicity is to be taken into consideration to me is the highest order of parliamentary obscenity. I hope the hon. member did not mean what he said and I am prepared to accept an apology.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I applaud very much the comments and responses of the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

I stand on a point of clarification. I believe there has been some misunderstanding on the benches opposite with regard to the question of indictable offences and summary conviction offences under the bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the member addressing a question or comment to the member who just spoke?

Ms. Clancy: No, Mr. Speaker. I was addressing a comment to the House to clarify a point. We are looking at two different things here. We are looking at apples and oranges, the apples being those people who applied for landed status as immigrants. In the particular case with regard to criminal convictions, if they are summary conviction offences there are those that are punishable by a minimum of six months. If they are indictable there are those that are punishable by five years. Mr. Speaker, you would probably know this better than I would, but I think five years is the low end of the scale for indictable offences.

• (1810)

The question with regard to those crimes punishable by 10 years relates only to those within the refugee stream. That is tied to a United Nations convention to which we are a signatory. I hope that helps. Indictable offences per se run the gamut. It is not a 10–year thing. It does not relate to landed immigrant status. It relates to the refugee process and it is part of the UN convention.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member who just gave his presentation the same question I asked the previous member.

There is evidence in the past year that current levels of immigration are putting a stress and strain on the bureaucracy and all the good programs that Canada has which people love to apply and come to Canada for as the hon. member indicated his family did.

Does he not think there is some merit, any merit at all, in looking at the system and our levels of immigration which are currently at 250,000 people? In our opinion it is at least 50,000 too high. It is unmanageable. We need to control it a bit better. It would preserve the integrity of our immigration system. It would restore confidence in the minister of immigration and I am sure the hon. member would dearly love to see his reputation stay at a good level.

Most important, it would also help and protect immigrants who come here to give their best to this country. Immigrants send their children to school, but because of high numbers and the reputations that some of the bad apples bring to the system they go to school and are discriminated against. They are called names. They come home and they cry.

This is not what we brought them to Canada for. This is not what they applied to Canada for. Those are the things we have to try to improve within the system. That is what we are trying to get across here.

We are not against immigration. We are for immigration but we are for numbers at a speed and at a level that we can control things. We cannot control a car going around a 90–degree corner at 150 miles an hour. They should reduce the numbers to control it better.

Does the member who just gave his speech see any merit in looking at the numbers and reducing them for better control?

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I am pleased to note that he welcomes immigrants to the country.

With respect to numbers the question was put to the Canadian electorate no less than in October 1993. The Canadian electorate made a decision by putting the Liberals into government that the level was a reasonable one.

When we look at the problem we have to look at the two sides of the equation. If we do not have enough resources to manage the 250,000 one possibility is to reduce the number. However I would suggest there is another better alternative and that is to increase the resources to absorb our commitment to the Canadian people.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be involved in a debate that has engaged people's thinking as much as this one has. It is a very healthy sign that we are looking at the merits and the particulars of what we are trying to do here.

The motion before us opposes Bill C–44 on the grounds that it does not prevent the screening out of applicants for refugee status or for permanent landing when those applicants have criminal histories or may be the perpetrators of violence.

• (1815)

This is as opposed to true refugees who are so often and often have been the innocent victims of violence.

Those on the opposite side of this House who have risen to speak on this motion and to Bill C–44 have argued that Bill C–44 does permit the screening out of undesirables. They argue that Bill C–44 does have teeth and that we are misguided in our attacks on this bill.

It is easy to understand why they would argue that the bill does go far enough, but this bill would not clean things up. This bill does not strike at the heart of the problem and does not deal with the real workings of the refugee determination system in Canada. One could say that it is a refusal to face facts about just how badly our immigration and refugee systems have gone wrong. We hear a lot of defence of the system across the way.

There is no excuse for this refusal and no excuse for the inability or the unwillingness of this government to face those facts. The shortcomings of the immigration system and our refugee determination system have been given wide publicity since the Reform Party began pointing them out.

The media has widely reported our exposing of deportation backlogs that cannot possibly be dealt with by the existing enforcement resources in Canada. It has been reported that refugees who are members of genocidal regimes who have caused death and despair in their native countries are now happily residing, often at taxpayer's expense, in Canada. They have reported, after we exposed them, refugee admittance guidelines that actually invite undesirables to make a refugee claim in Canada.

The government knows about these scandals. It is feeling the heat from these scandals. The people of Canada are better informed than ever about what is really happening in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and polls are reflecting their anger and dissolution.

In response to that outrage and concern, government hastily put together a package of response that it claims will take care of the problem. It claims that this package of reforms will stop riff–raff from calling Canada home by preventing refugee claims being made in prisons and will stop the immigration appeals division from overturning deportations, something that the IAD has become all too notorious for.

These so–called reforms are nothing more than long overdue common sense. However, they fall so far short of the mark of affecting any real fundamental and significant change to a system that so desperately needs it that we cannot support the bill.

I urge support not only by my colleagues in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition but also by the members opposite for a motion to stop this bill and force, finally, real reconsideration of the way Canada handles its immigration and refugee systems.

The minister wants us to believe that Bill C–44 is a cure for the massive haemorrhage in Canada's immigration and refugee systems. Bill C–44 offers nothing more than a few band–aids and for that reason it must be rejected. For that reason we cannot allow the people of Canada to be duped into thinking that they are getting real reform here, that things will actually be better after this bill passes. They will not.

Nothing significant is going to change and I will tell members why. The first element of this legislation, the element touted by the minister as being the most significant change, is one that would prevent criminals in Canada from making refugee claims in order to delay their removal from Canada. That is a good idea. I cannot understand why it was not done long ago.

The idea of immigration and refugee board members going into a prison to hear refugee claims is patently absurd. The government would have us believe that this is somehow going to prevent criminals from making refugee claims when it will not. We know how many criminals apply for refugee status from Canadian prisons or while they are on parole. That is easy enough to keep tabs on.

We have no idea whatsoever of how many criminals who have committed their crimes abroad seek refugee status and are successful each year. We have no idea.

• (1820)

It is easy enough to prevent someone who is already residing in Canada, especially in a Canadian jail, from making a last ditch attempt to remain in the country. It is not quite as easy to prevent those who have criminal backgrounds from entering the country in the first place, not that it is impossible. Other countries have extensive refugee background checks before they hear a refugee claim and make a determination. Why do we not?

We do not because the immigration and refugee board and its supporters tell us that we are not allowed to, that it would be a violation of our commitment to the United Nations convention on the status of refugees. Of course that is sheer nonsense but it is a popular tune that continues to be sung again and again.

It has been revealed to us by people intimately associated with the refugee process that this year the IRB has been giving orders to refugee hearing officers forbidding them to do background checks of any kind whatsoever prior to doing a refugee claim. They have issued orders preventing refugee hearing officers from using Interpol or even getting in touch with the RCMP or CSIS to investigate those refugee claimants of whom there is serious suspicion of criminal activity, guerrilla or terrorist backgrounds, or even genocide. As hard as it is to believe that is the fact.

Bill C–44 appears to be a bill that will take care of the problems when it does not even address them. What good does it do to make changes to rules governing the hearing of a refugee claim preventing those who have committed crimes in Canada from making claims when we welcome those who have committed crimes, even crimes against humanity, from other countries?

It is true that we are welcoming these sorts of people. In fact the IRB is going one step further. Not only are guerrillas from Latin America, double agents from Bolivia, and high ranking members of brutal totalitarian regimes allowed to make a refugee claim in Canada, once they do make that claim they are fast tracked through the system.

The Reform Party proved that this summer. We provided the documents written by a member of the minister's own department circulated by the immigration and refugee board and forced upon refugee hearing officers that spell out that those who fit the categories just mentioned do not even need to go before a full three member refugee panel. They get expedited. So far this year over 3,500 refugee claimants have been expedited in this manner.

How many of those claimants were criminals, terrorists, guerrillas or war criminals is not known. We may never know because the IRB with the full blessing of this government and the current minister has stripped its refugee hearing officers of the power to do even the most basic background checks. That is absurd and outrageous but it is happening.

While it may be a good first step to prevent hearing officers from hearing refugee claims in prisons it is far more imperative that the entire system, the entire process of refugee hearings and determinations be changed.

The Canadian interest is not being represented in this process and that is why it has gone so dreadfully wrong.

The second major element of this legislation deals with the prevention of the IAD, the immigration appeals division, from overturning deportation orders based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

That too is common sense but raises a troubling question. I am sure I do not need to inform this House that the IAD is a branch of the IRB, the immigration and refugee board, and that this board is populated by the same appointees as the IRB. The same people who are mandating that guerrillas, double agents, et cetera, be welcomed to Canada are also refusing to enforce the deportation orders of those we happen to catch up with.

The same people who want to fling the doors of Canada wide open have been refusing to enforce the laws of Canada for those who make it into the country. Now Bill C–44 comes along and it would take the power to overturn some deportation orders, not all just some, away from these appointees.

• (1825)

Instead of slightly curtailing the power of these people to allow violent offenders to stay in the country, we need to re–examine the very role of the IRB. Do we need such a board of political appointees accountable to no one? Who are they working for? Whose interests are they serving? What are the priorities of the government when it comes to immigration?

The government has two choices right now. The first choice is to align itself with the appointed members of the IRB, the members of the immigration industry and the refugee advocates who say that we need to keep the IRB the way it is, that we do not need major reform in the system and that the interest of Canadians must be, and I stress they have actually said they must be secondary to the interests of immigrants and refugees. The interests of Canadians come second.

The government could align itself with the overwhelming majority of Canadians who feel that immigration policy and even refugee policy should first and foremost work in the interests of Canada. Immigration and refugee policy while being compassionate, balanced and legal must clearly be seen to protect the interests, the security, the health and the safety of Canadians. That is the reform we really need and it is time the government looked after its duty to Canadians.

Bill C–44 does not reflect the willingness of the government to truly protect the interests of Canadians. Bill C–44 is stop–gap. It is a band–aid and it almost entirely maintains the status quo. The status quo does not deserve to be maintained. Canadians deserve better. Thus we cannot support a weak and ineffectual bill like this.

Let me make one last appeal to my colleagues opposite. I know that the Reform Party is not the only party that has been hearing the cries of Canadians for immigration reform. I know that the Reform Party is not alone in receiving hundreds and hundreds of letters and calls from across the country, but especially from Ontario, which decry immigration policy and demand change. They have been hearing those calls too. Do the people, largely the constituents of your ridings not deserve better than window dressing? Do they not deserve better than stop–gap measures? They want real change. They want a better system that protects Canadians. Let us give them that.

Let us vote against Bill C–44, start over and change the way that Canada does business when it comes to immigrants and refugees. Let us give Canadians a system that really works not just for immigrants and refugee claimants but for Canadians too.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to say to the member that I thought her remarks were substantive and constructive. I listened to her attentively. The member gave me some insight I had not been exposed to before.

I am a member from Ontario, from downtown Toronto and we hear the concerns expressed about the immigration policy. Our minister is also from Toronto. Does she not think it would be more constructive in advancing this debate if some of those ideas that she talked about today are addressed in committee where the minister has said he would listen to some amendments being proposed rather than to try to kill the bill even before—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, after a bill is drafted it is very difficult to get it substantially changed in committee. I believe and the hon. member opposite would know as well as I do, perhaps better because he has been in the House longer, that it is very rare for a bill to be substantially changed when it deals with a whole system, a whole process of dealing with a government department.

I really think it would be better to look at this from square one rather than trying to tinker with a bill that has already been drafted.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. It is now 6.30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Debate

TRANSPORTATION SUBSIDIES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on June 7, 1994, I asked a question of the Minister of Transport having to do with transportation subsidies. At that time I expressed my concern to the minister about a speech he had given and which I had subsequently read. I felt the minister had given undue attention to the way in which the rail sector in our transportation system was subsidized.

Having gone through the speech, I noticed he was making a general argument about the subsidization of our transportation argument, but every time he gave an example it was from the rail sector.

I rose at that time to complain about this singling out of the rail sector, asking the minister to make sure that whatever he did or whatever he planned for our transportation system—it is still unclear at this point exactly what he does have in mind—that he not operate on the basis of this bias that he had revealed in this speech with respect to the rail sector.

Not surprisingly, of course, as ministers are wont to do, he got up and assured me that he would take everything into account. I still have that concern. It is something I want to follow up today.

Subsequent to that question, the minister has said a great deal about other elements of our transportation system, particularly with respect to airports and the commercialization plans that he has for the air sector as well as other transport sectors.

A lot of Canadians see through this. They see behind the word commercialization basically the same consequences and the same agenda as what the previous government used to call privatization.

There may be some fine difference between commercialization and privatization, but I am sure it is a difference that will be lost on the people who either lose their jobs or whose wages are reduced and whose standard of living is consequently reduced when the jobs they used to have go from the public sector to the private sector and they no longer receive the same benefit that they received before.

As with so much of this privatization, commercialization, deregulation, free trade, et cetera, a lot of this is simply an agenda for reducing the incomes and the standard of living as a consequence of a great many Canadians who over the years have come to be paid decently in the public sector and for that matter in the private sector.

What is happening now in so many ways is that these well paid working Canadians are on the hit list. They are the working middle class whose wages are being targeted for reduction. I would like to say that when the minister takes into account the relationship between the various transportation sectors, he ought to take into account the views of my constituents.

He wrote me a letter at the end of June saying that he wanted to know what my constituents feel. I can tell him what my constituents feel. They feel that the minister should take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that we have a healthy rail sector in this country.

When he does that and when he is doing that, he should take into account the way the trucking industry is subsidized, not just through the financing of public highways, but by the people who work in the trucking industry. One of the characteristics of the trucking industry and one of the reasons why it has been able to be so competitive with railways—using that awful word competitive which hides a great many injustices—is that its average hourly wage is so much lower.

Why is it more? It is a result of deregulation. Anyone with the capital to finance a few trucks has the ability to set up a trucking business and to operate almost free of governmental constraints and regulations. There is this downward pressure on wages. Therefore many people who used to expect to make a decent living in trucking or for that matter in a great many other industries no longer have that expectation.

One of the ways in which various transportation modes are being subsidized, but particularly in this case, trucking, is through the wages of the people who work there. I can say on behalf of the people who work in the rail sector in my riding, whether they work for VIA, CPR or CNR, they do not want to subsidize the rail sector by reducing their wages but that is exactly what is being asked of them now.

I hear it in the minister's voice when he says: "Well we don't want to go ahead with the VIA cuts but it depends on the labour negotiations". The minister is deliberately trying to set up the employees of VIA and other railway employees as the scapegoats for whatever cuts he is already planning to make. I urge him not to scapegoat those employees. They are trying to hang on not just to a way of life but to a way of life for all Canadians, that is to say a way of life in which working Canadians are able to be well paid.

The agenda which this government is following is the same as the last government's. It is an agenda which means that the middle class will disappear. The wages people were paid on the railway and in other organized industries will disappear. We will have a fragmented society. A few people at the top, the minority, will make a lot of money while more and more people at the bottom will make less and less all the time as a result of so–called competition, deregulation, globalization and all of the other things I have come to despise since I came to this place.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you to the hon. member who knows he got a little more than the four minutes one is supposed to get. We ought to give the same extension to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first let me say nothing could be further from the truth that our agenda is that of the previous government. There is a lot of difference between commercialization and privatization, but that is for another day. This government does not intend to attack workers or force on anyone a loss of income or lower standard of living. It is about building a national, integrated, efficient, affordable transportation system taking all modes into account. As I said, that is for another day.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona raised the issue of transportation subsidies. He expressed some concerns that the rail industry would be unfairly affected by a review of subsidies. I am glad to have the opportunity to address his concerns and assure him and the House of Commons that any review of transportation subsidies will be balanced and will ensure that all modes are treated fairly.

Transportation subsidies currently affect every mode. As an example of subsidies received by modes other than rail, almost 80 per cent of freight subsidies in Atlantic Canada are received by motor carriers. Further, as mentioned by the Minister of Transport in his speech in Thunder Bay on June 3, the federal government subsidizes ferry services by approximately $160 million and ports and harbours by $100 million each and every year.

I understand the hon. member's concerns about hidden subsidies. Indirect subsidies account for almost $700 million spent by the Department of Transport. One example of such a service is the provision of navigational aids provided by the coast guard.

In the coming months the government intends to review all options for dealing with inefficient subsidies. Transport Canada is in the midst of exploring possibilities for commercialization of many activities that could be better achieved by other means. The exercise will not be targeted at specific modes but rather will attempt to eliminate existing distortions.

I can assure the hon. member that the Minister of Transport is clearly aware of the situation in the rail industry and that the rail sector will not be singled out. The objective is to provide Canadians with an efficient, integrated, affordable transportation system where the costs now imposed on taxpayers are borne as equitably as possible by the users.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. The House therefore stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.39 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 20, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have a motion I would like to put with unanimous consent.

It deals with the 28th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It was concurred in yesterday by the House with consent. Apparently it has caused some difficulty in the committee's branch to have this report take effect as of today. It would prefer to defer the implementation of the report, which deals with the allocation of rooms for committees, until October 3.

Accordingly, I move:

That the committee room assignment system contained in the 28th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and adopted by the House of Commons on September 19, 1994 come into effect on Monday, October 3, 1994.

I think there would be unanimous consent for that motion.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table a petition containing approximately 75 signatures which was forwarded to me by a constituent in my riding of Cambridge.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate community approval of same sex relationships or homosexuality.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions from constituents of mine in the two districts of Burstall and Maple Creek. The petitions are very similar in content so I will read only one of them.

Whereas the Criminal Code of Canada, section 241, states that anyone who counsels a person to commit suicide or aids or abets a person to commit suicide is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years; whereas the Supreme Court of Canada recently upheld section 241 of the Criminal Code of Canada in the Rodriguez decision, recognizing that section 241 was enacted to protect all individuals, including the disabled, the terminally ill, the depressed, the chronically ill and the elderly; and whereas if section 241 were to be struck down or amended such protection would no longer exist, we, your humble petitioners, therefore pray that Parliament not repeal or amend section 241 of the Criminal Code in any way and uphold the Supreme Court of Canada decision of September 30, 1993 to disallow assisted suicide or euthanasia.

I concur with these petitioners.

• (1005)

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 36 I would like to present four petitions from various districts of my constituency. All are of similar content.

The petitioners request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibitive grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

I concur and support these petitioners and would like to present these petitions.

WITNESS PROTECTION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions this morning.

The first petition contains 1,018 signatures from across the country concerning the subject of witness protection. This simply adds to the total of thousands upon thousands of signatures that I have presented in this and the last Parliaments dealing with the subject of witness protection and calling on the

Parliament of Canada to enact a witness protection and informant law.

I draw to the attention of the House that my bill on this subject will be coming up for a final hour of debate and vote on September 26.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by people from Scarborough, Ontario and points close thereto concerning the Young Offenders Act calling on Parliament to provide heavier penalties for those convicted of violent crime.

I remind them that we are currently debating a bill in the House on this subject.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed mainly by people living in the city of Etobicoke in the municipality of metropolitan Toronto.

The petitioners call on Parliament not to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships and to ensure that no amendments are passed using the undefined phrase sexual orientation. I completely concur.

SERIAL KILLER CARDS

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to place before the House a petition signed by over 1,000 people from St. Catharines and surrounding area.

The petitioners state that they abhor crimes of violence against persons. We believe that killer trading cards offer nothing positive for children or adults to admire or emulate but rather contribute to violence.

The petitioners ask Parliament to amend the laws of Canada to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale and manufacture of killer cards in law and to advise producers of killer cards that their product, if destined for Canada, will be seized and destroyed.

I have spoken in the House before about the harm to society of serial killer cards. I would like to reiterate my support for this petition.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 66, 68 and 70.

[*Text*]

Question No. 66—**Mr. Szabo:**

For the years 1992 and 1993, have any departments, agencies or crown corporations contributed funding to Planned Parenthood of Canada or to Planned Parenthood International and, if so, (*a*) which ones and (*b*) in what amounts?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am informed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Department of Health as follows:

(a) & (b)

Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada:	1992–93	1993–94
CIDA	$100,000	$97,594
Health	$146,000	$146,000
Planned Parenthood International:		
CIDA	$10,467,996	$7,949,736
Health	None	None

Question No. 68—**Mr. Fillion:**

What are the government's plans for the development of the sea terminal at Grande–Anse over the short, medium and long term?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): The port of Saguenay has sought approval to develop a new forest products terminal at Grande–Anse. It proposes that on the basis of its own traffic forecasts, current facilities will soon be at capacity and a new facility is required.

Port Saguenay is administrated by the Canada Ports Corporation, a commercial crown corporation. Infrastructure developments undertaken by the corporation must be commercially viable.

The proposal to expand the Grande–Anse terminal was only put forward on the basis of $23.5 million in grant funding being available to finance the project. This grant funding is not available and the expansion is currently on hold. The Canada Ports Corporation will continue to monitor the viability of the proposed expansion.

Question No. 70—**Mr. Crête:**

With regard to the $70 million cut in the budget of the Federal Office of Regional Development (Québec), what is the distribution by sector of the $14 million for 1994–95 and how is the remaining $56 million being distributed for subsequent years?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development–Quebec): The Federal Office of Regional Development–Quebec resource envelope consists of appropriations for programs approved by Treasury Board—we call this our "A Base"—and a sum of money not yet allocated to a specific program (regional development reserve).

It is anticipated that the $70 million cuts will partly be applied to our "A Base" ($34.77 million) over the three–year period. The balance ($35.23 million) will reduce the funds in the regional development reserve.

The breakdown in $ millions by year and by sector is as follows:

	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	TOTAL
Enterprise development program	2,000	2,000	7,000	11,000
Manufacturing productivity improvement program	1,755	5,245	3,000	10,000
Assistance program for disadvantaged areas	3,000	5,000	2,000	10,000
Regional development program (Quebec)	3,445	325	–	3,770
Regional development reserve	3,800	19,430	12,000	35,230
Total	14,000	32,000	24,000	70,000

[*English*]

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STARRED QUESTIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Starred Question No. 33.

[*Text*]

Question No. 33—**Mrs. Lalonde:**

What effect do the new unemployment insurance measures contained in the Budget have on the accounts kept for the Unemployment Insurance Account, and what impact will they have on balancing the books for the Account?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): The answer is as follows: The changes to the Unemployment Insurance Program announced in the February 24, 1994 budget will reduce benefit expenditures by $500 million in 1994, $2.1 billion in 1995 and $2.4 billion in 1996. These are calendar years. The planned annual surplus for 1994 in the Unemployment Insurance Account is $240 million, which should bring the accumulated deficit down to $5.6 billion, by December 31, 1994.

• (1010)

Premiums rates will be rolled back to their 1993 level in 1995 and 1996, and the accumulated deficit in the UI Account should be eliminated by the end of 1996.

The Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

WEST COAST FISHERIES

The Speaker: I have received an application pursuant to Standing Order 52 for an emergency debate. I would call on the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 52 to ask that the House now adjourn to examine what can only be considered to be a crisis on the west coast of Canada.

The disappearance of 1.3 million salmon from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans management surveys ought to give rise to an immediate examination of our policies on the west coast. This crisis is now attached to the commercial fishery, to the aboriginal fishery and to the sports fishery in the salmon sector, to say nothing of other species as well.

Considering what has occurred on the east coast as a result of years of ignoring the reality of what was happening to the resource, a similar situation may exist on the west coast. One point three million salmon have disappeared and no one knows what has happened to them. This ought to result in a special debate in the House of Commons. It is a non–partisan issue, a non–political issue, but one that I know all political parties here, as well as others, would feel very strongly about.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I can well understand the great interest the hon. member has in this particular issue. As the House will recall, yesterday we had application for a similar request for an emergency debate.

In my view, the situation has not changed in the last 24 hours. I would rule that the application will be denied at this time. Perhaps at a later date we could look at it again.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

On the Order: Government Orders:

June 21, 1994—The Solicitor General of Canada—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs of Bill C–45, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Records Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and the Transfer of Offenders Act.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Bill C–45, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Records Act, the Prison and Reformatories Act and the Transfer of Offenders Act, be referred forthwith to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to open debate on this motion to refer Bill C–45 to the justice and legal affairs committee before second reading.

This approach makes it easier for the committee and the government to consider changes to the bill in light of the proceedings of the committee. I am pleased to present this bill under the new House rules, which I sponsored as House leader last February and which were adopted unanimously by all parties.

Again I express my appreciation for the approach to these rule changes on the part of the various parties in the House. As I said at that time, the government was implementing a number of commitments that we made during the election campaign in the red book, and subsequently in the throne speech, aimed at revitalizing the House of Commons. In particular, we wanted to give members the opportunity to be more actively involved in the development of legislation.

Changing the rules of the House does not on its own bring about this revitalization. It is the extent to which the new procedures are used that makes the difference. It is up to members on all sides of the House to make the changes work. Therefore I am pleased to help bring these changes into effect in a meaningful way by proceeding with Bill C–45 under the new framework.

• (1015)

Turning to the bill, I believe it is important because it addresses significant issues of public protection in the area of corrections and parole. These are issues on which this government promised action in that same red book as part of its agenda to bring about safe homes and safe streets for Canadians. With this bill we are delivering on these promises.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this government is sensitive to the public's concerns about criminal justice. Canadians are particularly concerned about violent crimes and sex offences, especially when the victims are children. With this bill, we will be able to tackle these problems.

[*English*]

Time is limited as each of us has only 10 minutes to speak in this debate. I want to highlight a few of the important provisions of the bill. I will discuss others in more detail when we go to committee.

This bill will change the test for the detention to the end of sentence for those offenders who commit sexual offences against children. At present, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act permits the National Parole Board to detain sex offenders and certain other high risk offenders until the end of their sentence if they cause serious harm and are likely to commit an offence causing death or serious harm if released.

In the case of child victims, serious harm caused by an offender may not be evident for a number of years. The victim may be too young to adequately communicate the impact of the offence. Therefore it is difficult for the parole board to make a determination that serious harm was caused to a child so that the offender should be detained until the end of sentence.

The amendments in the bill would make it easier for the parole board to detain in penitentiary until the end of their sentence sex offenders who victimize children by removing the requirement that serious harm must be established as the criterion for detention. This would give the board authority to detain such a sex offender if a further sex offence against the child is likely.

I should point out the measures in this bill are needed not because we say that sex offences against children are considered more serious than those against adult victims, but because the current legislation has proven less effective in cases involving children.

We will also be making other improvements in the availability of treatment for sex offenders in the community and in prison.

Another area of concern to the Canadian public is the credibility and accountability of the National Parole Board. Our priority is the protection of the public. One way of achieving this is through a responsible and well managed conditional release process.

In most cases gradual transition from custody to the community under supervision and control and with support and assistance is the safest way to release offenders. It enables parole authorities to gauge an offender's ability to maintain a law-abiding life and to return him or her to custody should the level of risk appear to be increasing. Successful adjustment by the

offender during the conditional release period provides the best chance for his or her continuing law–abiding behaviour and as a result for long term public safety.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the adequacy of the people designated by the National Parole Board is critical if judicious decisions are to be made. We undertook to have commissioners selected on the basis of merit and qualification. I would say that the latest appointments made by this government, particularly in the case of the president of the board, did meet these high standards.

[*English*]

In addition, board member training has been strengthened especially around the difficult process of risk assessment. This will become an ongoing process. A code of conduct has also been finalized. The bill before us will strengthen the accountability of the board by establishing a disciplinary review scheme for board members.

Let me turn to another matter which has rightly been the cause of strong expressions of concern. I am talking about the way our present law requires the calculation of sentences of offenders serving multiple terms. Because of the formula set out in the present law, it can happen that an offender on conditional release who receives a new sentence of imprisonment can remain eligible for release and even stay out of custody. Under Bill C–45 however, people reoffending while on parole will have to serve a substantial portion of any new sentence before even being considered for parole.

• (1020)

Finally, dealing with the issue of post–sentence detention, which is not treated directly in this bill, I want to remind the House that we are working with a special federal–provincial task force on high risk violent offenders. It is studying legislative and policy changes that would improve public protection from high risk and violent offenders once their initial sentence has expired. The task force is expected to release its report at the end of this year. In the light of this report, I and my colleague, the Minister of Justice, will move to develop practical, workable responses and measures to deal with the issue of post–sentence detention.

[*Translation*]

In closing, I would add that this bill and related initiatives make for a balanced response to the legitimate concerns of Canadians and their request for reform. A stronger system will thus improve public protection.

[*English*]

This bill is part of a strategic framework of initiatives that work together in order to carry out our red book agenda and demonstrates our commitment to safe homes and safe streets for all Canadians.

I look forward to the committee review process and anticipate productive discussion of amendments which will reinforce the intent of the legislation. The end result I am sure will be the improved safety of the public. Therefore, I conclude by formally moving:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 73(1), Bill C–45 be forthwith referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I now recognize the hon. member for Bellechasse for 10 minutes as he knows.

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to speak on Bill C–45, particularly with the new rules of procedure under which it is now possible to refer a bill to parliamentary committee before second reading. These rules, which we have unanimously ratified in this House, will permit broader debate, as the positions of the government and the opposition will not have hardened before debate at second reading.

The various provisions in Bill C–45 are of great interest and address a concern of a large majority of Canadians and Quebecers, especially the release of criminals determined likely to commit a repeat offence immediately or at some time in the future. In this regard, the bill is on the right track.

One might, however, question the manner proposed by the government for detaining likely repeat offenders. It is the National Parole Board which is given these powers under Bill C–45.

We have a different approach. We would much prefer that the decision to detain potential repeat offenders be left to a court of law rather than to a quasi–judicial tribunal, appointments to which would often be open to criticism. I will come back to this in a few moments.

We cannot have it both ways—either we choose the approach of mandatory sentencing, of sentence without parole handed down by the trial judge, or another possibility would be to leave this decision with the Parole Board, with the possibility of appeal to a court of common law, the right to review by another tribunal to which judges would be appointed according to generally accepted and well known criteria.

• (1025)

Which brings me to the subject I touched on earlier, the Parole Board. The process to appoint Parole Board members should be much more open and we have an excellent opportunity to look at what other parliaments did, that is, hold confirmation hearings on the appointments this government wants to make. Before securing an order–in–council appointing someone to the Parole Board, the government should have to submit the names of the candidates either to the Standing Committee on Justice or to the

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and appointments should be subjected to confirmation hearings in such a way as to avoid media circuses like we saw in the U.S. during confirmation hearings for certain candidates to the position of Supreme Court judge. In my opinion, this confirmation process would enhance the work of parliamentarians and the role citizens want to see them play in this Parliament and in all parliaments in general.

Until the appointment process for Parole Board members is reviewed, Canadians have a right to ask questions on how these people are appointed, on the decisions they make and on the validity of these decisions, as they prevail every time.

Some of the provisions in Bill C–45 seem a little strange at first and perhaps should be reviewed by the parliamentary committee. First of all, clause 12 of the bill before us states that inmates are not entitled to a hearing when their case is being reviewed. Why deprive inmates of such a hearing? Is there a valid reason to do that? I think the burden of proof should rest with the government, with the minister introducing this bill, who should demonstrate that inmates should not have the right to be heard when their case is being reviewed, because there may be new evidence justifying a hearing. I think it would be much wiser to preserve the right to a hearing, even if it must be cut short if no new evidence is produced.

Clause 25 of the bill stipulates that the head of the Parole Board may automatically allow a person to serve the rest of their sentence. The institutional head may do so automatically or at the inmate's request. If it is at the prisoner's request, we would have to see under what circumstances he could ask to serve his full prison sentence, if he does not consider himself fit to be released, but if the institutional head can act on his own authority, there would have to be a hearing before a judicial tribunal. I have trouble seeing a public official who is not a judge deciding issues of basic rights like an offender's release on his own say–so, without the possibility of having his decision reviewed by a judicial tribunal. I have some concerns about this provision.

Clause 27 provides a new definition, a flagrant example of expansionist centralizing federalism. Clause 27 as it now stands defines the board as the National Parole Board. The new clause 27 would define it as the National Parole Board and adds:

> and includes a provincial parole board where it exercises jurisdiction in respect of parole as provided by section 112—

• (1030)

But if provincial parole boards are to be included, would it not be preferable to do so under clause 27 at the request of the lieutenant governor in council of a province? Why force the provincial parole boards to join? Since it is not the case now, why bring them in, unless it is at the province's request? That would show respect for provincial jurisdiction.

A rather disturbing provision is that those in detention for less than six months could not be paroled. Such prisoners are usually held for minor offences. Why would there not be a fast–track procedure in such cases so that a request for release from a person held for less than six months could be heard quickly, in summary fashion, especially given the overcrowding in prisons in Canada and Quebec. These matters should also be reviewed.

Clause 56 would add to the Act. It provides for the appointment of a judge to review the conduct of members of the parole boards. It is all well and good to add clause 56, but subsection 7 says that the judge conducting an inquiry is not bound by any legal or technical rules of evidence and may receive and base a decision on evidence adduced in the proceedings and considered credible or trustworthy in the circumstances of the case. The judge could act on hearsay; he is not bound by any rule of evidence.

I think that the judge named to investigate the actions of a member of the Parole Board should do so in accordance with the rules of evidence in Canada and the other legal provisions that ensure the supremacy of the rule of law. I find a provision like 56.7, which sets no rule of evidence for an investigator to follow, to be unacceptable.

Finally, section 155.1 as it now stands allows the minister to act as soon as the judge's report is filed; if it is unfavorable to the person under investigation, the minister can revoke that person's mandate. I think that an appeal procedure should be allowed at this point.

That is, the minister should not decide immediately once the judge's report is filed with him; rather, the judge's report should be filed with the Federal Court and any interested party should have a certain period, say 30 days, to appeal to the Appeal Division of the Federal Court so that the issue can be discussed in a judicial forum, in the absence of specific rules of law that are not mentioned in the Act.

These are the brief preliminary remarks that I had to make; in committee, we will no doubt be able to improve what is proposed in Bill C–45, which on the whole meets our concerns.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to talk to the particular aspect of Bill C–45 which is going to committee.

Several items in the bill are actually good points that we could support. However the proposals are yet another example of the Liberal government wanting to do something to convince Canadians that it is really getting tough on law and order. In many cases it is much to do about nothing. This is the story of our lives in Canadian government in 1994–95, is it not?

We support some of the points. We obviously support the measures to counter child sexual abuse. Full term sentence before release is and has been a Reform position since time immemorial, since the party was started. We obviously support it and agree the government should pursue it in Bill C–45.

• (1035)

We also support empowering any law enforcement officer to detain and return an offender violating parole requirements. That is a good step. The government is to be complimented on that. It is not often I stand in the House to compliment the Liberal government on something it does.

The other item I wish to compliment it on is expanding offences wherein an offender must serve full term sentences to include serious drinking and driving offences, criminal negligence causing bodily harm or death, criminal harassment or stalking, and conspiracy to commit serious drug offences. That is also a positive move in the right direction.

Let us get down to some of the concerns that are obviously omitted. This is where we get into the flaccid approach. I always said the dictionary term for flaccid means limp wristed and so on. I like to think of flaccid meaning the federal Liberals are crafty Conservatives in disguise. I will explain that at the end of my 10 minutes.

The legislation does not insist child sex offenders must receive treatment during or after their incarceration. How could that be missed? The country must stress that no serious child sex offender should be allowed to enter society whether or not full sentence completion exists, without assurances that future child sexual abuse by the offender will not occur. They should think about that when they are sitting on the committee. It is something that is very important to Canadian citizens. If they look at the area I come from in the lower mainland of British Columbia they will see this is a serious problem.

Mandatory treatment must take place. Currently if an offender refuses treatment no treatment is forced upon the offender. If an offender refuses treatment during incarceration some means must be at the disposal of correctional services that force the individual to take treatment. The offender should not be allowed to re–enter society until assurances are received that the offender will not reoffend.

There are no provisions in the legislation to account for sexual offenders that stalk and with violence violate adult women. It is not only young sex offenders we are looking at. They had better get real serious about looking at all sex offenders.

The proposed legislation does not force mandatory review of parole board decisions that go wrong. The legislation states the chair of the parole board may recommend such a hearing take place. This is really preposterous considering some of the boondoggles parole boards have been undertaking. We know that in many cases they are patronage appointments. Liberal Party hacks came into the jobs. Perhaps their qualifications and abilities do not quite match the job they are used to.

However let me give a little indication about a fellow by the name of Wayne Perkin in my area who was supposed to do six years for taping up a young lady's arms, beating her over the head with a hammer and sexually assaulting her. He served about 14 or 16 months and the parole board let him out. After that he bludgeoned to death Angela Richards in Langley, and the story goes on.

When I went to the sentencing in this particular case I thought how ironic it was the parole board was not even represented there to listen to the damage that was done after it let this person out. I really think accountability of the parole board has to come into play. It is not in the legislation and I suppose those folks over there will let it go by. The committee should really look at the matter. I know that Reform members of Parliament will be talking to it extensively at committee level.

The chair of the parole board has a vested interest to keep foul–ups by board members as quiet as possible unless media make a big fuss about board foul–ups that forces the chair to ask for an inquiry. Why would the chair of a board actually critique what happened in the bad mistakes made by a board? It would do our country well to have some of the Liberal MPs involved in assessment at committee level of Bill C–45 go to a parole board hearing. They might have their eyes opened.

• (1040)

The proposed legislation still leaves board members as investigators and decisive people in parole. Nowhere does the legislation insist frontline workers like case workers, prison guards and those types of people, make direct representation at hearings. The frontline people know the serious offenders very well. Their input would offer board members details that otherwise may escape their investigations. Let us think about that. The onus is on a parole board to assess whether or not an individual should be eligible to get back on the street. What it really needs is the maximum amount of input it can get, not the minimum amount.

The legislation makes a half hearted attempt at correcting a problem with short shrift eligibility for parole violators. Instead of saying parole violators must serve one–third of a new sentence the legislation should state that if an offender commits another crime while on parole the offender should be forced to fill the entire remaining period of the old sentence, face a minimum sentence for committing a crime while on parole, and face full term for the offence committed while on parole.

It is rather ironic to talk about the next item since I raised it in the House in the last session. It is nice the government wants criminals to contribute toward their room and board. What about the victim? If the criminals have any income that income must

be directed toward restitution to the victim prior to or as well as the cost of their upkeep. Once again the victim is forgotten.

We disclosed in the House in last session that the government's benevolent attitude is allowing criminals in our system to get old age security, income supplement, GST rebates and CPP. What I heard from the Solicitor General was that it really did not work and they would make a change. Then I saw in the change they would have to pay 30 per cent of it, which is ridiculous.

They should not get one cent of old age security, the people I checked up on. There was one person in for a double murder who was getting old age security. The government should tell me the logic of that. Why should that money not go toward the victim? Why should all that money not go toward board and upkeep? For the government to suggest that it is going to take another tough measure, that it is going to take 30 per cent, is ridiculous.

The Liberal government will have to smarten up one of these days and look at what is right in the country. It should not be too shy about being tough.

Currently our investigations have discovered that there are far more sexual offenders needing treatment than there are treatment facilities. We have been told of 1,800 serious sex offenders currently incarcerated. There are only 200 slots for treatment at any one time. The legislation only promotes treatment for sex offenders abusing children. What about offenders who assault teenage or adult women? Once again the victim is forgotten. Where is the treatment for victims of assault? Have you not remembered the victims? It should keep that in mind.

How will the government pay for increased treatment? We must push for treatment for all violent or sexual offenders. At the same time where will the money come from? I know they are not overly concerned about where the money comes from in Canada today, but they should try to think about it in Bill C–45.

I have a final point. This was a fine opportunity for Liberals concerned about guns to include full sentences served for offences where any gun is used. Why did you not do this? Why is it not in here? Where is it going to be?

Once again I do not think the courage exists on the other side to deal with the tougher issues about taking away money that the criminal element should not have in our prisons, about dealing with gun laws, about dealing with violent sex offenders from an adult point of view, and about dealing with the victim.

• (1045)

I hope that in Bill C–45 they look at these issues in committee.

The Deputy Speaker: We have just come back and I again would ask members to please direct their remarks through the Chair. The theory is that it will reduce the conflict between members if remarks go through the Chair rather than back and forth across the Chamber.

Mr. Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I will not take much of the time of the House.

Today is sort of an historic day in the sense that it is the first time I believe that Standing Order 73(1) has been invoked. I would like to point out to the House that on May 11, 1994 I stood here on a point of order. At that time I was introducing a private member's bill and I pointed out to the Speaker that I would like to invoke Standing Order 73(1) for my bill. I pointed out some of the problems as the standing order presented itself where a minister of the crown could send any public bill to committee before second reading and this would include a private member's bill sponsored by a private member.

In reply the Speaker took it under consideration and made a ruling on June 1 at which time he suggested the redrafting of Standing Order 73 to grant the sponsor of a private member's bill the same prerogatives with regard to that bill that a minister of the crown enjoys with regard to a government bill seems to merit further consideration. He referred that issue to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and asked it to take that into consideration.

I realize the standing committee has been very active and very busy on a number of subjects. I would ask on my point today, Mr. Speaker, that you again ask that committee, seeing that this standing order has been invoked for the first time and could be invoked again for other opportunities, since the matter is an urgent one, especially for private members, backbenchers, that we would like to have a ruling on that as soon as possible.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member and I thank the member for giving notice of the point of order. He is absolutely right that the Speaker on June 1 did suggest that the committee look at the matter. As the member will know the Speaker does not have the power to direct, as I understand it, any committee to consider any matter.

If I can characterize what the member has said, he is really asking the committee to deal with the matter as quickly as possible. I see the chairman of that committee nodding. I hope he will take under advisement what the hon. member has said.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the government's plans to solve the pressing problem of public protection as it relates to the correctional process.

The amendments proposed in Bill C–45 will allow for a better control of those who generate the greatest fears, namely violent offenders. The changes proposed by the government will be supported by improved treatment programs for sexual offenders.

These changes are an essential component which the government intends to use to deal with violent crimes and to improve the public's faith in correctional services as well as in the conditional release program.

The Solicitor General pointed out that to pass harsher legislation to alleviate the public's concerns is not enough. Indeed, if we are to solve the social problems within our communities, we cannot merely increase the number of inmates in our jails.

In recent months, the media have given a lot of coverage to the serious and increasing public concern regarding some issues related to the judicial process.

[*English*]

Almost every day there are story headlines, news broadcasts, telling us of the violence which is present in our communities. The television programs we watch also recount quite graphically at times details of violent crime, whether real or fictional. It is difficult to escape the feeling that violence pervades in our lives.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

This is why most Canadians believe that crime is on the rise in their communities. It must be remembered that studies on victimization, not the media, best describe the current crime trends.

These studies show that, in 1993, global rates remained stable or decreased compared to 1988 levels. Moreover, they show that the crime rate dropped by 5 per cent in 1993, the biggest decrease since we started keeping statistics on crime, over 30 years ago.

Statistics show a substantial decrease of some 15 per cent in the case of murders, for the second consecutive year. The figure for 1993 is 27 per cent lower than the all–time high of 1975. Nevertheless, Canadians are more and more concerned about crime and are asking the government to find solutions and put a stop to its presumed higher incidence.

It must also be recognized that certain ways of dealing with crime and the fear that it generates can have results opposite to their objective. One only needs to look at the situation in the United States to realize that some strategies against crime can have unpredictable and serious consequences.

Do you know that 13 states have abolished their parole system, essentially in an attempt to slow down the rise in crime? Yet, studies show that crime rates in these states have not decreased and are, in several cases, among the highest in the country. Canada is second to the United States as regards the incarceration rate.

[*English*]

Correctional Services Canada has determined that if the current rate of admissions to penitentiaries continues there will be over 18,000 offenders in federal penitentiaries by the year 2002. This would represent a 30 per cent increase in the next eight years. The cost of housing these offenders is not decreasing. On average it costs the Canadian taxpayer over $50,000 for each incarcerated offender.

[*Translation*]

While the public is concerned about the consequences of criminal activities, we are increasingly recognizing that, for the most part, crime arises from social problems, like unemployment, poverty and illiteracy.

As members of Parliament, we are responsible for protecting the public and, like all our fellow Canadians, we must look beyond the immediate repercussions of crime and take into consideration the underlying causes of criminal behaviour. That is why our government has implemented a national strategy on security and crime prevention in urban areas.

[*English*]

One of the key elements of this national strategy is the creation by the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General of a national crime prevention council this past July. The objectives of the council are to unify crime prevention efforts across the country and to give them focus and direction.

[*Translation*]

Despite the creation of this national crime prevention council, we have to realize that repression and crime prevention are not the exclusive responsibility of the criminal justice system. To come to grips with the many social and economic issues leading to crime requires a multidimensional and integrated approach. We must co–operate and work in partnership with every segment of our society, including parents, teachers, social services organizations and all levels of government.

As the Solicitor General said earlier, in order to undertake an effective and in–depth reform aimed at protecting the public against crime, the federal and provincial governments must work together to find overall solutions.

However, the federal government realizes that control of violent offenders is a complex problem for which it would be pointless to seek a universal remedy.

As you know, governments share responsibility for criminal justice, but mental health is a provincial jurisdiction.

• (1055)

Since searching for ways to deal with high risk offenders is not the exclusive responsibility of any one level of government, a federal–provincial task force on high risk violent offenders has also been set up.

The task force is reviewing all policies and legislation that could help to treat, manage and monitor high–risk violent offenders.

[*English*]

In closing, let me emphasize that the legislative reforms of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act proposed in this bill are clearly measures that will contribute to the protection of the public; balanced measures augmented with comprehensive activities such as crime prevention through social development, through strengthening meaningful partnerships with other levels of government and through community involvement in order to ensure safer homes and safer streets for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard St–Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, going through Bill C–45 raises a great concern about sexual offenders and sentences that they are given. In these days, sexual offences make headlines in all the media everywhere in the country.

Our duty, as elected people, is to legislate in such a way that the action we are taking will have positive results. Public safety is everyone's responsibility. But there is no point in passing legislation just to pretend we have done our job and this piece of legislation must be the least confusing possible. It is important that its enforcement be as easy as possible and, finally, this whole series of action must be efficient. Killers must not kill any more, thieves must not steal any more and rapists must not rape any more.

I will deal mainly with clause 3 of the proposed bill. It says, and I quote: "The Commissioner may in writing designate any staff member, either by name or by class, to be a peace officer, and a staff member so designated has all the powers, authority, protection and privileges that a peace officer has by law in respect of an offender subject to a warrant, and any person, while the person is in a penitentiary". It is that point I have a problem with.

I knew that the job of a correctional officer in a penitentiary was not well known, but I am very disappointed to see how badly it is known. In that clause of Bill C–45, it is clearly written that the commissioner may in writing designate, for instance, a night security officer from some warehouse to be a correctional officer in a penitentiary. I have nothing against security officers who protect warehouses and other buildings and I am sure they do a very good job. But that has nothing to do with the job and responsibilities of a correctional officer in a penitentiary. Absolutely nothing!

A correctional officer is a person who has been very carefully chosen. The time is long gone when people would offer their services as a policeman or a prison guard because they could not find jobs and had big muscles. That was the case at the beginning of the century. But this should not be the case at the end of this century. For instance, if there is no corrections officer around inside a penitentiary, it is highly unlikely anyone would try to break in. In fact for centuries, the tendency has been for people to try to break out.

However, in a warehouse without any security, it is very likely some people will likely help themselves, in the absence of security personnel. I mentioned earlier that corrections officers are very carefully screened. Among the many qualifications these people must have, there are some that everyone should have, including honesty and impartiality. I think we can assume every upstanding citizen has those qualities, but he must also have above average judgment and tremendous self–control.

• (1100)

He must also have very acute powers of observation. His personal safety and the safety of his colleagues and the public depends on it. And last, but not least, he must pass an impressive battery of tests to determine his personal and interpersonal strengths. Government personnel departments, also known as human resources, invest many months' worth of tests, analyses and studies in each case before they select the individual or individuals best suited to perform the duties of a corrections officer.

Do you know that at the Port–Cartier penitentiary, which opened in 1988 or 1989, more than 23,000 applications were received and processed? Port–Cartier has about 250 employees, including 188 corrections officers. The selection process took more than 20 months, from the day the initial advertisement was published in the media to the first day on the job.

In the same area, the Government of Quebec regularly takes from 16 to 20 months to complete its selection process. I am sure this also applies to the nine other provinces as well.

We must not wait until something terrible happens to take the proper action. We must act now, as soon as the bill goes to committee, to consider the impact some clauses may have. You do not wait until a book is published to correct the proofs.

About the proposed deductions from inmates' income mentioned in cluases 21 and 26, it seems inmates might see the cost of room and board deducted from their income. How would this measure be implemented? That is a question Bill C–45 fails to answer. What would it cost to introduce such a measure? Here again, the bill does not deliver.

Finally, and this may be why the bill does not provide an answer, how much will these measures save the Treasury? We

cannot afford to introduce measures for their own sake. Getting four quarters for a dollar is certainly not worth the trouble.

On the subject of parole, the bill proposes that individuals serving a second sentence for the same offence should not be eligible for parole. We must look at this very carefully. People complain that some individuals were poorly assessed before their release on parole. If we deny an individual the opportunity to be released on parole, this means there will be no evaluation, either negative or positive, in his file. Once he has served his sentence, he will be forced back into a society he has not seen for months or, in many cases, years. He will be on his own in a world that has continued to evolve and grow and which will certainly have changed. Do we have the moral right to do this?

In concluding, I wish to say that we in the Bloc Quebecois will work on improving this bill, in committee and in the House. We will do our utmost to make this bill as transparent and, above all, as efficient as possible.

[*English*]

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton): Mr. Speaker, in last year's federal election members on this side of the House listened to Canadians express their desire for the federal government to introduce reforms to the criminal justice system.

We listened to Canadians tell us that they no longer feel safe walking on our streets and that they fear for the safety of their children, a fear that has never been felt before in this country.

We listened as Canadians from all walks of life and from all parts of this country told us that they want a criminal justice system that is responsive and effective in dealing with the criminal element in our society.

• (1105)

When we took office we committed ourselves to reforming the criminal justice system to more closely resemble the kind of system that Canadians want. We continue to listen to Canadians and to their ideas for reforming our system. We listened as Canadians told us that they want the red tape of government replaced with the common sense of concerned citizens.

It is because this government is committed to listening to the concerns of Canadians and to acting in a constructive manner that I am pleased to speak today on Bill C–45.

Bill C–45 introduces amendments to key pieces of legislation resulting in a criminal justice system which is more consistent with Canadian values. The protection of our children must be our primary concern in the justice system. It is clear that more needs to be done in this area.

The statistics are staggering. Fifty–three per cent of females and 31 per cent of males are the victims of unwanted sexual acts. Eighty per cent of these assaults occur when they are children or youths. This is horrendous and totally unacceptable.

Under existing laws, the National Parole Board is able to detain an individual who has committed a sexual assault against a child only if the offender has committed serious harm to the child. Serious harm is defined as severe physical injury or severe psychological damage. Proving serious harm so defined with respect to a child is difficult because the psychological harm caused by an offender may not be visible for years to come.

Bill C–45 addresses this problem by removing the requirement to demonstrate serious harm for a sexual offence involving a child. This legislation authorizes the National Parole Board to detain an offender where it is satisfied that an offender is likely to commit another sexual assault involving a child before the expiration of their sentence. This really means no parole. This measure is in direct response to concerns expressed by Canadians that our justice system is too caught up in red tape to respond to the common sense concerns of Canadians and to the protection of our children.

Such a move cannot be made in isolation and Bill C–45 provides the necessary accompanying changes to ensure that the removal of the serious harm criteria with respect to child sex offenders is done in a responsible and effective manner. Rehabilitation programs for sex offenders will be strengthened under this legislation to ensure that the time which those convicted of a sexual offence against a child or an adult spent behind bars is constructive.

The strengthening of our rehabilitation programs is greatly needed. A recent study found that 40 per cent of convicted sex offenders reoffend within five years after being released from prison. This is simply unacceptable.

While significant progress has been made by the correctional service of Canada in recent years in the treatment of sex offenders further improvements are needed. Bill C–45 contains provisions to ensure that the Correctional Service of Canada has the resources to improve its capacity to treat offenders by allowing it to make deductions from an offender's income for room and board costs. This covers part of the spending.

The removal of the serious harm provision also places greater importance on the expert abilities of members of the National Parole Board. This legislation strengthens the accountability of the parole board by establishing a mechanism for the discipline or removal of National Parole Board members in instances where a member is clearly not performing up to acceptable standards.

Bill C–45 moves to fulfil a number of our red book commitments to promote safer homes and safer streets.

In addition to the provisions I have already mentioned which deal with the treatment of child sex offenders, this legislation expands the list of offences for which an offender could be ineligible for parole until the end of their sentence. Bill C–45 adds stalking, conspiracy to commit drug offences and serious

drinking and driving and criminal negligence offences which result in bodily harm or death to the list of offences for which an offender could be referred for detention until the end of their sentence.

The recognition of stalking and drug offences in particular as social societal problems in need of intensive treatment is relatively recent. This bill acknowledges their severity in law. By designating stalking, drug offences and drinking and driving as offences for which offenders could be detained until the end of their sentence we are bringing key criminal justice legislation into the 1990s.

• (1110)

These reforms are the product of consulting Canadians on the issue of justice reform. A representative of the Canadian Police Association has described the reforms contained in Bill C–45 as the best improvements in the overall corrections and parole system in this country in the past 15 years. I concur and attribute the responsiveness of this bill to concerned Canadians who have demonstrated a strong commitment to Canadian society. It is their willingness to address these issues in a frank and open manner which has shaped the proposed changes to the criminal justice system.

I congratulate the hon. Solicitor General on Bill C–45 and thank Canadians who participated.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss Bill C–45, one component of the Solicitor General's safe streets package.

I have to confess that I am not very pleased as I stand here. Like most of the Liberal agenda for change, this bill tinkers with it. There is no bold face of change at all. The bill has taken an alarmingly wrong turn in making neighbourhoods safe for Canadians when considering changes to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

My Reform colleagues and I have often spoken of the need for widespread criminal justice reform. In order to demonstrate the poignancy of our arguments we often refer to specific cases. When we do members from across the floor dismiss our arguments as irrelevant because they are exemplified by anecdotes. However, we do not trot out examples to whip up public sympathy but to demonstrate in clear, understandable human terms what the real life implications are for Canadians when the justice system goes wrong and fails to protect the victims.

Today I will share with the House the real life tragic story of a woman and her family who live in fear. As I explain the particulars of the case it will be evident where and when mistakes are made in the processes involved for conditional releases, escorted temporary absences, known as ETAs, and unescorted temporary absences, UTAs.

In 1983 Robert Paul Thompson was issued a day pass from prison. He had committed numerous assaults dating back to 1969. Obviously his proclivity for violence was at that time not deemed sufficiently problematic and he was given a day pass. While out on this day pass Thompson went to the home of his former common law spouse Brenda Fitzgerald, the daughter of Mrs. Helen Leadley, a constituent of the riding I represent, Calgary Southeast.

When he arrived at Brenda's home Thompson found her in the company of another man. He tried to kill the man by beating him with a hammer and stabbing him. His viciousness was completely unleashed as he brutally stabbed Brenda Fitzgerald to death. How stupid, how irresponsible that he was issued a day pass.

For this brutal murder and attempted murder Thompson plea bargained and pleaded guilty to second degree murder. He was sentenced to life which made him eligible for parole in the spring of 1995.

The case does not end with his conviction and sentencing unfortunately. Two and a half years after his incarceration in December 1985 Thompson stabbed two prison guards and took a 63–year old prison nurse hostage. During the hostage situation it took 10 guards to restrain Thompson. For these subsequent crimes Thompson received a sentence of 11 years to be served concurrent to his original sentence with parole eligibility still in April 1995.

Thompson has been denied two requests for conditional release since his last conviction. In 1992 he was denied day parole and in 1993 he was denied an ETA. These decisions are extremely important for the Leadley family's safety. Since his incarceration this man, Thompson, has managed to get a letter to Mrs. Leadley threatening to kill the family. From prison a convicted murderer has been able to violently threaten the family of the woman he murdered. The family lives in fear and any quality of life has virtually disintegrated. The grandchildren have been given different names and moved out of the city and Mrs. Leadley is not even able to see her own grandchildren.

However, the reason that I stand here today should be of concern to the members of this House, as it is to me.

• (1115)

Thompson recently applied for an escorted temporary absence. His brother has a non–life threatening illness and is in hospital. Thompson wishes to visit him for two hours. In its infinite wisdom in an eight–page decision, the parole board has recommended that the ETA be granted.

The parole board gave its reasons for denying his first parole request: the viciousness of all of his crimes. Now has something happened in the past 12 months since his last denial to make the board suddenly comfortable with this man's criminal character?

The parole board cites the fact that Thompson has participated in some rehabilitation programs since his last request for release as reason for its sudden change of heart. In 1993 he was a dangerous criminal but just 12 months and a few courses later he is suitable for release it suggests.

To justify its new position, the parole board refers to anger management courses that Thompson has taken. He was required to participate in a program that required only one hour per week for 10 weeks. Are these 10 hours of participation enough for the board to have changed its position? Also in its decision the board encourages Thompson to request to be transferred to a lesser security prison.

These are the decisions and recommendations of a parole board that alleges its reason for being is to protect the Canadian public. There is certainly no accountability here. I fail to see how such decisions protect the Canadian public.

The parole board is saying to this criminal that he deserves a special treat for having been a good boy for 12 months. The irony of the situation is that the case management team supports Thompson's request, as does the warden of the prison and the parole board. The Canadian public does not support this request. I do not support it and the Leadley family does not support it.

The Liberals keep saying they want safer streets but I do not believe it. Whenever they get a chance to make a tough decision to make the streets safe, they balk. They fail to act. I sent a letter to the Solicitor General, the National Parole Board chairman and to the Minister of Justice. My office has had numerous contacts with these offices since the board rendered its reprehensible decision on September 13. The Solicitor General has the power to overturn this ridiculous decision but has done nothing. Not one of these people has acted yet nor has responded to my letter and phone calls requesting the reversal of the decision of the parole board.

In fact, the chairman of the National Parole Board has demonstrated his complete disdain for the safety of the Canadian public by responding to my requests by saying: "Mr. Thompson will be escorted. I really do not see what the big deal is". It is no small wonder that Canadian confidence in our criminal justice system is so low. What reason do they have to be confident when such ignorance is demonstrated by the National Parole Board?

In the board's decision for Thompson's pass, it is mentioned in a section on general statistical information on recidivism that two out of three offenders will not commit an indictable offence after release. The corollary of this is that 33 per cent will reoffend after release. This is a substantial number, an unacceptably high number. Further to this frightening figure is the amount of recidivism of day parolees. The number of people who have breached a condition of release or reoffended has increased by 41 per cent in five years.

Despite these alarming figures, the National Parole Board chairman still fails to see what the big deal is in letting a convicted murderer out on an ETA. I am absolutely furious. The irony is that it is his job to protect the Canadian public.

The big deal is simple. In the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, section 17(b) grants to convicts the privilege of receiving escorted temporary absences for the following reasons: medical; administrative; community service; family contact; personal development for rehabilitative purposes; or compassionate reasons, including parental responsibilities.

These people demonstrated no compassion when they killed their fellow man. Escorted temporary absences are expensive luxuries which should not be so easily obtained, especially for violent offenders.

As well, section 17(c) states that an inmate's behaviour while under sentence does not preclude authorizing absence. This section should be struck from the act and is worth pursuing at the committee stage.

Thompson's example is one case in point. He was out on a day pass when he committed murder. This fact should necessarily be considered when he applies for subsequent passes. In fact, it should be sufficient reason to deny all subsequent requests.

• (1120)

I have used the Robert Paul Thompson case to demonstrate some of what this bill fails but ought to do. In retrospect, the decision in 1983 to issue a day pass was flawed. I am very personally connected to this situation.

I challenge the Solicitor General on this matter. If he really cares about making Canada safer for all of us, then he can begin here and now by reversing the terrible and disgusting decision of the parole board to grant Robert Paul Thompson a day pass for family contact. Canadians demand no less.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address the House today on Bill C–45. As a former prosecutor for Essex county in Ontario I recognize the need for changes in this area to provide Canadians with greater public protection and a greater sense of security. Police officers, prosecutors and victims groups with whom I have discussed these amendments tell me that this is a wonderful and a strong step forward in this area.

The Liberal red book told Canadians that we share their concerns. It told Canadians of our promise to take steps to help protect our citizens from repeat offenders. Safe homes and safe streets are a theme for this government, but it is a theme that goes hand in hand with our other themes of job creation and of respect for human rights. Indeed, these themes of prosperity, security and human rights merge to make Canada the kind of country that really is the envy of the world.

These amendments address the issue of public security. With these amendments our government is following through on our commitments to the public, commitments published in our red book, commitments we have consistently followed up on and that you can literally check off as we go through our mandate. They are sensible commitments which help to improve our security and our rights in this country.

Public safety is the primary consideration in putting forward these changes. As we follow through on our red book commitments we are improving protection from repeat sex offenders. These changes are part of ongoing reforms to increase and improve our handling and our management of these offenders within the federal corrections system. In particular we have focused on those offenders who victimize children, although of course others are included in the sweep of this legislation.

These changes will help to restore public confidence in the corrections process by closing gaps and by responding directly to shortcomings that have been perceived by the public. We will tighten the system for those convicted of sex offences against children. We will pass changes which will allow us to detain in the penitentiary until the end of their sentence sex offenders who victimize children.

Other offences will be caught within the mandate of this legislation. Those include: serious drinking and driving offences; criminal negligence offences which result in bodily harm or death; criminal harassment, more commonly known as stalking laws; and conspiracy to commit serious drug offences. All of these will be added to the list of offences for possible detention until the end of sentence.

Of those offences however I think all Canadians find crimes against children to be among the most reprehensible acts. That is why it is so important to increase the powers of the National Parole Board to enable that body to keep repeat sex offenders behind bars for their full sentence.

Under the existing legislation the National Parole Board must establish that serious harm was done to a victim during the commission of the offence or that it is likely to occur during a future offence involving a child. This criterion of serious harm can be difficult to identify among children who often do not exhibit the full effects of the trauma until later in their lives.

This legislation seeks to improve the protection of children and is also a response to the report on serious harm by the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General.

● (1125)

In addition to strengthening the sentencing side of sex offences the legislation will also strengthen and expand treatment programs for these crimes. This is another part of our red book commitment.

As important as it is to keep repeat sex offenders in penitentiaries as long as they remain a risk, it is equally important to recognize that their sentences will inevitably expire and that we must therefore strengthen our rehabilitation programs. Although we have made some strides in this area in the past, it is important to keep our focus in that direction and to make sure these programs improve. These amendments will also provide additional reasonable resources for those programs.

We are also following through on a commitment to create a mechanism for the discipline or removal from office of National Parole Board members where members are not performing competently. This proposal, together with increased training, the continued advertising of board vacancies and the appointment of qualified, competent board members will further increase the accountability of the board. This is something Canadians have demanded, something we have promised to Canadians and once again, something we have followed through on.

While this legislation targets repeat sex offenders and other serious criminals specifically, it also addresses the issue of sentence calculation. There has been a longstanding concern about the way sentences are calculated. Changes to the process will ensure that offenders on parole in the community who are convicted of a new offence are automatically returned to custody, and would serve a substantial part of the new sentence, at least one–third, in penitentiary before being eligible to be considered for parole.

Like other legislation we have promulgated since our election and which we will table throughout our term this act is the result of consultation with Canadians. I speak specifically to my friends across the way when I say that unlike some legislators, Liberals do not limit their consultations only to those who share their own view. We have the nerve, we have the mandate and we have the strength to dare to involve all Canadians. We are not afraid to hear other views. We do not sit with narrow, little minds hiding in a hot house. Instead, we go to all Canadians. We seek to widen our horizons. We seek to criss–cross the country and to consult widely in both languages.

That is something the Solicitor General has done. I know my friends on this side of the House join me as should those across the way in commending him for this consultation and commending him for having the guts and the courage to go out and speak to all Canadians.

I ask all members in this House to support this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General had been promising major amendments to the current legislation in order to crack down on adults who commit crimes against children. In particular, the government said it would take extremely harsh measures in view of the demands of

a society totally disgusted with the courts' failure to deal with child molesters.

Like all Canadians, I was expecting a massive overhaul of the current legislation. It seems, however, that the Solicitor General does not have the same perception as the vast majority of Canadians on this point. It seems that the government has chosen to continue to favour administrative justice, which is arbitrary and secretive, over the courts. Clearly the Liberal Party does not want to toughen the act with regard to with rapists and child abusers.

If I understand this bill correctly, individuals serving a two–year sentence following assault on children, will be referred to the Parole Board which will determine whether they can be paroled at the time legally set or whether they should be kept in jail until the end of their sentence or subjected to special control measures.

People should not be led to believe that the amendments proposed by the Solicitor General could be used to keep these individuals in jail after the end of their sentence.

• (1130)

You should not think either that this is tougher for abusers and pedophiles or that it would apply to all sexual offenders.

All the Solicitor General is doing is proposing to give the Parole Board the discretionary power to parole before the end of their sentence individuals guilty of sexual crimes against children.

This measure already exists for violent offenders and drug dealers; we are merely adding pedophiles.

Two observations before I move on to more legal aspects. Sexual crimes against children are probably the most horrific, the most despicable and the most repugnant crimes that a court can find an individual guilty of.

It is not without reason that nearly every crime of that nature is punishable by maximum penalties going from a 10–year prison sentence to life.

When an adult sexually assaults a child, he destroys the person within the child, the child's vision of the world as well as his or her trust in mankind. Such crimes are no less serious when the victim is an adult, but the latter is already equipped with a psychological immune system that might help him or her get over the pain and suffering. The assaulted child dies inside.

I feel no sympathy, no mercy for molesters; I despise and loathe these cowards who take advantage of a child's innocence to satisfy their narcissistic drive. Until proven otherwise—the burden of proof rests on the criminal's shoulders—I do not believe that rehabilitation is possible. I do know that in certain rare cases there appears to be a change in behaviour, at the cost of tremendous personal sacrifices and after a painful process. But certainly not as a result of some ridiculous prison therapy criminals agree to with the sole objective of improving their chances to get paroled.

Crimes of a sexual nature against children deserve the maximum sentence; those which leave them injured, mutilated or harmed in their physical or moral integrity should result in a life sentence for the offenders.

This brings me to publicly question once again the professional competence of the members of this inept organisation, namely the Parole Board.

I do not question the need for a parole monitoring body or its usefulness. Every western nation relies on such government agencies responsible for closely monitoring criminals in the community at large, until the end of their sentence.

However, I am extremely sceptical about the professional competence of the Parole Board members who are all political appointees.

This body has become the haven for the friends and survivors of defeated governments or governments reaching the end of their mandates, whichever the case. The good faith of these people in carrying out their duty is not at issue, but I cannot help but notice that the lack of professional hiring criteria sheds a cloud of doubt on the credibility of their decisions.

And yet, the Solicitor General has decided to entrust this board with the authority to release criminals convicted of abusing or raping children.

The board's job would amount in fact to reviewing the sentence imposed by the court. If at least the Solicitor General had given authority to the court to impose a prison sentence without parole in the afore–mentioned cases, we would be closer to a reform. But such is not the case.

The court already has the power to give very harsh sentences to child abusers. Every sexual crime involving children is punishable by penalties that the court should not hesitate to pass.

The court already has in hand all the elements necessary to determine the sentence. We will discuss later, probably at the end of the day, the amendments that Bill C–41 brings to sentencing principles. The court will have all the facts at hand and will be able to evaluate all the factors relevant to the case, including elements of the pre–sentence report describing in detail the personality of the accused.

I believe that by simply giving the courts the power to order that the sentence imposed be served completely before a criminal can be released, we could have achieved what the bill seeks to do.

• (1135)

I am against giving this new quasi–judicial role to an organization which has neither the stature nor the competence to assume such responsibility towards society. We must give the courts all the necessary latitude to reach the legislation's goals. Those were my comments, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on Bill C–45 brought in by the Solicitor General as part of the strategic framework of initiatives to which the government committed itself in the red book during the last campaign. It seeks to implement the safe homes, safe streets strategy which is being very much demanded by Canadians from coast to coast to coast as we in all parts of the House know.

The bill recognizes the all time low level of confidence Canadians have unfortunately demonstrated in our courts and in our current parole system. I must confess that this low level of confidence is justified and as a Canadian I certainly share it to a large extent.

Contrary to some opinions we have heard today from other members of the House, the bill is worthy of support. It is a major step in the right direction. It puts forth several important initiatives much awaited by Canadians and I would like to speak to them briefly today.

It adds several offences to the list of serious crimes for which people can be required to serve their full sentence such as drinking and driving and drug offences, to name two.

There is an important initiative in that the bill would seek to increase the accountability of the National Parole Board by establishing a mechanism to discipline and remove members that have performed in an unacceptable and indeed incompetent manner in some cases. Unfortunately we know that this could be the case and the provision is badly needed.

The bill seeks to strengthen rehabilitation programs for sex offenders. This is one of the most important initiatives undertaken. All too often repeat sex offenders such as pedophiles come out of the institutions in which they were incarcerated just as unbalanced individuals as when they entered incarceration. This is simply unacceptable and must be addressed. The bill seeks to do that.

The bill increases the authority of officials to make deductions from the income of offenders to help defray the increasing costs of incarceration. This is something which Canadians will applaud no matter what is their overall view of the bill. It is obviously a very important initiative and makes good common sense.

In my personal view the most important guiding principle in our system of criminal justice should be that violent criminals will be considered in a category altogether separate from non–violent criminals. Violent criminals should be experiencing stricter sentences from our courts and much stricter conditions for early release.

It is my view that the almost automatic release after one–third of the sentence of criminals has been served, even the most violent criminals, is a big mistake. Violent criminals, whether they be sexual offenders or non–sexual offenders, should be serving much closer to the full sentence. I would hope to see the day when repeat violent offenders will be serving the full sentence.

Bill C–45 moves substantially in that direction. It permits the retention for full sentence of criminals that have offended against children. While I applaud it as a step in the right direction I hope to see the day when such heinous crimes will be met with a mandatory serving of a full sentence for violent criminals, be they sexual offenders or non–sexual offenders. This is very important in the case of someone who has demonstrated a pattern of repeat violent offence.

• (1140)

Canadians know, and we in the House know, that in many cases sentences have been too light and out of all proportion to the nature of the crime and to the incredible harm inflicted on the victim, be they children or adults. For any adult who has been a victim of violent crime, particularly violent sexual crime, it is an horrendous experience to try to live through.

Bill C–45 requires an offender on parole who reoffends to serve at least one–third of his or her sentence for the latest crime before being eligible for parole. I applaud that. I say again I hope to see the day when repeat violent offenders serve their full sentence and not one–third. I hope to see the day when they forgo any opportunity for early release if they have established a pattern of repeat violent offences. The bill is a major step in that direction.

The issue of the serious harm provision against children is very important. The bill removes that condition and states it is not required for serious harm to be demonstrated. This makes good sense. For me personally violent crime is by definition serious crime. It inflicts serious harm on the victim especially if the victim is a child. Violent crime of a sexual or a non–sexual nature against an adult obviously is serious and should be treated in such a manner.

I very much applaud Bill C–45 and the Solicitor General for the initiatives he has undertaken. It is not a perfect bill. I suppose we see very few of those in this land or any other. I personally hope to see the day when we will go further, when we will be stricter on repeat violent offenders whether they be sexual or non–sexual offenders, and when we will be much more vigilant on early releases than what we have been.

The bill is a major step toward the stricter approach being called for by Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this occasion to speak in favour of Bill C–45 which was given first reading in the House last June.

Since 1984 there has been a marked increase in violent crime across the country. Dealing with this growing incidence of crime was certainly listed as one of the priorities of the Liberal Party and the new government as set out in the red book.

There is no doubt that for many years Canada was viewed and is still viewed, and rightly so, as a non–violent nation. It was a nation in which all of us could carry on our business, our daily affairs, without fear for our personal safety or for the personal safety of our loved ones. However in the last decade Canadians have become less certain about that reality as we have seen example after example played out across our television screens and in our newspapers of violent crimes being perpetrated within our communities.

Our government believes the issue of safe streets is not achieved simply by strengthening legislation in relation to criminal behaviour such as the Criminal Code, the Young Offenders Act or the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the present legislation. There are some in the House who tend to simplify the issue of public safety to the extreme by saying that by making harsh incarceration rules, by sentencing people to long sentences or by introducing corporal or capital punishment our streets will suddenly or magically be safe.

Some would have us believe that if we toughen our parole release provisions to the extreme in all cases suddenly there would be no more crime and we would not suffer from violence to our person and to our families. The government disagrees with that approach.

• (1145)

We recognize that in order to reduce the incidence of criminality within our society that society must provide meaningful employment opportunities for all people. The direct link between economic hardship, lack of opportunity and criminality is well known. To that end the government has implemented policies which allow for economic growth.

Roughly 275,000 new jobs have been created since the new government took office. The Canadian economy has grown by 4.2 per cent annual growth rate in the first quarter and an astounding 6.4 per cent in the second quarter. This assists to reduce the incidence of criminal behaviour within our society.

Another factor that certainly helps reduce the crime rate and the violence within our society means doing something to alleviate underlying social conditions which create an environment where criminal behaviour can flourish, whether it is poverty, racism, hunger or whatever the social issue might be.

We have begun to address those issues as a government. We must continue to alleviate negative social conditions which create an environment where crime can flourish, whether it is fighting racism or increasing educational opportunities or providing our young people with experience in the workplace through the Canada youth corps. We are moving toward safer communities in our nation once again.

No doubt there are other things that governments and communities can undertake to increase public safety. The creative nature of our communities will make this happen from coast to coast. I am not saying that the government cannot move to improve the Criminal Code, the Young Offenders Act or the legislation currently before the House where it makes sense to do so.

The government recognizes that action to combat crime must be a multi–pronged approach involving the enhancement of criminal laws, the Young Offenders Act, the parole legislation where it is reasonable to do so and demonstrably justified. Where flaws are located in the current legislation we must move to correct those flaws. We have a responsibility to do so.

Not only must our economies be strong, not only must our social programs be relevant and scratch where the country itches but also we must deal with our criminal legislation through these various criminally related statutes and to fix them where they have proved inadequate.

We see this approach being taken whether it is in this bill brought forward by the Solicitor General or whether it is other bills such as the Young Offenders Act being brought forward by the Minister of Justice or amendments to the Criminal Code. These types of approaches allow for the House and our society to improve, to enhance the laws which govern our land, the laws which make it safe for all of us to enjoy our communities and to enjoy our homes without fear of violence.

Within this specific legislation a number of changes have been made which will make our parole system better, our criminal justice system better and will ultimately improve the safety of our communities across the nation.

The individual legislative proposals which I support make it easier to detain in penitentiary until the end of sentence sex offenders who victimize children by removing that serious harm must be established as a criterion for detention in these cases. There is no doubt that the young person by having to provide testimony as to serious harm is revictimized and we certainly see no need for that. The fact that an offence has been committed

certainly establishes beyond doubt that serious harm has been done.

This legislation will also establish a mechanism for the removal from office of National Parole Board members who become incapacitated from executing their duties by infirmity or misconduct or have failed to carry out their role in a manner that is expected of them. This is to maintain the integrity of the system. We certainly will reduce the number of errors that are made in releasing people who should not be released.

• (1150)

In addition to these types of changes, we are also expanding the list of offences for which an offender could be referred for detention until the end of sentence. These offences include serious drinking and driving and criminal negligence offences which result in bodily harm or death. In addition there will be more emphasis placed on the rehabilitation of people through programs. This is also a very important step forward.

What is typical of the government is that we are utilizing some of the parliamentary reforms we have brought forward in this term to allow individual members more say in the development of legislation.

I want to commend the Solicitor General for referring this bill at this stage to the committee so that we can, as individual members, provide input and make additional changes. Certainly where it is clear and obvious that changes ought to be made the government has made those changes but it is allowing the opportunity for further changes, for further amendment, as the bill moves along.

This is a very progressive step. Through the committee stage we can hear what Canadians think of these changes and write a bill that reflects the desires of our people for a safe society but one balanced with our desire always to ensure that people can have the opportunity to be rehabilitated.

I am very proud of the efforts the government has made so far and will support these legislative changes as the bill moves on to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: As no other member is rising, is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to.)

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to begin the debate on second reading of Bill C–41 with respect to sentencing, may I first observe that the bill is a response to and product of over 14 years of effort to achieve comprehensive reform in the sentencing process as part of the criminal justice system in Canada.

Indeed the need for such reform in the sentencing process has been long recognized by judges, by parliamentarians, by lawyers, by Canadians themselves.

• (1155)

For over a decade there have been calls for such reform: a royal commission on the subject, the law reform commission, the Canadian sentencing commission which reported in 1987, and in 1988 an all–party committee of the House which had a comprehensive set of recommendations with respect to sentencing, conditional release and corrections.

Many of those recommendations are reflected in this bill. It is in recognition of that need for reform that my party gave its commitment last year during the election campaign to introduce this legislation.

I tabled Bill C–41 on June 13 last and today I recommend to the House that it be considered and approved in principle and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

The bill we are considering today is a significant one. By its terms, for the first time Canadians would have a say through Parliament on the purpose and the principles of criminal sentencing. No such statement exists at present in the Criminal Code. Parliament's role to date so far as sentencing is concerned has been limited to setting certain maximum levels of incarceration and rarely minimum levels rather than dealing with the policy objectives of the sentencing process.

Bill C–41 brings together first, a statement of the purposes and principles of sentencing; second, the rules governing procedure and the admissibility of evidence in the process; and third, the various sanctions that the courts may impose to punish, to deter, to rehabilitate, all in a form that represents the collective view of Parliament.

The changes proposed in this bill have been broadly accepted by criminal justice professionals, by the provinces and by the territories. The establishment of these statements of purposes and principles has been endorsed by the Canadian Sentencing Commission, by the justice committee of this House and the former Law Reform Commission of Canada. I would not want it to be thought that Bill C–41 is the product only of the so–called elites, the professionals, the government administrators of the

system. The bill reflects rather, in my respectful view, the broadly based need, the widely felt need in Canada for uniform and effective statements in the code for what sentencing is to achieve.

I believe that sentencing practices in Canada must consistently reflect the values that Canadians have told us are important to them in the treatment of offenders. But considering the fact that criminal sanctions provide for one of the most serious intrusions by the state into the lives of individuals, indeed depriving them of liberty, it is really quite remarkable that the criminal law to date has not contained such a policy statement.

[*Translation*]

Through this bill, Parliament provides the courts with clear guidelines. Parliament stresses the need to punish certain types of behaviour by clearly stating that the purpose of sentencing must be to denounce unlawful conduct, to deter offenders and other persons from committing crimes and to separate offenders from society, where necessary.

In addition, the statement of the purpose and principles of sentencing provides that the sentence must take into consideration the will to protect society, to assist in rehabilitating offenders and promoting their sense of responsibility and to provide reparations for harm done to victims or to the community.

The bill also defines various sentencing principles, for instance that the sentence must be proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the offender's degree of responsibility. When appropriate, alternatives must be contemplated, especially in the case of Native offenders.

• (1200)

[*English*]

The bill provides courts with clear policy direction from Parliament. The elements of punishment are addressed. Denunciation is there, as are deterrents and separation from society. The bill is a comprehensive and detailed one. I would like in the moments during which I will speak to the House today to highlight a number of issues that I feel are particularly important.

First, the statement of purpose and principles augments the normal sentencing practice of considering extenuating factors by specifying two important circumstances. It provides that when the evidence demonstrates that an offence has been committed by a person who abuses a position of trust or authority in relation to the victim, that shall be considered as an aggravating circumstance in determining the penalty.

Numerous recommendations have been made respecting breach of trust for offences involving violence against women, for example, and involving vulnerable persons including children. The 1993 violence against women survey by Statistics Canada demonstrated that almost one–half of women reported experiencing violence during their lives by men known to them. In too many cases positions of trust were exploited, for example, by adults against children or a physician against a patient.

The 1984 Badgley committee called for protection of children from persons they already know and trust. Including this specific aggravating circumstance will express Parliament's determination to extend criminal law for the purposes of protecting such persons, persons made vulnerable through the disarming effects of a trusting relationship.

The bill also specifies that if an offence is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate, this shall be considered an aggravating factor in determining the sentence. It seems to me that this provision responds to growing concerns about hate motivated crime.

The last report of the league for human rights of the B'nai Brith established that the number of reported anti–Semitic incidents has grown significantly over the last few years.

Moreover, hate motivated violence against individuals based on the offenders bias toward other sexual orientations has sparked public anxiety. General concerns have been raised about the pervasiveness of racism in Canada.

Recognition in the Criminal Code of hate motivation as an aggravating factor in sentencing will send an important message to minority communities and to the public at large.

A second feature of Bill C–41 merits special treatment in this debate. The bill reflects also the importance of our recognizing the plight of victims of criminal acts. Bill C–41 goes some distance in achieving that objective.

The statement of purpose and principles specifically indicates that objectives for sentencing include the provision of reparation for harm done to victims or the community and the promotion of a sense of responsibility in offenders, an acknowledgement of the harm done to victims and the community.

It goes further, specifically in relation to section 745 of the Criminal Code. That is the section that makes it possible for a person who has been sentenced to life with a period of parole ineligibility longer than 15 years to apply after 15 years for permission to seek parole. Such an application is heard by a court composed of a judge and jury, and two–thirds of the jury must agree before such a person is given permission to apply for parole.

The section has become controversial and it is alleged that life should mean life, that no such application should be permitted. Against that there are those in the correctional system who insist that persons who are rehabilitated after 15 years should have the opportunity to appear before a court and seek not parole but permission to apply for parole, to establish that they have

changed and society's best interests would be served by their being considered for parole release.

• (1205)

Earlier this year I met Marie King Forest, a woman from Saskatchewan whose husband was a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, murdered in the course of his duties.

Mrs. King Forest attended court earlier this year during the hearing of an application under section 745. She was accompanied at the meeting by three other women whose husbands had been police officers and who had been killed in the course of their duties.

Mrs. King Forest described to me the anguish she felt at reliving the tragedy of her husband's death and at the whole process surrounding the 745 application. It is out of respect for that anguish, for the feeling on the part of the families of murder victims, homicide victims, that they should have some role to play in the process.

Bill C–41 proposes a change to section 745, a change that would specifically require the court to take into account on such an application the perspective and the evidence of the victim's families in deciding whether permission should be granted to the applicant to seek early parole.

While it does not go as far as some would have it go—indeed they would have us revoke the section—that change goes a long way toward accommodating the concerns that have been expressed by, among others, the Canadian Police Association and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. I believe it achieves a balance. It permits the court to take into account at the time of such an application the continuing anguish and loss of the victims' families and measure it against other societal values and objectives, including the importance of reintegrating into society someone who has been rehabilitated and who can demonstrate so at the time of the hearing.

Still on the subject of victims in the criminal justice system, the restitution provisions which have been in the Criminal Code for some years, since they were passed in 1988, have largely remained unproclaimed due to provincial objections with respect to the complex procedures that they contemplate.

Bill C–41 sets out a new set of measures respecting restitution developed co–operatively by the federal government and our provincial colleagues. There is a priority given to restitution. If a court finds it appropriate to award both a fine and restitution, the priority will go to the victim. Restitution must be honoured first.

Provision is made to ensure that restitution orders can be enforced by the civil courts. One can register them, like a judgement, then ask that they be executed upon so the property or the money of the offender can be seized to satisfy the order.

Finally, the Criminal Code will specifically state that any restitution ordered by a criminal court will not limit a victim's right to sue for damages in the civil court. A victim will be able to take a restitution order to the civil court for execution.

[*Translation*]

At the present time, nearly a third of the people liable to incarceration in provincial jails are in that situation because they did not pay fines. Studies have shown that Natives are the most at risk of being incarcerated for failing to pay fines. Since we know that these offenders rarely go to prison for long periods and, in fact, often do not spend any time in jail, the administrative burden involved in treating these cases is heavy and of little use.

The bill recognizes this situation.

• (1210)

These provisions state that the court must be convinced that the offender can pay the fine contemplated before imposing it. In case a fine is not imposed because the offender would not be able to pay it, the offender will be liable to other penalties such as probation or community service.

[*English*]

Measures are provided in the bill to help provinces collect outstanding fines. Provinces will be able to use the same mechanisms to enforce fines under the Criminal Code as they use for provincial statutes. Persons designated by the court will be able to make adjustments to the order. Provinces will be able to refuse to issue or to renew permits or licences until a fine is paid. They may refer the case for civil enforcement. Incarceration would be retained only as a final enforcement option.

Ultimately I believe that these proposals will result in less crowded institutions and should decrease the costs for the system. They will do this without compromising the effectiveness of criminal justice and its administration.

[*Translation*]

In the last few years, we have learned a great deal about the administration of justice, about how to protect the public better. Incarceration must remain an option for offenders who need this form of punishment and must be separated from society to ensure the safety of the population. It is worthwhile to remind the House that Canada's incarceration rate is extremely high compared with other industrialized countries.

Furthermore, studies show that for minor and first–time offenders, incarceration is not very useful or effective and may even be harmful if the goal is to turn the person into a law–abiding citizen.

The provisions of this bill concerning alternative sentences for adults and the new approach to collecting fines, which I talked about earlier, will allow the courts to handle cases differently according to their specific sets of circumstances by expanding the range of options available for serious and minor offenders alike. Our goal is above all to create a more equitable, less costly and more effective system which Canadians can trust.

[*English*]

A general principle that runs throughout Bill C–41 is that jails should be reserved for those who should be there. Alternatives should be put in place for those who commit offences but who do not need or merit incarceration.

What alternatives will be available? For the first time Bill C–41 introduces diversion for adult offenders. At the discretion of the investigating officers and the appropriate authorities persons charged with a minor offence, particularly the first time, can be sent into a parallel stream away from the courtroom to be counselled or to be helped to overcome whatever problem led to the infraction.

Courts will continue to have probation as an appropriate sanction in the cases which require it. Fines, as mentioned, will be improved. There will be a new sentence provided for in Bill C–41 called the conditional sentence. I will speak to that remedy for a few moments.

Where a court imposes a sentence of imprisonment of less than two years and where the court is satisfied that serving the sentence in the community would not endanger the safety of society as a whole, the court may order that the offender serve the sentence in the community rather than in an institution.

Offenders who do not comply with such conditions as may be imposed at that time can be summoned back to court to explain their behaviour, to demonstrate why they should not be incarcerated. If the court is not satisfied with that explanation, it can order the offender to serve the balance of the sentence in custody. This sanction is obviously aimed at offenders who would otherwise be in jail but who could be in the community under tight controls.

• (1215)

It seems to me that such an approach would promote the protection of the public by seeking to separate the most serious offenders from the community while providing that less serious offenders can remain among other members of society with effective community based alternatives while still adhering to appropriate conditions. It also means that scarce funds can be used for incarcerating and treating the more serious offenders.

There is much in the bill to remove uncertainty and mystery about the sentencing process. The principles and purposes are spelled out once and for all. The theme of the bill is that such matters should not be left just to the justice professionals but should be there for all members of the public to see.

In keeping with that approach there is a provision in C–41 requiring reasons for sentencing to be given in all cases. This measure will encourage well–reasoned decisions, will assist courts of appeal in dealing with appeals from sentences and will serve an educative function.

Giving reasons will assist the courts in expressing their objectives in demonstrating how they are applying the principles of sentencing and should enable the public better to relate to what is done in sentencing and to the policy approved by Parliament. Without overstating the provision, I hope it will help us to evolve sound government policy in criminal justice with broad and better informed public support.

All of these proposals and C–41 in its entirety are designed to increase public accessibility to the law concerning sentencing, to make it more understandable and to make it more predictable. The bill includes a complete restructuring of part XXIII of the Criminal Code of Canada. It brings together most of the provisions relating to sentencing now in the code. It presents them in such a way as to make them, I hope, more logical and more accessible both to criminal justice professionals and to the public.

With this bill and with the other initiatives in the area of criminal justice the government is providing a balanced and a comprehensive approach to the challenge of crime in Canada. Improving the process and clarifying the principles of sentencing is not going to solve all of our social problems but the bill will, I hope, contribute along with crime prevention initiatives to respect for the law and the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society.

Jails and prisons will be there for those who need them, for those who should be punished in that way or separated from society. We must remember as well that only 10 per cent of all crime is violent and that over 53 per cent of all crime involves property, not people. Therefore, this bill creates an environment which encourages community sanctions and the rehabilitation of offenders together with reparation to victims and promoting in criminals a sense of accountability for what they have done.

It is not simply by being more harsh that we will achieve more effective criminal justice. We must use our scarce resources wisely. It seems to me that Bill C–41 strikes that balance and I commend it to this Chamber for its consideration.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert): Mr. Speaker, before stating my position on Bill C–41, I would like to point out both in my own name and on behalf of all voters in the sovereigntist federal riding of Saint–Hubert the resounding victory of the Parti Quebecois in the elections. The party was voted in with a much higher global percentage of votes than the one allowing

the Prime Minister of Canada to claim to be governing on behalf of all Canadians in Ottawa.

I speak as a sovereigntist member of Parliament and, whether we debate Bill C–41 or any other issue, the laws of this country entitle me to do so as a member of the Official Opposition in accordance with the mandate I was given by nearly 60 per cent of the voters in the federal riding of Saint–Hubert. I did not hide my stance. Must all those who strive to disprove the logic and legitimacy of our position be straightened out at the beginning of this new session? My sovereigntist beliefs do not interfere with displaying all the judgement and competence required to carry out my duties as Official Opposition critic for matters under the jurisdiction of the justice minister.

• (1220)

To those who, contrary to all rules of democracy, dispute our right to sit in this Parliament as the Official Opposition, I say this: my voice and that of my 52 colleagues joins the chorus of the 77 sovereigntist members elected in Quebec. Sovereigntists now account for about 70 per cent of the total deputation in both Quebec City and Ottawa.

May those who dispute our legitimacy and continue to doubt that our constituents voted for our program stifle their fantasies. The voters in Quebec like anywhere else in Canada vote according to their beliefs and with their heads, contrary to what the Prime Minister would have the rest of Canada believe.

This Prime Minister, whose party barely managed to muster one third of the vote in Quebec and a little over 40 per cent in the rest of the country, has no qualms of conscience about claiming to have been elected by all of Canada, while in fact more than half of his caucus comes from Ontario, where 45 per cent of the vote "from coast to coast" was concentrated.

I maintain that the legitimacy of the Parti Quebecois in Quebec and that of the Official Opposition in this Parliament is stronger than that of the federal Liberals. I would add that the Prime Minister would never have won the latest elections in Quebec and that Canadians should be aware of who speaks for Quebec from now on.

In my analysis of Bill C–41, I speak for all the people of Quebec and the 60 per cent of voters from other provinces who did not vote for the Liberals. The Parti Quebecois is now in power in Quebec, with nearly two thirds of the seats in the Assembly. It was voted in with 53 per cent of the francophone vote and massive support from the community which says "no" to stupor and lethargy and refuses to be bogged down in the status quo.

If the Prime Minister did not want to hear any more about the Quebec issue and if he thought that the pitiful attempts of Meech and Charlottetown would end the debate, he now realizes, after the September 12 election held in Quebec, that he was fooling himself as well as Canadians.

Just as I am about to do regarding Bill C–41, the Bloc Quebecois will always fulfil its role of Official Opposition loyally in this Parliament. As long as Quebec remains an integral part of Canada and as long as Quebecers pay their share of taxes to the federal revenue minister, the Bloc Quebecois will play its opposition role and fulfil the mandate it was given by Quebecers on election night, October 25, 1993.

I now open the debate on Bill C–41 as the official opposition critic on justice. I will never give up my responsibilities and my convictions in this House for the sole reason that my opinions on the future of this country differ from those of the Prime Minister of Canada and his regional caucus.

It is with these principles in mind that I now turn my attention to Bill C–41. The Minister of Justice will be pleased to learn that I have no hesitation in saying that this legislation is a positive one, even though the minister did not make the full necessary reform to protect the rights of victims.

I see that all of Part XXIII of the Criminal Code is amended to make way for new measures to deal with offenders through an appropriate reform of the sentencing process. Thus the bill introduces a measure similar to the procedure we find in the Young Offenders Act, to deal with suspects who admit their guilt by using alternatives to judicial proceedings. According to the bill, alternative measures designated under a provincial program may be substituted for the usual trial, conviction and sentencing proceedings.

Our courts, especially our criminal courts, have a huge backlog of cases that never go to trial because they are constantly postponed. The courts are dealing with an ever–increasing number of criminal cases, mostly cases that should be tried on summary conviction.

• (1225)

Visit the courts when they are in session, and you will get a good idea of the frustration felt by witnesses, victims, investigators and, in fact, all those who are faced with the inefficiencies of an outdated system that puts a heavy financial burden on governments and taxpayers.

Our current criminal procedure requires the presence of the accused and witnesses at every stage of the trial, even in the case of a guilty plea.

In most cases where there is so much evidence that a preliminary hearing is a waste of time and a trial an unnecessarily costly

exercise for the government, although compulsory for the accused, the case could have been dealt with by administrative means.

By proposing alternative judicial proceedings to deal with cases where suspects are prepared to co–operate, the minister has opened the way to some very interesting changes in criminal proceedings.

If efficiency is the goal, I think that will be achieved. However, I can imagine how some people will react. They will say this is another case of criminals getting off scot–free and legislation that is more intent on encouraging crime with these ridiculous measures than on punishing criminal behaviour. I suppose some people might have that impression.

I would be the first to say that the law should concentrate, first of all, on preventing and punishing crime. We must pass laws to protect society. That should be our only objective. The rehabilitation of offenders comes later, when society has all the instruments it needs to protect itself.

That being said, I suggest that those who may tend to react hastily take a very careful look at this bill. In section 717(1)(*a*) they will see that provincial jurisdictions may designate the type of offences to which the legislation will not apply when they set up their program.

In other words, provincial governments will be able to develop a program of alternative measures according to their perception of the priorities and views of the majority.

I am very pleased to say that if this bill is passed, it would restore much of the initiative in this area to the provinces. It will give the provinces greater flexibility to implement these measures in line with the interests of the local community, as is the case for alternative measures programs under the Young Offenders Act.

Is the Chair signalling?

The Deputy Speaker: No, and I would point out that you have 20 minutes left.

Mrs. Venne: So that might have been a nervous tic I noticed.

In addition, this would allow the courts of each province to clear thousands of minor cases or summary proceedings through admissions of guilt, thus sparing the taxpayer enormous legal costs. This is a laudable attempt to reduce public expenditure and contribute to administrative efficiency and I congratulate the Minister of Justice.

However, the bill seems to be trying to cover too many bases.

In fact, in order to attain the stated objectives, it is not necessary to subject co–operative suspects to publicity not imposed on those electing to be tried in a court of law. Thus, for example, the police will always have a suspect's fingerprints and photograph on file. And this file will be open, with the appropriate authorization, to various parties, including insurance companies, government departments and agencies, the courts and the general public so that the interests of justice may be served.

There is a large measure of naïveté here. We must ask ourselves what will motivate a suspect to co–operate with the police if his file can be accessed for two years by just about anybody and he is still subject to criminal proceedings, despite his desire to settle the matter once and for all through an alternative measure.

It should be obvious to the Minister of Justice that those who drafted this bill have never seen a suspect in their life, or have never witnessed the plea bargaining that takes place on a large scale just outside our courts of law.

For these alternative measures to be attractive and the program to work, the file must travel a private, administrative route, without publicity, eventually reaching the offices of the provincial ministers of justice, after all conditions have been faithfully met by the offender.

It is wishful thinking to believe that a suspect will co–operate with the police for the pleasure of repenting twice and having a file that resembles that of a criminal who has already been sentenced.

• (1230)

The bill also consolidates a number of sentencing principles which are, for the most part, laid down in our case law and applied by our courts across the country.

The need for a codification of guiding principles regarding sentencing is obvious. Most of the applicable criteria and factors have become standard with time. They have been used and considered in criminal cases since the first Criminal Code of Canada was published. While the common law tradition gives preference to case law over written law, it may be a good idea to set some general guidelines to be followed by the courts in their consideration of the circumstances of each case. The criteria proposed in the bill, including the statement of principles, are not restrictive but cover a range of actions wide enough to apply to most cases.

There is nothing very novel about this. I would point out however that in the part dealing with the purpose and principles of sentencing, the bill very vaguely refers to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society. I do hope that these words make sense to the people of Canada and that they will mean something to the courts because, as far as I am concerned, they simply reflect good intentions that the legislative background of the Liberals does not uphold. I would be inclined to believe that such principles could even lay the foundations for political courts. It all depends on what partisan view the power takes on a "just, peaceful and safe society".

Was it not just, peaceful and safe in the eyes of the Nazis to exterminate the Jews? What kind of just society do we have in mind now in terms of sentencing? That of the 60s? Is it through sentencing that we achieve just society status? Does the Minister of Justice leave it up to his predecessors, the illustrious instigators of Canadian liberalism, these great humanists who in 1970 had no other means to create their just society but mass imprisonment under the War Measures Act?

It all depends on one's perception of what constitutes a just society. From this flows the question: can a just society be achieved through sentencing?

This is the kind of wording you come up with when you do not have a clue what to do to look good in an enactment. Everyone is for virtue and against evil; everyone wants a just society. I simply wonder about this need for preserving a just society through sentencing in the country best liked in the world by its citizens.

This is hardly surprising on the part of the Liberals, always inspired by the model of generosity that was the former boss of the present Prime Minister, himself closely connected to the decision center in 1970. But this unfortunate legislative slip that the Liberals themselves must be embarrassed about must not prevent us from recognizing that this bill also contains innovative ideas that should be favourably considered.

For example, the principle of mitigating or aggravating circumstances is introduced in positive sentencing law. Aggravating circumstances include all aspects of an offence which reflect bias, prejudice, breach of trust and abuse of power.

Let us take for example the therapists recently convicted of sexually abusing their female patients. These professionals who were then in a position of authority abused their patients' trust. I would have liked a better French translation for the expression "position of trust" found in the English version but I imagine the courts will take this into account.

Offences committed within a therapist–patient relationship would come under this provision and the courts would be authorized by law to impose sentences more in keeping with this type of offence.

Finally, again with respect to the purpose and principles of sentencing, it is deplorable that the bill tries to sneak through the back door the concept of a parallel system of justice for Aboriginals. It is so well hidden that it is almost necessary to read Clause 718.2(*e*) twice to discover this enormity hidden under nine sneaky words, and I quote:

> **718.2** A court that imposes a sentence shall also take into consideration the following principles:
>
> (*e*) all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all offenders, with particular attention to the circumstances of aboriginal offenders.

We have (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), (*d*) and

• (1235)

The French text fails, unintentionally no doubt, to point out like the English text that the said sanctions would exclude imprisonment.

Why should Aboriginals, who make up less than 2 per cent of Canada's total population, benefit from a legal system different from that which applies to all other Canadians? Why should an Aboriginal convicted of murder, rape, assault or of uttering threats not be liable to imprisonment like any other citizen of this country? Can we replace all this with a parallel justice, an ethnic justice, a cultural justice? Where would it stop? Where does this horror come from?

Why should Aboriginals, who are adamantly opposed to the distinctiveness of Quebec society—which is still subject to all Canadians laws without exception—, who claim full Canadian citizenship, who take full advantage of the generosity of our welfare state and who enjoy tax exemptions and benefits, be treated differently from other Canadians when they commit crimes? If such is to be the case, I ask that all criminal laws applicable to the Quebec nation be transferred to the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec's National Assembly.

Other aspects of this bill deserve special attention. Not because it proposes reforms but because these reforms are incomplete, when we had an opportunity to correct some clearly unacceptable shortcomings of our criminal justice system.

The government seems concerned about the fate of victims in criminal trials. It seems to care, but its intentions are expressed so timidly that we cannot take them seriously. Indeed, the bill adds nothing that could reassure Canadian society that this government wants to protect victims.

I agree with all those who tell you that it is time to forget about the fate of unfortunate criminals and think of the victims, it is time to punish crime and compensate the victim, it is time to silence the criminal and listen to the victim. This talk about rehabilitation puts us to sleep or revolts us when we see that victims are obviously pawns in criminal proceedings, mere witnesses tossed about as the court case drags on and called at the whim of the Crown's lawyers.

We must finally see that the victim is the key person in the criminal trial when the crime involved a violation of the person or his property. The victim is the one who was assaulted or lost property, so the criminal's sentence should depend on the victim. The victim should be what drives the criminal justice system and gives society the opportunity to impose just sen-

tences on criminals in order to prevent them and their kind from making more victims.

Countless pressure groups in all provinces denounce lawmakers for their laxity in treating victims of crime. It is time to think of the victims of crime.

Despite the public outcry, the calls for redress and the continuous pleading from these thousands of women, men and children who are victims of horrible acts, what does the bill give us on this score? A timid concession made very condescendingly, probably in the name of archaic common–law principles. That is why a victim's written statement on the damages suffered can be read during sentencing. If the public prosecutor wants to consider the loss or damage incurred, he can ask the judge to impose a financial penalty that would have the effect of a judgement rendered by a civil court.

All the groups dedicated to the protection and support of victims, mainly women, will tell you that such measures are quite simply insignificant and insultingly inadequate. They are insignificant in that they are trifling and ridiculous because they will have no real effect on the outcome of the trial and the judge's decision. What should be done, and I ask the House to set partisanship aside, is more radical.

• (1240)

That the victim has the right to examine the accused and the witness; that the victim may object to the admission of evidence and has the same right to contest the evidence as the prosecution and the defence; that the victim may make representations on sentencing and, if necessary, appeal the verdict and the sentence.

I may refer to the French penal system where the victim may take part in the proceedings. We see this in cases involving non–political crimes, and we saw this at the trial of the Nazi criminal Barbie for crimes against humanity, where survivors and parents of victims who had died took an active part in the trial.

Under this system, the victim is able to play an effective and active role in the proceedings. I am convinced that when the victim is able to take part in the proceedings on the same terms as the Crown and the accused, instead of being a mere witness, at the mercy of parties who do not share the victim's involvement, the outcome will not be the same.

I am not saying that the trial is all about the victim. It is not. I have no intention of introducing a concept in our criminal law that would be entirely alien. I am simply saying that the victim is one of the parties concerned, on the same terms as the Crown and the accused. There is no rule of law that justifies excluding the victim, and we cannot afford to do so if we are to rehabilitate the victim's status in a judicial system that still lets many criminals escape or diminish its authority; a system that most Canadians see as a sinister farce in which criminals and their lawyers "get away with murder".

I know that is not true and that the vast majority of offenders are found guilty or plead guilty. I do not deny that, but I have a problem with the way criminals are treated by the system.

What is the use of finding a rapist guilty of rape if he only gets six months? I find that outrageous, Mr. Speaker. Let the victim take part in the proceedings and, mark my words, there will be some major changes.

I will conclude on this note, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say that I am pleased nevertheless with this very prudent attempt which I see as a sign of progress, considering this government's generally conservative approach to criminal law and criminal proceedings.

I would have liked to take this opportunity to say that personally, the whole field of criminal law should be turned over as soon as possible to the provincial legislatures, but I will have plenty of opportunities in the course of this session. The usual unavoidable overlap between bureaucracies will provide a splendid excuse.

I also want to say that the Minister of Justice can count on my full co–operation in preparing legislation that would change the status of the victim in criminal proceedings. It is a matter of great concern to me, and I believe we urgently need to address these issues. I would ask all groups and individuals who share my concern to get in touch with me.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, there comes a time in the affairs of a nation when the opportunity is at hand to change the course of events. Most often at that particular moment, little notice is given and the significance of the missed opportunity arises only in retrospect when we search for the cause or the seeds of some disaster. Such may be the situation before us today with Bill C–41.

We have in this bill many technical amendments to the Criminal Code which the public may not deem as momentous or strategic. It will be interesting to see if the press gives this bill much more than a day's worth of print. This is a sad and disheartening situation. In many respects the Canadian Criminal Code is a national document, is a particularly Canadian creation and has been one of the things that has bound us together as a nation. How we as a society write down the limits of personal conduct and define our sense of national morals reflects the basic character of what it means to be a Canadian. The written code gives substance to the national sense of community.

In the Criminal Code we are dealing with life and death, with the very tools of peace, order and good government. In a most basic way it is an aspect of how we as Canadians describe ourselves, who we are. We are not American or European but distinctly Canadian in our interrelationships with one another in our local communities.

• (1245)

The Criminal Code is a statement of how we as a national community attempt to protect our society. The Criminal Code by reflection describes what Canadians hold dear and value. It can also reveal the limits of our ability to govern ourselves through our institutions. Unlike the United States and most of the less viable principalities of the third world, our Constitution does not include a lofty statement of transcendent national principles. Nor do we have a charter mythology.

We are very permissive in allowing our fellow citizens, provincial governments and business establishments, to fly the flags they prefer for allegiance or anticipated commercial advantage. We have disloyal parliamentarians in the Chamber who have given up on Canada and who are working to have the representative voice of their great province no longer heard from these desks.

July 1 is our Canada Day but some Canadians get more emotional satisfaction out of celebrating St. Jean Baptiste, Christopher Columbus or Robert Burns. No doubt for a few here and there it would be Queen Victoria or even Joey Smallwood. When a most gracious and forbearing lady visits one of the countries under whose constitution she continues to be the head of state, she is met by most Canadians with respect and adulation, some with indifference and a few with discourtesy.

If nationhood is sharing and Canadians seem to share few common sentiments, what are the bonds of Canadian association? It is meaningless to say we share a common territory, that citizens of Windsor share a common territory with their fellow citizens of Halifax or Yellowknife but not with their neighbours in Detroit, only because of the way the national boundaries are drawn. It is not very helpful to say that Canadians share a common citizenship without some account of the obligations and the privileges of that citizenship.

There is perhaps an alternative definition of nationhood. A national community is based on a sharing of claims both individual and collective. These claims are made against individual citizens, private groups and public authorities both within the nation and outside the nation. These claims are honoured by a structure of political relationships that acknowledges no superior authority. In the idea of shared claims and responsibilities we find the reality of Canadian nationhood in such places as the Statutes of Canada and the Public Accounts of the Government of Canada. Here are some things Canadians share.

The first is a national Criminal Code and rules of criminal procedure. In these are embodied some of the most important mutual claims of citizens and the Canadian community. Canadians share a common system of penitentiaries for the incarceration of those guilty of the graver offences against these laws.

Second, we have a national commitment to the Canadian social safety net to be implemented through joint action of the federal, provincial and local authorities. The most important elements are the various programs of income maintenance and the removal of financial barriers between citizens and their access to medical, hospital and educational services.

Canadians can move freely throughout the nation without thereby suffering a termination of health or income security benefits. Yet within these national characters Quebec has been permitted the freedom to go its own uncoordinated way and create duplication in medicare, unemployment insurance and immigration.

As Canadians we are proud we have a national commitment to the alleviation of regional economic disparities and to interprovincial fiscal equalization. We have had a national commitment to the support of the arts, letters and sciences, along with other creative activities in broadcasting, film making, et cetera. We have a commitment as a nation that wherever practical Canadians will have access to the Government of Canada and its departments and agencies in the official language the citizen chooses.

Through trade and tariff policies and national taxes we have a national assertion that Canadian capacity to produce can be shared on a nationwide basis. This list is by no means exhaustive. Other items might be added in terms of environmental policy, public legal aid, equality before and under the Canadian law, foreign ownership rules, the extension of broadcasting services to remote uneconomic areas and a national approach to international competition in sport.

Only in terms of national community is it possible to explain or defend the magnitude of the budget of Indian affairs compared to the absence of Canadian assistance to other traditional peoples undergoing the strains of modernization elsewhere in the world. Only national community justifies Ottawa's help for Newfoundland fishermen and its lack of help for the people in similar circumstances living in nearby St. Pierre and Miquelon.

• (1250)

Bill C–41 is certainly a measure of the view of the government about what it thinks is going on in our Canadian society and community. Amendments to the Criminal Code can be a measure of the government's sense of the need to move, to change or to alter the status quo. The bill represents the status quo, business as usual and perhaps maybe even a cynical view of Canada. It sends the message that the best we can do is a little maintenance and housekeeping, and that a sense of vision of a new and better Canada is not worth seeking. More likely the vision of a new Canada is not within the capability of the government.

The sense of urgency I hear from constituents about the grave need of government to mind the store, to take care of the business of the people and to reform the justice system is a theme that comes from every region of Canada. Like so many other things for which the government has lost the sense of proportion, the lack of fundamental inspiration to govern responsively is clearly evident in this timid housekeeping bill. It seems that the times have passed by the government. My

colleagues across the floor do not seem to have heard the cry from Canadians concerning law and order.

My Reform colleagues represent, therefore, a new wave of change. In Bill C–41 we can see the comparison that the government is stuck in the past. The bill is clear evidence that the old line parties which embody the old line attitudes and ways of thinking do not adequately address community expectations of today.

From this side of the House we have been calling upon the government to wake up. We call it to action to deal with the needless tragedy we are facing from debt and deficit, to rethink the responsiveness of our democratic institutions, and most especially to address law and order reform.

I am here to tell the government benches that the justice system is not sound. The justice system needs more than tinkering from a Bill C–41. There are few, save those within the professional criminal justice community, that have any respect or even basic tolerance of how the government minds the store concerning crime. They know the justice system does not work sufficiently well.

It is from within this context that Bill C–41 and Bill C–42 come to the floor of the House of Commons. It certainly is a measure of where the government is at. I do not need to get into name calling for evidence of inadequacy and the lack of vision is on the table for the nation to see. Bill C–41 will do little to respond sufficiently to what the community wants and needs. Here we have a piece of legislation that is interesting in parts, irritating in others, but utterly fails to respond to what the country is asking for in terms of reforming the criminal justice system.

The government desperately needs to get the machinery of the justice system moving to respond to community needs. I have heard the pleas of my constituents and have responded by stating them clearly in the House. The time has come for the government to listen to all Canadians.

At some point one must draw a line in the sand, draw attention to a bill and then the attitude it represents, the magnitude of the inadequacy, the missed opportunity and the disappointment of the community when comparing results with promises. The bill is such a disappointment.

As Canadians begin to understand that in bill after bill the same pattern emerges, that there is no vision or comprehension of what the community wants, they will likely elect Reformers in sufficient numbers to govern. The nation then can get on with real law reform and build a criminal code that would probably be half as long but clear and resolute, understandable and, above all, would operate in a manner that represents mainstream Canadian values.

The change that my election to the House represents is a new type of change. Reformers represent not business as usual, incremental change as reflected in Bill C–41, but discontinuous change that is not part of old patterns. The courage to make bold changes is sometimes confusing and disturbing, particularly to those in power and to those who are being left behind like the authors of the bill.

It is sometimes small, fundamental changes that can make the biggest difference to our lives. Even if it goes unnoticed at the time it is the changes in the way we view our relationship to our constituents that make the biggest difference in the way we legislate. If we can change the justice system, this nationally shared structure, we can demonstrate that in all areas we can build a Canada where all its citizens will want in for the goodness we share rather than want out to keep for themselves what serves their own purpose.

• (1255)

The discontinuous change I am talking about, the vision of a new Canada, may require upside down thinking different from the old patterns even if the bold changes appear not understandable or discordant at first sight.

Certainly the self–described Quebec militants on this side of the House have a quest that has outlived its usefulness. Their aspirations longed for in view of the problems we all face cannot be fulfilled by the passé dreaming of the militants for a former age. No longer can they squarely respond to the problems in a world of new international realities. We are all in the same boat. Indeed the ship of state is leaking and the tired ideology of the current government can only think of patching a little here and there as evidenced by the inadequacy of Bill C–41.

There is a leaner ship to be built of a new order of technology and thinking. For the militants to use a lifeboat to try to separate from the old ship will only bring them to a situation of drifting through rough seas in a small boat with no protection or capacity to ride the storm waves of international change. It will not accomplish the results they seek.

There is too much crime in Canada. We want safer streets. We want community mechanisms to break the cycle of violence. The Criminal Code sets the standards and the boundaries; our community institutions must fill the need.

Change begins with the recognition that a problem exists. In Canada everyone knows we have a crime problem that is at unacceptable levels. Our justice system is operated apart from the community. It is time the justice system accounts for its results and what it has done on a delegated basis on behalf of the community.

Who owns the justice system anyway in the long run? Crime, and society's response to it, is a big industry. A lot of precious community resources are spent on its seemingly unaccountable operations. The way it operates Canadians could believe that it is the insiders in the criminal justice community that run things for themselves.

We need an interrelated sequence of process in the administration of criminal justice that is simple and cost effective. There must be consistency in philosophy from the moment an offender has the first contact with the police to the time of final discharge. The new thinking required hopefully will bring a general policy which woven into the entire system would guide the various services with a uniform theme.

The community intuitively knows a coherent philosophy to integrate the various stages of administration of criminal justice does not exist. The system as a whole is more like subsystems within which pragmatic guidelines have been developed to enable the professionals involved to fulfil their occupational roles as they perceive them. This situation must change.

For example, what frustrates an outrageous public opinion is justice delayed. It is offenders roaming the community unaccountable. It is sentencing that does not reflect mainstream community values. It is the misplaced priorities of an offender focused system. It is a system that by its poor account of itself fails to earn the confidence and support of the community it is supposed to serve.

Specifically in the bill we have heard the government side describe the efficacious substance of Bill C–41. It is a reworking of Bill C–90 from the last Parliament. I like some things in the bill as it codifies what we have been doing in British Columbia for years, specifically alternative measures in the adult system akin to the provisions of the Young Offenders Act. In B.C. the crown simply exercises its prerogative to refer files to the B.C. corrections branch where probation officers will explore alternatives to court and arrange dispute settlement arrangements. We have even had some private contracts for offender–victim reconciliation projects.

The form of the law is now following the function of the law. However, what the government gives with one hand in modernization in this section, it takes away with the other by denying victims assistance in establishing responsibility in civil proceedings. Disclosure of records of diversions can be made to insurance companies but cannot be used to establish liability in civil proceedings. A nice double standard. The records of the alternative measures cannot be used in evidence in subsequent offences after two years. This is unacceptable.

Specifically section 718.2 goes in the right direction by outlining sentencing principles but the aggravating circumstances section is incredible to say the least.

A vicious assault based on hate criteria is to be dealt with more harshly than an equally violent assault that was done for money or just for kicks.

• (1300)

In this section interestingly the grounds listed are the same as in the charter of rights except this bill has added sexual orientation.

Section 718.2 goes in the right direction in part (b) by saying that a sentence should be similar to sentences imposed on similar offenders for similar offences committed in similar circumstances.

This notion has always been an operative principle of argument at the sentencing stage of the court process. However, with our tremendous capacity to quantify statistics with computers we have the ability to produce a comprehensive sentencing grid of what currently is happening across the nation in sentencing. A rational sentencing grid that plots the hierarchy of offences with their prevailing tariffs against the culpability and history of the offender could go a long way in responding to the inequities of sentencing and the lack of public confidence in the system.

If there are no benchmarks to compare the principles of specific deterrence to the individual and general deterrence to the community it fails to operate very well. In producing a national sentencing grid document the community could then deal with appropriate retribution as distinct from revenge.

Retribution is based on the principle that the punishment should fit the crime and be properly meted out and controlled by the state. Revenge on the other hand is characterized by lawlessness and its excesses.

The government had an opportunity here to be bold in this respect and it has failed. This bill outlines old principles but then fails to provide the tools to accomplish them. Then to top it off the very next section in part (c) reads, and pay attention now because I know my community will chortle at this one: "Where consecutive sentences are imposed the combined sentence should not be unduly long or harsh". What is the sense of this type of language in the Criminal Code?

While I am talking about basic sense I can hear the insult to aboriginals inherent and implied in section (e) of this part: "All available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all offenders with particular attention to the circumstances of aboriginal offenders". Here we go with paternalism again.

Further in this section it is time that a sentence including a fine, some jail and probation be possible rather than just two of the three. Again this bill fails to modernize and provide latitude for innovation.

It is heartening to see that in the last few years because of community agitation the victim is gradually being written into the statutes as having standing in law and a valid interest and stake in criminal proceedings. Nevertheless the wording of 722 prescribing what is permissible in victim impact statements is far too narrow.

Nowhere is the relationship of the victim to the offender allowed to be described. Neither are the views of the victim concerning appropriate consequences allowed to be heard. This paternalistic controlling view over victims at court is out of date and not worthy of this well intentioned but inadequate bill.

In section 722.1 a similar controlling attitude is reflected in the letter of the law where the clerk of the court shall provide a copy of a document after filing. At the behest and convenience of the author presentence reports and psychological evaluations should optionally be made available directly to the offender or counsel and the prosecutor. There is no need for the clerk to control or have complete ownership of the transmittal of documents. Here is another case where the law should follow function and practice but it does not.

In section 724(e) proof beyond reasonable doubt is unreasonably harsh for the crown to refer to any previous conviction by the offender. In the same vein section 727 is completely archaic and unnecessary as it does not accomplish any tangible objective.

It is an anachronism to have special procedure requiring the crown to give special notice that a greater punishment would be sought because a criminal is a repeat offender. There should be no such item in the code.

Section 732.1 is irritating in sub (3)(g) where an offender's permission is needed for the judge to be able to sentence them to a treatment program when offenders have specific problems such as substance abuse or sexual problems.

Sentencing is given to an offender in court on behalf of the community. There is not a community meeting to explore palatable choices to the likes of the offender. Here we have 1960s thinking again that invokes all the arguments about the utility of court ordered treatment.

• (1305)

We are long past this mentality with the vast experience of dealing with sexual offenders. I suppose the justice minister's advisers hang on to their old fashioned notions about criminals. The outdated principle is repeated again in section 747.3 concerning hospital orders.

Certainly a probation order should be able to be extended beyond three years for special cases. Under section 732.2(1) an offender can be called back to court by the initiative of the probation officer. The section allows the offender and the prosecutor to be heard in such circumstances, but what about the probation officer who initiated the proceedings in the first place?

When an offender is messing up or revealing new or previously undisclosed problems new, more onerous conditions should be allowed to be added to an order. This only makes sense but the law prohibits common sense response.

Additionally when a probationer violates the order of the court section 733(1) should involve a reverse onus provision for the offender to show cause why a sanction should not be applied for breach of the sentence and make the section parallel to section 742.6(9) of the breach of the conditional sentence.

Section 743 states: "Everyone who is convicted of an indictable offence for which no punishment is specially provided is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years". Simply put, it should read 10 years.

I now come to section 745.6. This section is so disturbing it alone brings the law into disrepute. This section allows first degree murderers to apply parole after serving only 15 years of their sentence. Private members' bills have been introduced to repeal this provision. There is little support from the community for this measure. I cannot emphasize enough how fast this procedure should be done away with.

The minister is all too well aware of the national feeling on this clause, yet he persists. It is utterly incredible and an insult to Canadians.

Section 750 spells out when holders of public office such as members of Parliament will be vacated for conviction. Five years in jail is a most lenient if not absurd standard. I suggest the mere conviction of an indictable offence should be sufficient.

Section 751.1 outlines the civil option to recover costs for defamatory libel. Of course unless the personal bankruptcy provisions are also changed in other statutes this provision is meaningless as it is for civil court judgments arising from deliberate and malicious harm.

This bill really does nothing to address bringing greater certitude to the criminal sentencing process. Despite the codifying and writing down of the purpose and principles of sentencing judges will still have too wide a latitude in imposing inconsistent sentences. The aggravating factors section certainly flies in the face of the principle of equality before the law.

How can we on this side of the House support this most disappointing bill? I call on the government to bring in some

amendments so we can speed the bill on its way. Let this bill reflect Canadian values and bring forward Criminal Code amendments that are needed, rather than just tinkering with the system.

A needed change for example is the category of sex offences that are just summary and not dual which removes these offences from the identification procedure. Street prostitution is dealt with by the issue of a street–side ticket, a consequence of the summary status of section 213.

In this bill where is the ban on replica firearms and the needed amendments to section 85 of the criminal use of firearms? Where is the section on the public disclosure with respect to dangerous offenders and also the designation of such to be done at any time during a sentence, not just at the beginning? Where is the provision for the collection and analysis of DNA testing? I could go on.

The picture is clear. This government is in no mood to give Canadians the legal climate desired because it is not predisposed to renew a system that we have inherited from its type of outdated thinking. Criminal justice in Canada is not particularly systematic. At the heart of the system is the necessary conflict between the competing value systems of crime control and due process.

The administrative and legislative responsibility for its functioning is fragmented between different agencies responsible to different levels of government and in some cases between a number of private organizations and different levels of government. There will always be the task to balance individual rights and the general security of the community. I had hoped that Bill C–41 would have clarified what is paramount in this regard but it does not.

The next step needed is to inculcate a sense of the interdependence of the criminal justice system with broader social and political processes which have an impact on every Canadian.

• (1310)

The criminal justice system in turn is part of a larger whole, the social forces such as health care, education and welfare services which bear upon the quality of Canadian life.

Those who have the disposition to resist the disintegration of the Canadian community from within or its absorption into the maw continentalism from without have for too long been on the defensive. We have been too slow in formulating the credentials of this glorious community, too bemused by academics who would rather define it out of existence, too preoccupied with the emotional, symbolic and cultural dimensions in nationhood.

It remains that as far as the political order is concerned, there is only one Canadian question. How can the over 27 million people who live within our national boundaries establish and sustain governmental institutions which are at once humane, effective and responsive?

The times now require a national community to be held together by a national government of a first class, triple–A rating; one that is approachable, accountable and most of all affordable. The bonds that we do have, the national values and national commitments of this country, are concretely embodied in particular measures for honouring the mutual claims and responsibilities of citizens and governments for each other.

If the present claims and ties can be sustained and new definitions agreed upon such as a renewed justice system, Canadian nationhood may need nothing more to reflect the greatness of the human spirit working together in common enterprise.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and honour to rise in this House to speak to Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code, sentencing and other acts in consequence thereof.

Legislation regarding criminal justice reform has always been of great importance to me. The legislation before us today on sentencing reform is no exception to that rule. As stated in our red book, this government has committed itself to introducing a broad range of crime and justice initiatives to reserve Canada's growing crime and violence rates.

People across this country have said that they want significant changes to the criminal justice system. Thankfully this government, through the work of my hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, has not only taken the time to listen to the people but we are doing something about it.

So far this government has introduced legislation in several key areas of criminal justice such as the recent amendments to the Young Offenders Act, amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and amendments to the Immigration Act. These initiatives are reflective of a balanced, fair and reasoned approach to the changing and challenging times and of course our criminal justice system.

Bill C–41 marks yet another important step in the delicate process of criminal justice reform. As the minister has indicated, the proposed legislation contains a number of key provisions including a statement of purpose and principles, measures to strengthen the level of fairness in our system of fines, greater penalties on offenders who have breached their probation, the introduction of conditional sentences, clarification of rules of evidence and procedures for sentencing hearings, as well as amendments to part 23 of the Criminal Code in order to create a more coherent and understandable method of documenting provisions related to the sentencing process.

Perhaps the most significant provisions of Bill C–41 are those related to enhancing the rights of victims. In this regard the Minister of Justice has proposed what I believe to be unprecedented amendments to section 745 of the Criminal Code which

deal with early parole hearings for persons sentenced to life in prison.

During the last Parliament through my private member's bill, Bill C–330, I attempted to introduce similar changes that at the very least would allow victims of violence to present information during a judicial review or early parole hearing.

Consequently I applaud the minister's intent to amend section 745 of the Criminal Code in order to provide victims of violence with the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the criminal justice system by presenting victim information when convicted criminals apply for early parole consideration. This measure will ensure that victims of violent crimes have the opportunity to speak out about the harm done by the offender. This means that the victim's experience will be taken into consideration when deciding whether the parole eligibility period should be reduced.

• (1315)

This particular provision also has been advocated by various victims rights' organizations and advocacy groups such as the Canadian Police Association, which has publicly acknowledged the merits of the proposed amendments to section 745 of the Criminal Code.

In fact, as I speak, right in downtown Hamilton in my riding of Hamilton West, the Canadian Police Association, the Centre for Victims of Crime and CAVEAT, an acronym for Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating its Termination are concluding a three–day conference on various criminal justice issues including victim's rights and parole reform.

Today representatives of the 150 or so conference delegates will be tabling further recommendations to the federal government that will help us continue along the challenging road of criminal justice reform.

According to National Parole Board statistics there are over 2,000 offenders serving life sentences in the Canadian correctional system. According to the National Parole Board, on average approximately 40 offenders per year will be eligible to apply for a judicial review over the next 15 years. At the beginning of this year there were 128 offenders eligible for a judicial review.

The sheer volume of impending parole eligibility hearings which will take place in the immediate future necessitates swift action in the area of parole reform.

Crown attorneys tell me they are not prepared to handle the workload that is about to come crashing down on them. That is why it is necessary to take swift action.

Getting back to the statistics, as of March of this year, 42 decisions were made on early parole applications by first degree murders. Of those 42 decisions, 32 parole eligibility reductions were granted. That means 76.2 per cent of the offenders who applied for early parole consideration had their parole eligibility period reduced.

Many questions arise from this scenario. For example in each of these cases and in the first instance the accused must be convicted of his or her crime by a unanimous jury decision. Yet at the judicial review early parole consideration can be granted to that first degree murderer based on only a two–thirds decision of that jury at judicial review. Why?

In my humble opinion the status quo is unacceptable. I look forward to addressing these and other equally compelling questions when Bill C–41 is referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

The government recognizes the shortcomings of section 745 and is ready, willing and able to initiate the ongoing process of change.

In closing I would like to encourage my hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice, to vigorously pursue his criminal justice reform agenda by continuing to weed out those inappropriate provisions such as section 745 of the Criminal Code in order to develop a balanced, fair and reasonable criminal justice system in this great country of ours. In doing so the government will fulfil its commitment to the people of Canada who have so passionately expressed the need for meaningful and progressive criminal justice reform.

With the support and co–operation of the concerned members of the House, the challenging work going to be faced by members of the justice committee and indeed the concerned citizens throughout this nation I am sure we will be able to meet the challenges we face in the process of rejuvenating Canada's criminal justice system.

• (1320)

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C–41 which is an amendment to the Criminal Code regarding sentencing.

I want to focus specifically on what the hon. member had touched on in his speech, that is, section 745 of the Criminal Code. This bill leaves section 745 in the code which makes a mockery of the term life imprisonment.

In 1976 the government abolished the death penalty and assured us that society would be protected by sentencing murderers to life imprisonment with no chance for parole for 25 years. However Bill C–84 which was to accomplish this contained a little known clause which created section 745 of the Criminal Code.

Section 745 nullifies the term life imprisonment and grants murderers the right to apply for parole eligibility after serving only 15 years of a life sentence. Section 745(1) of the Criminal Code reads: "Where a person has served at least 15 years of his sentence he may apply to the appropriate Chief Justice in the province in which the conviction took place for a reduction in

his number of years of imprisonment without eligibility for parole".

This section makes a complete mockery of the so–called life sentence which was a trade–off for the elimination of capital punishment in our statutes.

One parliamentarian in support of section 745 called it "a glimmer of hope if some incentive is to be left when such a terrible penalty is imposed on the most serious of all criminals". This parliamentarian reflects the typical, irresponsible, unaccountable, bleeding–heart mentality that underlines so much of the legislation passed in this House over the last 25 years, including our parole system, our Young Offenders Act, our Immigration Act. The same mentality has created the federal debt of half a trillion dollars and produced a budget that will add $100 billion to that debt in the next three years.

This irresponsible, unaccountable, bleeding–heart mentality has ignored the rights of the victims of crime, their families and society. This is the type of mentality that has betrayed our country. What murderer ever gave a victim a glimmer of hope when he or she viciously tore life from the victim?

Did Norman Clairmont give the 19–year old Potts girl a glimmer of hope when he brutally and savagely murdered her in 1978? No he did not. Did Larry Sheldon extend a glimmer of hope to the nine–year old girl he raped and murdered in 1974? No he did not. Did Charles Simard offer a glimmer of hope to the two teenagers he murdered in the province of Quebec? No he did not.

Now these murderers are lining up to take advantage of a glimmer of hope they denied our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, a glimmer of hope provided by irresponsible politicians and governments.

Murderers, rapists and vandals lose all their rights the moment they launch their deadly attack upon the life of another. In spite of this undeniable fact, we have watched the bleeding–heart politicians restore the rights of these criminals through legislation devoid of common sense, legislation like section 745 of the Criminal Code.

In a judgment rendered on April 28, 1994, Judge Demetrick of the Alberta Provincial Court declared that portions of the definition of a firearm contained in section 84(1) of the Criminal Code is so convoluted as to be "legal fiction" and "twice removed from reality".

How is it possible that the Government of Canada is producing legislation so convoluted that it is declared by our courts to be fictitious and twice removed from reality? The answer to this question is that the thinking that is producing this type of legislation has to be equally fictitious and twice removed from reality. It is the kind of thinking that comes from an ivory tower mentality, the kind of mentality that produced the Young Offenders Act, the Immigration Act, the national debt, this government's approach to gun control legislation. It is the kind of mentality that produced section 745 of the Criminal Code which returns rights to the murders of Canadian citizens.

• (1325)

In March of this year the hon. member for York South—Weston introduced a private member's bill to get rid of section 745 of the Criminal Code which gives convicted killers the right to apply for early parole. I can tell the House that this member has a great deal of support from our party and I believe from Canadians all across Canada. We will watch to see how much support he has from his own governing party.

We will see if the ivy tower mentality, the twice removed from reality mentality identified by Judge Demetrick still controls the agenda in the Liberal caucus. If it does, then the only alternative the people of Canada have is to wait until the next election and remove this government from power as decisively as they removed the Tories from office in the last election. I stand in opposition to this bill.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member.

As I said in my earlier statement I too had a private member's bill and my question is to the hon. member who just spoke. Those irresponsible bleeding–heart politicians that the member referred to did help the courts to create the best country in the world according to the United Nations. It is not as though we are all going to hell in a handbasket on one bill.

I would hope that the member opposite is not so opposed to this bill, as he stated at the end of his remarks, that he would not consider coming to the justice committee when it deals with Bill C–41 in order to give us his background, knowledge and expertise on section 745.

It is very easy for anyone to stand up in this place and condemn. I used to do it myself four years ago from across the way to the government. I always took the opportunity, when given, to go before a committee to try to reason with the government on why it did not act, or attempt to team up with other members of Parliament who wanted change.

I would hope that the member opposite will take the opportunity to make representations to the committee on justice in order to try to change the government's mind on section 745.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is reasonable. As I have appeared before audiences all across certainly my constituency and other parts of Alberta I am quite prepared to appear before any committee or any assembly or any audience to put forward my concerns and my reasons for opposing section 745 of the Criminal Code.

The premise on which my concern is based is that it was a betrayal of the people of Canada at the time capital punishment was being removed from the Criminal Code. We were promised that the substitution would provide the protection that society was looking for and that substitution was life imprisonment with a minimum penalty of 25 years.

I have heard individuals, including open–line commentators, express outright disbelief when they heard about section 745 and its implementation. Now these murders come forward and use it in order to gain early parole.

My concern and my opposition is to the whole of the bill, of course. However with the time limit, I focused only on that one particular area and other members will focus on other areas of this bill.

My specific concern is that section 745 should never have been implemented in the first place. It was a betrayal of the honest people who are prepared to give this whole idea of the removal of capital punishment from the Criminal Code an opportunity. That was based upon a life sentence with a minimum term of imprisonment for 25 years.

• (1330)

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–41 is a major step toward safer homes and safer streets. I am pleased to speak in support of it.

This bill responds to many of the concerns about our justice system that I heard during the last election and that I continue to hear on the streets of Edmonton. It presents positive measures and practical common sense solutions, not rhetoric and sensationalism. Bill C–41 is effective action, not simplistic slogans, and that is what the people of Edmonton East voted for.

Edmonton has established a strong record in crime prevention, reducing the crime rate by 25 per cent in the last five years while rates in other cities have increased. It has achieved that goal through community co–operation and community policing. Based on its experience Edmonton has been calling for changes in legislation to support local action.

Today I would like to highlight a few of the specific measures of Bill C–41 that will be welcomed by the people in my city and other communities across the country.

First there is a clear statement of principles as the basis for sentencing. People in Edmonton East get angry about what seem to be arbitrary sentences handed down by judges without explanation.

How can one explain it when someone abuses a child, takes away the very foundation of her life and is back on the streets in a year or two with no change in behaviour? Edmonton East welcomes the provision requiring judges to take into consideration the misuse of a position of trust and authority as an aggravating circumstance.

How can one explain it when a repeated offence by a john destroying the safety of a neighbourhood gets a mere $100 slap on the wrist, less than a traffic ticket these days? Communities in my riding will welcome the explicit requirement that judges take into account other aggravating circumstances.

When a break–in leaves an elderly couple bleeding and dying and their house in shambles, the community understands the seriousness of the offence but the courts do not. We have been trying to make judges aware of the true costs of damage done by johns soliciting next to a neighbourhood school, an aggravating circumstance.

When charges are laid against drug traffickers who use drug houses and destroy neighbourhoods, judges should be able to consider the considerable damage to the community. Hopefully the police will not need to go back time and time again and that will also save money spent on expensive policing efforts.

The second is a greater voice for victims in the justice system. This bill responds to the public demand that victims have a greater role in several ways.

First, victims and their families will be able to make representations to the court in early parole hearings. This is a welcome change. People who receive threatening letters from convicts and fear their release on parole will now have a voice in that decision–making process and decision makers will have more complete information on which to base their decisions.

Second, restitution will now be a real option. Justice is not done when an elderly couple in our community loses most of their possessions in a vicious attack and at the end of the whole process they get nothing back. People are the victims of crime, not the state.

Greater use of restitution was one of the recommendations of the Edmonton safer cities report. I am happy to see that its recommendation has been followed here.

Experience with pilot projects has shown that offenders who understand the true impact of what they have done on another person are less likely to reoffend. For the first time Bill C–41 puts some teeth into that basic truth by making restitution an integral part of sentencing.

Third, Edmonton will welcome stronger rules for probation. Offences by people out on probation have eroded the public confidence in the justice system in my riding. Yet probation is an important vehicle for the rehabilitation of young offenders. The provisions in this bill will go a long way to restore credibility of the probation system and by extension, the public confidence in the justice system.

• (1335)

Community groups that have tried to provide opportunities for people on probation report that they need more support to make these programs successful. Better supervision will encourage communities to participate in programs designed to help offenders change their ways and find their place in the community again.

Fourth, greater use of conditional sentences with clear penalties will be more effective than overcrowded jails. Canada has the second highest incarceration rate in the world next to the United States. One look south of the border is proof enough that high incarceration rates do not equal safe streets.

My riding contains a number of correctional facilities, enough for people to know that jails do not change many people. In fact we see the evidence that jails are often schools for crime. Doing time can turn a minor offender into a professional criminal.

For minor offences a conditional sentence with a severe penalty for breaking the conditions is a much better alternative. It will also allow us to spend our limited protection dollars on people who really need to be put away from society. The correctional service says it costs about $47,000 a year to keep someone in prison with little to show for it at the end.

Finally, expansion of the alternative measures program will be welcome. Edmonton has a successful program for young people who are going to court for the first time, often for shoplifting. One of the recommendations of the safer cities report endorsed by city council is the expanded use of this program. Young people who have already had a brush with the law, perhaps in another place or on a reserve, would also benefit from a program that forces them to deal directly with the victim and understand the consequences of what they did. Bill C–41 will allow that.

I am happy that the federal government is responding to suggestions made by people who are close to the problem and who have put a lot of effort into identifying practical ways to deal with crime in our communities.

In conclusion, Bill C–41 will have three positive results: better outcomes from our justice system; safer homes and streets; and better value for money spent on courts and corrections. That is what the people of Canada want for every community.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C–41. Members have heard from our party why we feel so strongly about the government wimping out once again. However, we are getting used to that in this session of Parliament. There are so many issues in Bill C–41 to talk about but the one I want to spend a particular amount of time on is victim impact statements.

A case which comes to mind happened to Angela Richards, a young lady in my riding. I attended the verdict and the sentencing of Wayne Perkin, the individual who actually committed this horrendous crime. This individual had previously committed a sexual assault; he bound up a young lady and injected her with cocaine. He was subsequently sentenced and was then released by the parole board. Had he not been released, young Angela would still be alive today.

However, it would not be appropriate for me to stand here and give some political rhetoric. I want to read to the House and to anybody listening a victim impact statement provided by Corinne Schaefer, the sister of Angela Richards. This victim impact statement probably says it all about what is wrong with our system in Canada today. I will sum up with comments about Bill C–41 that truly identify what the problems are and why this government is so very ineffective. This victim impact statement was given on June 30, 1994 in Vancouver:

> Two years have just passed since learning of Angela's murder. It is extremely difficult to write down the impact of her death.
>
> I am confused about the value of this. A part of me feels this statement will have no bearing on whether or not an "appropriate" sentence will be handed down as I do not think there is any punishment great enough. I tend to think this may only be a therapeutic exercise for my benefit.

• (1340)

Already it can be seen that Corinne's confidence in the system, as much as anybody else's in this country today, is lost.

> The other part of me wants to scream and cry out to you in my anger and pain. I want this statement to really make a difference. I know this is my only chance to finally have some say in this matter. All those days in court were gruelling and particularly upsetting when defence presented false allegations about Angie. It is awful to go through such tragic and deeply personal accounts of her death and do nothing but sit and listen. Now the opportunity for this statement presents itself, yet I am told I cannot comment on sentencing, nor how much I hate the accused and wish him dead. So through my fury and rage I will do my best to put into words how just two years ago my carefree and wondrously happy life was shattered upon learning that my precious baby sister was murdered.
>
> I love Angie very much, more than words can say. How can I make you understand how much I miss her when I am still denying her death? I do not want to believe this and though I know in my heart that it is true, my heart has yet to accept it. Angie was not only my sister. She was my friend. There were no secrets between us. She was funny and witty and bright and loving and mostly always happy. She was everything that the accused is not. And now she is dead.
>
> I want so desperately to know and believe that she was truly struck "out like a light" before being so viciously stabbed but I will never know, no matter how many times I replay that night in my mind. How horrible for her. I cannot help but feel guilty at not being there to somehow save her.
>
> How did we lose such a beautiful and vital human being? She is gone from our life. Yet we are plagued with remembering her murder for the rest of our lives. A despicable excuse for a person, a criminal with such an extensive history, a parolee, a repeat

offender, someone I hope you will consider to be a dangerous offender, considering the current charge he is facing: 13 counts of sexual assault with a minor, and administering a noxious substance.

This kind of person the victim is describing is the kind of person the government is talking about getting parole after 15 years.

It makes me sick to write his name. I wish him dead so I do not have to worry about when he appeals parole and the day he gets out, which could be in 15 years. Every day I fear for his next victim, my life and for his. I figure I will be barely 50 years old and he will be out on the streets and I will still have it in me to kill him. Who can predict what the future holds? I wonder if I will ever be kind and caring again. I certainly will not be forgiving of this. I have become cynical, hard and very sarcastic. I am humiliated by the person I have become. I also tend to be paranoid. After all, who can you trust?

This is a victim impact statement and is not made up by me. It is by someone who is affected by the laws this government is bringing into place.

Even my dreams are nightmares and often show Angie's body cut up and floating in water or in a dumpster. Once I dreamt that she was brought to the hospital and was going to make it. The reality hit once again upon waking.

For a while there I wished for my mom to die as I could see how much pain she was in. I cannot talk to mom about my sad feelings and how much I miss Angie because I hate to see her cry. She has cried so much I do not want her to see me cry because I do not want to upset her any more than she already is. It's crazy. Even though I need mom more now than ever I can't turn to her. I hate to see the pain on her face, how disoriented and scattered her thoughts have become, how tiny and frail she is to us all. It is disgusting and totally unforgivable. I am at a loss as to what life is all about.

The joy of my sons' births were diminished greatly by my grief. They have been cheated out of what would have been innumerable wonderful moments with their Auntie Angie. I wonder why I brought them into such a horrible world.

I am just now forcing myself to get therapy as I've exhausted whatever coping mechanisms I had and I'm starting to want to hurt myself badly. I'm scared I'm going to do something stupid. My husband is at a loss as to helping me. At times I just want to run away from it all and not accept this. My grief counsellor has assured me that I'm not crazy (which is somewhat comforting.)

My job as an RN in emergency is affected. I'm not able to show compassion for IV drug users, especially cocaine users.

• (1345)

This is what the convicted was.

In fact, I don't want to acknowledge them. There are increasing numbers of stabbing victims presented to emergency and I cannot help but think of Angie and how her beautiful little body was torn after 12 vicious stabs. I'm currently forced to look at alternatives.

The number one rule about doing unto others as you'd have them do unto you was taught to us at a young age. Angela understood and lived this rule; and only good should have come her way. I now realize that there are no guarantees to a happy, long life, especially within our faulty Canadian justice system.

I do hold the system responsible for her murder. I have learned a lot about the justice system and parole board. The foremost message I've received is that criminals seem to be rewarded, rather than punished.

Does that sound familiar?

How many more victims is it going to take before we stop tolerating this?

I am now compelled to join other victims in the fight to improve and strengthen our legal system in hopes that tougher sentences and less cushy prison environments will deter increasingly violent criminal activities.

Corinne knows what she is talking about. One has to ask why the government still includes a golf course at Ferndale penitentiary and so on. Where is the government coming from?

Believe me. I would much rather spend my precious free time with my family, than to have to fight to keep a murderer in jail for the rest of his life. He should never be paroled again.

Does that sound familiar?

The fact that he served only two years of a six–year sentence for attacking Ms. Eastman in 1986 is a joke. How lucky she is to be alive today. Again, I say, had he served his full sentence, my Angie would be alive today.

Why hasn't anyone taken responsibility for slipping up? How could he have been paroled so early? Are parole board appointees not aware of how manipulative these offenders are? Do they not realize that these criminals have nothing better to do than plan and plot for parole?

The emotional, mental and physical costs far outweigh any monetary losses we have encountered. I am however attempting to have the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board repay my mother over $800 for therapy she needed and probably should have continued, but for worry of the cost.

I'm also angry that reward money was used to entice certain individuals to give information. It is unfortunate but money talks. That $30,000 should have been used for a bursary in Angie's name at her high school. She would have like that.

My life has been tarnished forever. I am sorry for the people near and dear to me who put up with my broken spirit. All I know is this: I did make it through yesterday and am cautious about the future.

For the love of Angie, I write openly, honestly and beg that my statement will make a difference.

I can say to Corinne that her statement does make a difference. It has been read in the House of Commons for the government and all other people to listen to. However it is more than a victim impact statement. This is a statement from an average law–abiding Canadian citizen, hoping the government will finally clue in to the fact that legislation has to be a little stronger these days. We have to think of quotes like the one my colleague from Crowfoot referred to. It bears repeating. One parliamentarian in support of section 745 calls it "a glimmer of hope if some incentive is to be left when such a terrible penalty is imposed on the most serious of all criminals".

• (1350)

Where is the glimmer of hope for Angela Richards? Where is the glimmer of hope for all victims out there? A victim is not only the person who died. The victims are the direct relatives and friends of people who have been killed and maimed in this life. Where is the glimmer of hope? Why is a glimmer of hope being offered to the people who do this sort of thing?

The government had better clue in or the next time there is an election it will be sitting over here.

An hon. member: It has sat here before.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): It has sat here before and can do it again.

Angela's murder is not the end; it is the beginning. I sincerely hope what I have said here today not be considered a speech. It is an impact statement from a victim at a sentencing hearing. Government members whether ministers, backbenchers or wherever they sit in the House, and all other members, should remember this statement. It needs to be heard. It needs to be listened to.

I do not know what else can be said about the matter. We could critique each and every clause as some of our members so aptly have done, but we must remember that the life and property of the law–abiding Canadian citizen should always be paramount in the country. The government should get off the track of looking for benefits and for a better life for the criminal who has committed the offence.

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for sharing Corinne's plea with us. I suggest to him that Bill C–41 speaks directly to her request to be heard. During the hearings for early parole the impact statements of victims will be included. That is a very important part and a very significant addition to our situation. I believe better decisions will be made on whether or not criminals will be paroled as a result of this change.

I suggest that you have made an important comment. I do not believe our bill is a wimpy bill. It speaks directly to the cries of Corinne.

The Deputy Speaker: I ask all hon. members to put their remarks through the Chair. The word you is to be avoided unless it is directed to the Speaker.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to get government members to clue in to what is said in the House. I spoke to an immigration issue yesterday and it went over their heads.

This victim impact statement was read at a sentence hearing. What the government is talking about doing is hearing her again after 15 years and hearing her again after 20 years. We are saying we should not have to hear Corinne Schaefer again; we have already heard her. The government should clue in. This person has committed the crimes he has been convicted of. He stabbed this young lady 12 times. Why is the government looking for another impact statement to let him out?

We have to understand that this person should not be out. He should not attend parole board hearings. He should be left in prison. He should stay there. I do not want Corinne Schaefer to show up at another parole board hearing. Neither does her family. Neither does her mother.

• (1355)

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)): Mr. Speaker, at what point does the hon. member consider the parole board ought to relook at such an impact statement?

The person has been condemned to a period of serving his sentence in prison. Shall he just be released without any forewarning, without anything? In terms of his sentence at what point should there be any consideration of the impact on the victims and when should they have a say?

I would like to ask an even more fundamental question, not in terms of the individual but in general. What would you do with all the people who have committed crimes? Where do you intend to house them and how do you intend to run those prisons?

The Deputy Speaker: Before calling on the member for Fraser Valley West I would ask the minister, as I just asked her colleagues, to address all remarks through the Chair.

Having members speak through the Chair is designed to keep tension down. It is not because we need to have all comments directed at us.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I was talking about Wayne Perkins. I already said that he was let out on parole. He had bound a young lady, sexually assaulted her and injected her with cocaine. After he was let out he stabbed another young lady, Angela Richards, Corinne's sister, 12 times.

I am not talking about letting this fellow out. They have it all wrong. I am talking about keeping him there and leaving him there. I am asked how long. I am saying to leave him there, period, to close the door. Enough people have suffered.

In that courtroom 50 people were crying. All of them are affected, from her mother, Lorna, to her sister, her brother–in–law and so on. I am saying to leave him there. If he gets out we are into the same problem again. It was already tried it once and it failed.

An hon. member: Life means life.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Life means life. What part of that does the government not understand?

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, let me direct a supplementary question to the hon. member. I understood when he said Life means life. That is all very well and good. He is well aware of the fact, as I think many of us are, that the statistics on the level of crime show crime has gone down but the number of crimes being reported has gone up.

If we fill our prisons what are we to do? How does the member plan to keep our prison population in control?

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I am a lot less worried about accommodating prisoners than I am with letting them out.

Let me repeat the quote. It will tell us the philosophy of where the government is coming from. It says we should provide a glimmer of hope if some incentive is to be left when such a terrible penalty is imposed on the most serious of all criminals.

What is a terrible penalty? Why is life such a terrible penalty to a person who has bludgeoned a young lady who would have been a contributing member of society? Why is that such a terrible penalty? Keep him in, keep him in. That is the answer.

The Speaker: It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

GRANDPARENTS

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to that segment of our society we sometimes forget or overlook. With the United Nations having declared this year the International Year of the Family it is appropriate to recognize the importance of grandparents in the traditional family structure.

In provinces throughout Canada the second Sunday in September in each year has already been set aside as a day on which we honour grandparents.

I wish to extend my warmest wishes to all grandparents. We must not forget their importance to the structure of the family in the nurturing, upbringing and education of our children. Sometimes the greatest gift a child will receive will be the wisdom and experience offered by a grandparent.

I am certain many of us here today have experienced the joys of sharing a day or a special moment with a grandparent.

I urge the government to recognize the important role they play in society and set aside the second Sunday in September in each year as a day to remember grandparents.

[*Translation*]

FRENCH–SPEAKING SOLDIERS

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Official Languages, Victor Goldbloom, admitted again yesterday that the military college in Kingston is not at all ready to receive French–speaking soldiers and give them the training courses they need. According to him, the linguistic record of the Kingston college is markedly worse than that of the Saint–Jean college.

The commissioner also noted that only 6,000 of the 13,000 so–called bilingual positions in the Canadian Forces are held by people with a sufficient knowledge of French. Why are francophones always underrepresented? Why does the federal government insist on closing down the only French–language military college in the country? The Liberals are showing their true colours. The facts are there: the government refuses to make room for francophones.

The reality is that French is an irritant to the Canadian government.

* * *

[*English*]

TEAM CANADA

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate all the members of Team Canada who competed in the recent Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia. Their performance was the best ever with our team winning a total of 40 gold, 42 silver and 46 bronze.

I would like to point out that their performance gives an indication of the many years of dedication and training which these athletes have devoted to their sport. In particular, special mention goes to Corinna Wolfe who competed in the women's high jump and lives in Mission. I congratulate her on her entry to the games and her strong performance.

As well, I would like to give special recognition to Chris Wilson of wrestling fame. Chris, who lives in Coquitlam, also of my riding, won a gold in the 68 kilogram category in wrestling, an outstanding performance.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans take pride in the federal government's recent decision to hold in Winnipeg, home to the Ukrainian–Canadian Congress, the upcoming special G–7 conference on partnership for economic transformation of Ukraine in preparation for the G–7 summit next summer in Canada.

The Ukrainian–Canadian community which has its roots in Manitoba and the greater west had long dreamt of independence for its motherland, a dream that was passed on from generation to generation and finally realized in 1991.

Political independence needs economic prosperity to sustain it. Thus this conference is both essential and timely.

It therefore behoves Canada to ensure that this conference leaves a permanent legacy, perhaps the creation of a Canada–Ukraine foundation to help secure the economic transformation and prosperity of Ukraine which benefits Canada as well.

* * *

ALBANIA

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the shameful actions of the Albanian government toward its ethnic minorities.

Last month the Albanian authorities held what can only be called a show trial against five leaders of the Greek–speaking minority. This show trial was held under the auspices of the penal code that was established by the communist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha and should not go unnoticed by the world community.

These convictions were nothing more than a malicious attempt to silence the representatives of the Greek–speaking minority in Albania in their efforts to secure the rights that are guaranteed to all people through the United Nations declaration on human rights.

I hope that our government will, should the opportunity arise, condemn the convictions of this ethnic leadership and contribute to the efforts to gain their release.

* * *

CANADIAN NATIONAL

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, once upon a time there was a belief that crown corporations, those corporate representatives of the Canadian public, acted in the interest of all Canadians. To the surprise of certain Canadian National employees in my riding, management has informed them that some 25 positions will be phased out and replaced by American workers at Flat Rock, Michigan near Detroit, which I still believe to be in the United States.

• (1405)

On behalf of those workers and indeed all CN employees I implore the board of directors and management to start working for the real shareholders of that company.

I believe all Canadians want trains inspected and repaired by Canadians. That is not an unreasonable request.

Canadian National employees expect a reasonable reversal of this mistaken decision of the management of our corporation, Canadian National.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN RADIO–TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, the CRTC has made public its decision on the new telecommunications regulatory framework. Despite what was promised in June 1992, basic monthly rates will rise by 50 per cent over three years in some regions. For the first time, basic telephone service, which is an essential service, is being undermined.

Why such a sudden and rapid increase? Consumers are the ones paying for the CRTC's decisions. A less drastic hike could have been agreed to for the sake of poor people hurt by the recession.

While Minister Manley plays with the idea of regulations allowing the convergence of cable and telephone networks, the CRTC announces that this sector will be almost completely deregulated and presents everyone with a fait accompli.

The right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. That is another appalling example of the inconsistency of the federal system.

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[*English*]

THE SENATE

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister appointed some political friends to the other place, including a former Manitoba Liberal leader, a former Quebec Liberal cabinet minister, and the daughter–in–law of a former Liberal Prime Minister.

Is it any wonder that Canadians have virtually no respect for the other place or the patronage appointees who rest there. They know that an unelected, unaccountable, anti–democratic body like the other place has absolutely no place in a democratic society. It has no business shaping legislation. It has no business whatsoever in deciding how taxpayers' money should be spent. It has no legitimate role whatsoever and serves mainly to provide a retirement income for the Prime Minister's friends.

Canadians demand that the other place be reformed so that it is elected and accountable, an effective guardian of regional interests.

While the new appointees collect their pay cheques, whether or not they can walk to work, the national debt has risen to $531,172,948,085.41.

* * *

POLAND

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, last week President Lech Walesa of the Republic of Poland paid his first state visit to Canada. Poland is emerging as the fastest growing economy in central Europe, proving that Canada's small but significant investment in technical assistance will eventually pay dividends to both countries in the long run.

President Walesa has a bold new vision to promote greater trade between our two countries and he invites Canadians to strongly consider Poland for private investment.

While travelling through Poland this summer, I had the opportunity to witness the tremendous progress the people of Poland have achieved both economically and in terms of their efforts to turn the tide of environmental degradation after decades of improper management.

On behalf of the Government of Canada I wish to congratulate the people of Poland for their success and pay a warm hearted thanks to their president for his visit.

Today we have another distinguished visitor in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I know you will introduce him at the appropriate time.

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BURMA

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today to focus attention on Burma.

July 20 marked the fifth year of house arrest for Aung San Suu Kyi. Ms. Suu Kyi was elected by the Burmese people as leader of the opposition in 1989.

Despite suggestions that it is willing to open discussions, the current military regime in Burma has made no attempt to meet with Ms. Suu Kyi.

On April 12 of this year a motion was passed by this House to urge the Secretary General of the United Nations to appeal for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and the restoration of civilian rule in Burma. A petition was also signed by 234 members of this House urging the same actions be taken.

I urge all of my colleagues here today to remain vocal on the subject of Burma and to continue to apply pressure on the Burmese regime to free Ms. Suu Kyi and restore the democratically elected opposition to government.

• (1410)

OPERATION GO HOME

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize the efforts of a national organization called Operation Go Home.

It is largely a volunteer organization which strives to return runaway youth in crisis to their families or to connect them with the appropriate existing agencies that can best help them. It has offices now in operation in Ottawa, Halifax, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

Its success is noteworthy. In 1993 it assisted 1,429 young people in crisis. Between 35 and 40 per cent of the youth were directed to a caring environment.

There are over 100,000 children living on the streets of Canada on any given day. Sadly the number continues to rise.

[*Translation*]

I want to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to this organization that has been working for some 20 years to return children, to see that they are returned either to their homes or to support agencies.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, the findings of Statistic Canada's latest survey on violence against women cannot leave anyone indifferent.

More than one out of four Canadian women who are married or living common–law say that they have been assaulted by their spouse. At one time or another in their married life, they were physically or sexually assaulted and few of them reported these assaults to the police. Even fewer of them sought professional help to allay their suffering and the trauma resulting from these assaults.

To stop wife abuse, the federal government must introduce legislation to end violence against women.

* * *

[*English*]

LACROSSE

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, on September 4 the New Westminster Salmonbellies junior A lacrosse team captured the Minto Cup, making it Canada's number one lacrosse team. The Salmonbellies battled the Brantford Excelsiors for seven hard–fought games before being crowned Canada's best.

What makes this victory especially sweet is that the national championship has not been won by a New Westminster team

since 1960. The last time a western team won dates back to 1988 when a team from Esquimalt, British Columbia won the crown.

In the past it has been Ontario teams that have dominated junior A lacrosse. All of those from New Westminster know that the cup belongs in New Westminister, a city which holds dear to its heart the heritage of Canada's original sport as well as the home of the Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

My congratulations go out to the entire Salmonbellies team, in particular co–coaches Steve van Os and Stan Stewardson, as well as the team's five graduating players, Kevin Stewardson, Glen Bzowy, Steve Higgs, Chris Charlton and Curtis Palidwor, the series most valuable player.

Great going, Salmonbellies.

* * *

DYSTONIA

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House the existence of a condition which is more prevalent than Huntington's, ALS or muscular dystrophy.

This condition is dystonia, a neurological disorder that causes involuntary muscle spasms and twisting, resulting in abnormal body postures. Only 5 per cent of the estimated 250,000 sufferers of dystonia in North America have been diagnosed and sadly one third of those afflicted are children.

The Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, a national organization which provides funding for a research and patient support, is committed to raising public awareness of dystonia. As with many medical conditions the lack of public and medical awareness of dystonia contributes to the sense of isolation and alienation that many sufferers of dystonia experience.

I encourage my colleagues in the House as well as all Canadians to support the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation in its efforts to raise public awareness of this painful disorder.

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[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, Jacques Parizeau, leader of the Parti Quebecois, repeatedly promised during the election campaign that if he was elected, there would be a referendum on the sovereignty of Quebec within eight or ten months following the election.

This is a firm commitment. There was never any question of postponing the referendum, and it is much better that way, since Quebecers want to settle the referendum issue once and for all. However, despite Mr. Parizeau's clear commitment, one wonders, in the light of a recent statement by the Leader of the Official Opposition, who speaks for the Government of Quebec?

Is it the Leader of the Official Opposition, who in his recent statement on the referendum explained that what counts is winning, never mind when the election is held, or is it Mr. Parizeau, Quebec's newly–elected Premier?

* * *

• (1415)

[*English*]

LOW–LEVEL FLIGHTS

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Goose Bay, Labrador, Innu protesters delayed the start of public hearings into low–level military flight training over their traditional hunting grounds. The Innu claim that the flights disrupt wildlife in the area, which is their major source of food, and contaminate the environment.

These public hearings are being held to evaluate a flawed Department of National Defence environmental impact statement that, according to scientists, contains more than 130 deficiencies, including the proposal to create one giant training zone and the use of thin aluminum strips that make animals sick when they eat them. The Innu have called into question the timing of the hearings, and the fairness and independence of the assessment panel conducting the review.

Therefore I call on the government to immediately suspend the hearings until the concerns of the Innu are addressed, and to consider the advisability of ending all low–level flight training over the territory of the Innu. The Innu people never ceded their land to Canada for military purposes. They have lived off this land in peace for 9,000 years and they deserve fair and humane treatment.

The Speaker: My colleagues, in the statements that we hear from day to day, many times we use language which could be interpreted as provocative.

I would encourage all hon. members to please be judicious in their choice of words especially, if I might bring it to your attention, when talking about the other place.

I would leave that with you. It is something that I would like you very much to take to heart.

[*Translation*]

We will now start Oral Question Period. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

HAITI

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we were all relieved to hear that the U.S. army would intervene in Haiti without bloodshed. However, the main objective of the mission has yet to be achieved, and I am referring to the return of President Aristide, and there are still some major concerns, especially after the Haitian police brutally attacked a demonstration by supporters of President Aristide in the streets of Port–au–Prince last night.

My question is directed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Has the minister been given assurances by the U.S. authorities that the return of President Aristide is imminent?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it will be a pleasure to answer the hon. member's question, and I want to make it quite clear that the purpose of this UN initiative is to bring President Aristide back to his country so that he can take up his duties as president. I believe that what has taken place during the last few hours is an indication that the process to return President Aristide to his country is well under way and is irreversible.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ with the minister's optimistic statement, since the events of the past few hours seem to contradict what he just said, and I am referring to the fact that President Aristide has just dismissed the agreement concluded between a puppet president and the U.S. military.

Is the Canadian government still satisfied with the agreement concluded on Sunday between Washington and the military junta, now that president in exile Jean–Bertrand Aristide has publicly dissociated himself from this agreement?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is an important point I would like to make. President Aristide mentioned that as far as he was concerned, the Governors Island Agreement was the agreement he had signed and the agreement he intended to abide by. I can say that the Canadian government entirely agrees with his interpretation of the facts.

Furthermore, we must realize that at this very moment, the country is no longer totally under the control of a Haitian military junta and is gradually coming under the control of a multinational force, which has a mandate, under UN Resolution 940, to take control and ensure that President Aristide returns to his country as soon as possible.

• (1420)

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, of course we share the same expectations as the minister, but today's events do give us some cause for concern, especially the fact that the military junta is still there and will be, at least until October 15. We can only hope that all this will be over with by October 15, but for the time being, the junta is there, side by side with the U.S. peacemaking force.

I want to ask the minister if he could tell us whether Canada intends to send Canadian police officers to Port–au–Prince without the consent of President Aristide and without waiting for his consent, while there is still some uncertainty about his own return and the role of the military junta.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned a date, October 15, which is a very definite deadline for the Haitian military. Whatever they do and whatever happens, they will have to submit to the firm determination of the Americans and all those who supported and approved UN Resolution 940. Consequently, I am quite confident that President Aristide will be able to return to his country.

The hon. member had a question about police officers. I have been in touch with President Aristide on a regular basis, and we will continue our dialogue. Any steps to be taken by the Government of Canada will respect the wishes of President Aristide.

* * *

PUBLIC FINANCE

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, the latest analyses of the Canadian financial situation are far from painting the rosy picture the Minister of Finance and his Prime Minister painted just a while ago. This year, the deficit will reach $40 billion, while the debt will approach $550 billion, jeopardizing both economic recovery and improved business competitiveness.

Does the Minister of Finance not agree that, in view of the sorry state of public finance in Canada, it is urgent, indeed extremely urgent, for the government to reduce drastically its operating expenditures instead of blindly relying on economic conditions and opportunistically reaping the meagre benefits as it has done recently?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that government expenditures must be examined. We said that we were going to do so item by item. For that very purpose, the Prime Minister asked that a committee be set up under the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal to take a serious look at government spending. This review is under way.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Instead of turning a blind eye as he has done so far, Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally commit today, before this House, to tabling an emergency action plan—because this is truly an emergency—to reduce operating expenditures in the federal administration by dealing as a matter of priority with tax leakage benefitting friends of the system and with the shameless squandering resulting from overlapping?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his colleagues had the opportunity to voice their opinions last year, during the pre–budget debate. Throughout the spring, and the summer as well, they had the opportunity to make suggestions.

When I appear before the finance committee with the promised update, the hon. member will again have the opportunity to make constructive suggestions. As a matter of fact, I think that the committee will be considering the family trust issue tomorrow. I trust that the hon. member will take that opportunity to make constructive comments.

[*English*]

The opposition has had the opportunity on many occasions to give us constructive suggestions as to what it would do and has refused to do so.

Once again we are going to give members the opportunity to do so and we will see if they are prepared to put up.

* * *

• (1425)

TAXATION

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that his first responsibility is to ensure the unity of this country. Surely that means refraining from actions that undermine people's confidence in the federal government. I have one particular action in mind.

Canadians are now among the most highly taxed people in the world. If the federal government wants to make federalism more attractive to all Canadians, it simply must refrain from increasing the burden of federal taxation.

I ask the Prime Minister to pledge today, for the sake of Canadian unity, to refrain from increasing the burden of federal taxation during the term of his mandate. Would he make such a pledge today?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will have a budget in the month of February. We had a budget some months ago and there were no tax increases. We do not plan to have any tax increases. We want to give very good administration to the country and the Minister of Finance looks at all aspects of all problems all the time.

Speaking about how long I will be Prime Minister, to promise that I will never increase taxes in the many, many years I will be Prime Minister makes it difficult for me to give a very categorical answer.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I would not worry about being around many, many years. My question is just asking for the term of the government's administration.

Let me be more specific. The economies of Alberta and British Columbia are growing faster than the Canadian economy as a whole and the provincial government in Alberta is making a more strenuous effort to restrain its spending than any other provincial government. There is now growing concern in the west that the only reward for economic growth or spending restraint at the provincial level is going to be to attract a federal tax raid similar to the one that occurred in the 1980s.

Will the Prime Minister today assure western Canadians that his government will not try to solve the federal fiscal mess by launching a tax raid on their region?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the leader of the Reform Party will be more successful with this trial balloon that he is trying to scare people with than with the so–called carbon tax that he invented, something we were not even talking about. Having nothing else to do, not being able to criticize anything we are doing, he is trying to invent problems.

Do not worry, we have enough problems like that. We do not want you to feel that you help the credibility and the confidence of this nation when you invent canards like this one.

The Speaker: I know that although people who are responding to questions do not always look at me they are referring to me when they say "you". I am sure they are.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, it is not only westerners who will be unsatisfied by the Prime Minister's answer. There are other Canadians who are uneasy with respect to the federal government's tax intentions.

Mismanagement by successive governments of the Canada Pension Plan and OAS have undermined many Canadians' confidence in the government's ability to provide pension income. In response, millions of Canadians have endeavoured to provide for their own retirement through private RRSPs. Now these Canadians fear that their only reward for making this provision will be to attract a tax raid by the federal government on their RRSP contributions.

Yesterday the finance minister was unwilling to allay fears in this regard. Will the Prime Minister state categorically that his government is not planning to launch a federal tax raid on RRSP contributions?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is very funny. We are in September, at the beginning of this session and the leader of the Reform Party cannot find anything more to do than create fear among the public. He should relax. There will be a budget in February and he will have his answer that day. In the meantime we will carry on with running the business of this country and will try to have the best figures possible, like the one this morning on trade: a $2.3 billion surplus in the month of July.

* * *

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC FINANCES

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, according to two studies published by the C.D. Howe Institute and by Quebec economist Pierre Fortin, the government is an estimated seven to ten billion dollars short of being able to keep its election promise of reducing the deficit to 3 per cent of the GDP by 1996.

Since the Minister of Finance is quite obviously unable to say where he will cut, could he tell us by how much he intends to reduce government expenditures in order to keep the election promise?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I was very clear when I tabled the budget last February. I said at that time that I would issue an update on the country's financial situation.

I said in the budget, and I quote: "Next fall [—]the government will release a comprehensive statement that will clearly lay out changes in the economic and fiscal outlook since the last budget". I intend to keep my word.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, faced with the difficulty of obtaining figures or anything solid from the Minister of Finance, I am asking him today—we know he has figures and a target—to tell this House by how much he intends to reduce government expenditures in order to keep the election promise made by him and the Prime Minister.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is asking me not to conduct an open public consultation. In other words, you want me to rise and table the budget immediately, not in February but now in September, without any consultation.

But this is not how we intend to go about it. We want the people of Canada and Quebec to be consulted and they will be.

* * *

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

There are 115,000 early Stuart sockeye missing from the Fraser River system. A report prepared by staff at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans makes it clear that DFO mismanagement and lack of enforcement are responsible. Further, the report confirms that the minister ignored the advice of his staff and chose not to close the fishery even though there were inadequate numbers of sockeye returning.

What does the Prime Minister intend to do about this incompetence which has led to the devastation of this sockeye run this year?

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Delta. As he knows, there is a problem in that approximately 1.3 million sockeye are unaccounted for. This government has acted responsibly by asking for a full and comprehensive review of our present management techniques and the science.

As the hon. member is from the fishing community he should know that science is not perfect. We need to look at a number of areas like water temperatures which have a profound effect on sockeye.

We are looking for a full review, including all stakeholders, including the aboriginal community, to get to the bottom of this and to make the necessary changes to ensure we have confidence in the management of the fishery. We will do that and that is what the minister stated earlier.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the minister has provided unsubstantiated excuses for this loss of salmon and has ignored data prepared by his own department. The people of British Columbia are tired of in–house excuses, tired of in–house reports.

Will the Prime Minister commit to an independent public inquiry into the management of the west coast fishery, or does he intend to wait until the fish on the west coast have reached the levels they have on the east coast?

• (1435)

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the minister has already asked for a comprehensive review from the independent community and also the stakeholders. It will be transparent.

If the hon. member has something to contribute we are willing to look at what he has to offer because every once in a while they come out with an idea we can look at. We will be happy to look at his suggestions.

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House, the Solicitor General rejected the opposition's request to establish a royal commission to investigate the very serious allegations concerning the infiltration activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

My question is for the Solicitor General. Is he giving us to understand that by setting up CSIS, a monster was created that no one, including Parliament, can control anymore, although it was created for the express purpose of ending the RCMP's illegal activities in Quebec in the 1970s?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, CSIS was created under a bill passed by this House. CSIS must work within this law, in a legal fashion. The Review Committee monitors CSIS and I think that we must wait for the results of our efforts in order to have an answer to the allegations which at this point are surely just allegations.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, does the Solicitor General know that a creature of this Parliament already committed illegal acts in Quebec, in particular by stealing the membership lists of political parties, by burning barns and by planting bombs?

Does the minister realize that by refusing a royal commission of inquiry, he is helping to recreate the same scenario as in 1970 and thus failing in his duty as minister?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): This government stresses the fact that any branch of the government operates within a legal framework and that is why we want the Review Committee to submit its report as soon as possible. I think that the people of this country, especially Quebec, will be rather surprised to see how the hon. member loves royalty so much that he is asking for a royal commission to investigate this affair.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

Many years ago the government started shifting civil servants around the country at astronomical expense with no apparent efficiency benefit except to try to get ministers re–elected more efficiently. Today we find out in documentation that the minister has struck a committee that is going to consider moving more public servants to Atlantic Canada for the same apparent reason.

Is the minister honestly considering trying this experiment again?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an important question.

I wish to advise him and other members of the House that the mandate as indicated by the Minister of Finance in his last budget has asked each and every minister to do a review of his or her department to find ways in which to increase efficiency. In fact section 5(2)(a) of the Department of Supply and Services Act reads: "investigate and develop services for increasing the efficiency and the economy of the public service of Canada".

I find nothing inherently wrong with the Government of Canada embarking upon a study to try to ascertain the efficiencies in order to do away with duplication and overlap.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned that public servants not be shipped around the country like sacks of flour for some form of patronage.

Will the minister demonstrate to the House, since we cannot get this program review from the other minister, that any moves for public servants will be made to save government money, to make government more efficient and not just to mess around with the lives of public servants? They have enough on their plates right now.

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, again I thank the hon. member. I thought he was going to stand in his place and congratulate the Government of Canada.

I will give the hon. member a demonstrable item that the Government of Canada concluded with the province of Quebec in order to rid itself of overlap and duplication. We consummated an agreement relating to housing and the delivery of housing programs in the province of Quebec. It thereby costs less money to the Government of Canada and enables more Quebecers to take advantage of Government of Canada programs.

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

TAINTED BLOOD

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The Canadian people are very concerned about the contaminated blood affair and the minister has an obligation to act openly to inform and reassure the population.

Why, in these circumstances, did the minister at her September 12 press conference hide from the Canadian people that the FDA was conducting on that same day another investigation at the Halifax Red Cross Centre?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question. This government has always acted with transparency and honesty and from the very beginning we have admitted openly that every blood donor centre would be inspected by the FDA. The FDA has now decided to change its regulations and require a licence for each centre. The Red Cross is in the process of applying for this licence.

Meanwhile, each of the 17 centres in the country must undergo the same inspection.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain to me why she did not send a clear directive to the other Red Cross centres when she had in hand the American agency's report?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we must keep in mind that the FDA inspects these centres to enforce its own regulations. American regulations are somewhat different from ours because under the American blood collection system, donors are often paid, while the Canadian system depends totally on volunteers.

This does not mean that their regulations are better than ours or vice versa. We are working with the FDA and the Red Cross to harmonize the various regulations, to ensure that we have the best regulations, so that our blood collection system continues to be among the best in the world.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

In my riding of York—Simcoe there are a number of responsible gun owners who have expressed concern over impending gun control legislation. These individuals along with other Canadians recognize the need for measures to curb the violent and illegal use of firearms.

Will the minister give assurance to Canadians today that in any new gun control legislation responsible gun owners will not be unfairly treated and that his efforts will be directed against those who abuse the use of firearms?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the proposals we are developing through caucus to bring forward to the House focus on three areas.

First is the presence of illegal firearms in this country and what we can do to stop it. Second is the question of whether the criminal justice system should have a sterner response to those who misuse firearms in the commission of offences, and it will. Third is the question of whether the regulation of firearms in the hands of legitimate and lawful owners can be improved to enhance community safety and to work toward crime prevention, detection and prosecution.

In that process we will indeed be respectful of the legitimate interests of firearms users. We understand and we respect the importance of hunting not only as a long tradition in this country but as an important economic activity. Those values will be reflected in the proposals we bring before the House.

* * *

• (1445)

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, Michel Robert, a former Liberal Party president, has been given an untendered contract for $249,925 to act as an Oka negotiator. That is a whopping $74 under the limit for untendered contracts.

Somebody said recently this government and this Parliament would serve the interests of all Canadians, not the interests of the privileged few no matter how well connected. I doubt few would be fooled by the sham of the tendering process. I do not think anyone could now believe the words I just quoted, spoken by the Prime Minister last June.

Does the Prime Minister still understand what the word integrity really means?

The Speaker: The question is rather far reaching. I would hope hon. members would be very respectful of one another. As such it is not a question which brings about information from the government.

Perhaps the right hon. Prime Minister or one of the ministers would like to answer.

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Robert was hired back in May. I find it passing strange the Reform did not realize it. Six months have passed. The Bloc asked a couple of questions at the time.

May 25, 26 and 27 was a very volatile time at Oka. Trees were being cut down, with a threat of the army going in. I had to act

quickly and I had to get competent people. Judge Réjean Paul was available as a mediator and Michel Robert.

As a result of questioning from the Bloc at that time I was able to put some of his background in *Hansard*. He was past president of the Canadian Bar Association, a fellow of the Ontario Bar, a former member of the military and an author. He has a tremendous, competent background. I was quite lucky to get him at the time.

The result is that Oka is calm. Things are being worked out. We do not have the military there. We are not spending hundreds of millions of dollars on enforcement. I do not apologize for hiring competent people, albeit some of them may be Liberal.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, I used Oka as just one example. That was just one of a very long list of patronage appointments. That was one example which I chose.

We want to get to the bottom of the tendering process. It was put in place to ensure that the best people could be chosen through the competitive process. It is a safeguard against patronage and ensures openness in the system. Since May there have been dozens of examples of competent people who only happen to be Liberals.

If Michel Robert was such a competent person as the Prime Minister and the minister maintains, why did he make a mockery of the tendering process itself, not that appointment? Why was he afraid to allow the contract to go through the competitive process to find the very best person for the job regardless of political stripe?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, when we hire professionals on a contract like this one on a short term we look for very competent people who can do the job. If we had to wait for the tendering process, asking tens of thousands of lawyers to apply and to pass an examination, we would never get results.

If the member had any guts she would try to prove that the person is not competent. Of course she will not. We are not afraid to get up in the House and say that this man was elected president of the Canadian Bar Association by lawyers in Canada. Yes, at one time in his career he had the good judgment of a Liberal. That is not a handicap.

* * *

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, just before the Quebec election, the Minister of Finance, who is responsible for the infrastructure program in Quebec, wrote to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to complain that several projects under that program had been announced by the Government of Quebec without federal authorization, in the middle of an election campaign.

Can the Minister of Finance promise to make public the list of projects announced by the Government of Quebec which he considers to be incompatible with the infrastructure program?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I already explained publicly that there was an internal misunderstanding which was cleared up; not only am I prepared to publish the list of projects that have not been approved, I am also prepared to tell you right away that all the projects announced by the Liberal Government of Quebec comply with the regulations established by the President of the Treasury Board.

I must tell you that as a member of Parliament and minister, I had to co–operate with Mr. Ryan and Mr. Bourbeau and I am fully satisfied; I think that they should be praised for their co–operation and the work that they have done on this.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance refers to a misunderstanding, of course he is referring to his letter. How can the minister explain that he signed a letter that by his own admission is completely incorrect and should not have been written? Are we to understand that the cat is finally out of the bag and that Quebec has no real control since the projects selected must be approved by Ottawa?

[*English*]

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, there was an administrative error in my office which was discovered very quickly thereafter and the matter was cleared up.

Now that there has been a change of government in Quebec I would hope the new government would proceed with the same degree of dedication and hard work as the previous government in making the infrastructure program the tremendous success that it has been.

* * *

GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Mr. Speaker, as the Liberal government and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food well know, in May of this year the subcommittee on grain transportation recommended that a man be appointed immediately to take over the entire allocation process from the Grain Transportation Agency. This was again explicitly expressed as a concern to the minister in a June meeting with the standing committee.

Could the minister explain why he did not act on this recommendation?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier in response to similar questions, the future form or structure of the GTA is certainly a topic the government has under review as we deal with a variety of very important agricultural transportation issues in the country.

I would point out though that during the course of the summer I have had a repeated series of meetings with not only the existing GTA but all major players in the Canadian western grain handling and transportation system to ensure that they are focused upon the huge challenge of moving a very large and very diversified crop this year through export positions into the most lucrative available export markets.

I am pleased to say that in comparison to this time last year we have achieved a 40 per cent increase in the number of hopper cars in the grain car fleet in the country. We anticipate in the month of October that we will see unloads at the port of Vancouver perhaps twice as high as last year and unloads at the port of Thunder Bay 50 per cent higher than last year.

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Mr. Speaker, that is a very broad answer to a very definite question.

Farmers are again harvesting a crop under extreme weather conditions. They have a plugged railway system. Because the recommendation was not acted upon we now have a situation where a few large players are dictating the process of car allocation. Farmers, small grain elevators and shippers are again being discriminated against.

• (1455)

What action is the minister prepared to take to solve the problem?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, the group of industry executives I have been meeting with during the course of the summer have focused on a broad range of issues to try to deal with the challenge of throughput through all our export facilities.

We have dealt with, at least in part, the issue of grain car allocation but obviously that is nobody's first choice in the system. We want to expand the capacity of the system and the throughput of the system. We will be introducing legislation this fall in the House to address some of those issues. Other reforms are under way already in an administrative manner.

The good news in the system is that we have a huge volume of grain to move. We hope our system will have the capacity to handle it, but given the volume and the diversity of the particular crop there may be a requirement for some form of allocation as we go through the crop year.

I have undertaken to the industry to monitor the allocation process as it is implemented to be sure it is fair to all players in the system including those who have reservations about it, namely the smaller shippers. I want to make sure they are treated fairly.

* * *

NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

Currently the annual financial information returns of charities are available to the public whereas those for non–profit organizations are not.

Since non–profit organizations like charities are indirectly supported by the taxpayer, would the minister consider making their annual financial information returns also available for public scrutiny?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I understand the member's frustration in this regard because in fact the public information return filed by registered charities is available to the public in accordance with section 149.1(5) of the Income Tax Act. However we cannot divulge information on non–profit organizations in accordance with the confidentiality provisions contained in subsection 241(1) of the Income Tax Act.

One of the reasons for the differences between them is that they cannot issue tax receipts. They do not have to register provincially or federally to maintain their status. They have no requirement to disburse a certain percentage of their income.

I will take the hon. member's question as a representation that the law could in fact be changed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers paid for the 1992 referendum twice. First, they along with all other Canadians paid for the referendum in the other provinces and, in addition, they alone paid for the referendum in their own province, Quebec. The outgoing government in Quebec sent the federal government a bill for $26 million to correct this injustice.

My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Does the federal government intend to honour its debt to Quebec or not and will it pay the $26 million that it owes?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speak-

er, the former government made no commitment to compensate Quebec—neither under Prime Minister Mulroney nor under Ms. Campbell. As far as we are concerned, we are not committed either to paying for a referendum which was held under a provincial law and therefore did not depend on us organizationally or financially.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture has had a bad summer. As incredible as it might seem the minister ended the summer by equating farmers to criminals because they were shipping grain into the United States.

When will the minister stop attacking farmers and change the Canadian Wheat Board Act so that farmers have the access which is guaranteed them under the free trade agreement?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, unlike some hon. members across the way who spent the summer in name calling and personal vilification, I spent the summer consulting with farmers, farm organizations and a number of others about the issue the hon. member has mentioned.

• (1500)

I have received from those farmers and farm organizations a broad list of recommendations and ideas about how our grain marketing, handling and transportation system can be modernized to maximize its throughput capacity and to put farmers in the position of maximizing their marketing opportunities.

This fall I will be formalizing that process in a way to ensure that all farmers have all the necessary information, facts and figures they require so they may have further and final input into the government's decision–making processes about these issues.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has stated that he will not accept a health care system that offers a higher quality of health care for the rich than for the poor. Yet the first step to a two–tiered health care system, one for the rich and one for the poor, is operating today as we speak in Alberta.

It is my understanding that the Prime Minister is meeting with the premier of Alberta later today. I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he is going to challenge the premier of Alberta on the private clinics which clearly contravene the Canada Health Act and say that his government will support the Canada Health Act.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting later this fall on this question of medicare. We are committed to maintaining the system that we have where medicare is free and portable for everybody.

We have said many times that we do not want medicare to be good for the rich and bad for the poor. The laws of Canada have to be respected. I hope that Mr. Klein will respect the laws of Canada.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: My colleagues, I would like to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of Mr. Michal Strak, the Minister–Chief of the Office of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of the Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs of the Parliament of Norway led by Mrs. Kjellbojrg Lunde.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VACANCY

BROME–MISSISQUOI

The Speaker: As a vacancy has occurred in the House of Commons for the electoral riding of Brome—Missisquoi by reason of the death of Mr. Gaston Péloquin, it is my duty to inform this House that, pursuant to section 28(1) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer today for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill the vacancy.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1505)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C–41 because I believe that the bill that will review and examine sentencing practices must be responsive to the concerns and values of Canadians.

The bill reflects our commitment to a justice system that is balanced, fair and encourages respect for the law. This is an omnibus bill, as we all know, and it responds to a number of very important issues.

I wish to commend the Minister of Justice for the nature of the consultations that he undertook, the wide scope of this bill, which in the end clarifies and ensures improvements in the application of the Criminal Code.

I have been listening to concerns in this regard and I am sure that members can be very satisfied with the improvements and the strengthening of actions and sentencing around criminal acts.

[*Translation*]

I fully agree with the objective of this bill as well as with all its provisions. That being said, my remarks will deal with two points in particular: first, offences motivated by hate and second, offenders abusing a position of trust.

[*English*]

I believe that equality for all Canadians includes freedom from hatred and from harassment. Expressions of hatred have absolutely no place in Canadian society. Openness, understanding and sharing are features that shape our collective identity. Most Canadians believe that each one of us has the right to live free from hatred or expressions of hatred and actions that are motivated by hatred.

I have always felt, and I have actually been convinced, that a crime motivated by hate based on one's race, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical capacity or any other form of that nature is a very serious crime and needs to be looked at in a particular light.

With this bill, such hate motivations will be considered an aggravating circumstance in the Criminal Code for the first time. It therefore will define and ensure that these crimes will be treated much more severely.

One of the strongest aspects of the new hate crime proposal is in its broad scope. It enshrines even further the principles that one finds behind section 15 of the charter which is a fundamental value for all Canadians.

While we are generally more aware of hate crimes related to religion, racism or sexual orientation, we must not forget that women as a group also come under attack simply because they are women.

In the aftermath of the massacre of 14 women at the École Polytechnique de Montréal in 1989, our country was shocked to discover the hatred that some men feel toward women. That was a very shocking moment and made many Canadians sit up and take note.

Women's experience in the criminal justice system is primarily that of victim. The way they are treated in the justice system is critical in their efforts to achieve equality as a right. Our vision, reflected in Bill C–41 and other initiatives, is one of a society and a justice system in which all Canadians are full and equal partners, confident that their rights will be upheld by the law.

• (1510)

The disturbing increase in the expressions of hatred and discrimination in our society is well documented. Since 1989 there has been a marked upsurge in hate group activity throughout the world, certainly right here in Canada. These groups are now better organized, they are far more subtle in their approach, and they have developed new strategies which really need to be addressed. One needs to be far more sensitive to read the message behind the message. It is subliminal in many cases and much more invidious in its intent.

The Solicitor General has estimated that over 52 neo–Nazi groups and 85 other associations promoting hatred are currently operating in this country. I believe that is cause for serious concern.

In its 1993 annual audit of anti–semitic incidents in Canada, the league of human rights of B'Nai Brith Canada recorded a 31 per cent increase in anti–Semitic harassment and vandalism. The league documented a disturbing increase in hate group activity. They have, to quote the league: "adopted a more militant and activist stance than in prior years". I can tell the House that those acts of vandalism and those expressions of hatred, which I have seen on the walls of synagogues and buildings in my riding of Mount Royal, are really distressing and very disturbing. Young people who come to schools or go into the cemeteries are really quite shocked and it leaves a mark on them.

[*Translation*]

Often, our personal knowledge or experience of ways hatred can be expressed gives statistics a sense of reality and urgency. I am convinced that all the hon. members of this House can remember a specific incident or action intended to frighten or harm someone by reason of his or her race, religion, colour or sexual orientation, just because they were different.

The increasing diversity of our population's make–up poses quite a challenge to Canadian society as a whole.

[*English*]

We all have a sense of pride and are all very thrilled when we read that the United Nations finds Canada the finest place in the world in which to live. Notwithstanding that, we have a series of warts. It is important to look at these and see how we can excise this unacceptable behaviour from our society.

We know that Canada is a multicultural and multilingual country from its beginnings. Our native peoples, our aboriginal peoples, are multicultural and multilingual. They were joined by

English and French, both languages and both cultures, to form a beautiful mix. Now, according to the 1991 census, 42 per cent of Canadians have origins other than British or French.

It is important to note that in Mount Royal riding—and I think it is a perfect example, although perhaps a little bit more concentrated than in other cities—the statistics show that 43.5 per cent of the population is first generation immigrants to Canada. This does not take into account the balance of the population in my riding who are of ethnic origin and who have been here since the early 1800s. It is a very diversified riding and I am proud to have about 60 different ethnic minority groups represented. They speak the languages of the world. These are the languages and the cultures of multicultural business in this global economy. They are important to us for a variety of reasons and it is exciting because you can have the wonderful experience of living in such a multicultural society.

They make up, all these Canadians, the majority in every major urban centre. By the year 2006 the proportion of Canadians who are visible minorities is expected to be between 13 and 18 per cent. In Toronto, the city with the greatest diversity, some suggest that the proportion could be as high as 50 per cent. These great urban centres reflecting our diversity make for culturally and socially exciting and dynamic communities in which to live, ones in which we can really flourish and grow.

• (1515)

However, we have to be forever vigilant. Hate motivated crimes can be found in this kind of a mix if we do not take care, if we are not vigilant. It could be a threat to the social cohesion of these communities. It could impede equal and full participation for all. It leads to alienation, a sense of disenfranchisement and a feeling of powerlessness.

There are some basic trusts we as a nation cannot afford to break. I will enunciate some: the right of all persons to enjoy their own language and culture; the right of a family to worship without fear of violence and distrust; and the right of women to walk safely on the streets in their communities.

To avoid conflict and maintain social harmony, our institutions must redouble their efforts to develop policies, programs and practices that recognize the reality of Canadian diversity and move to ensure this social cohesion. We need access, understanding and respect if we are to live together in peace and harmony.

Among those institutions that are ensuring this happens is our justice system, which has a great responsibility and a fundamental role to play in ensuring this trust and fairness. The system must demonstrate without ambiguity that hate crimes will not be tolerated in Canada. It is just not to be tolerated. It is not the Canadian way and it is absolutely not acceptable.

[*Translation*]

The provisions of this bill by which hate motives constitute aggravating circumstances for the purpose of sentencing should have been implemented a long time ago. They reflect this government's commitment to protecting the fundamental right of all Canadians to live without being afraid, to live in peace and security and to live as equals. Obviously, it does not suffice to ensure that hate will be deemed an aggravating circumstance, this must be part of an integrated approach to promote understanding and respect within the society.

[*English*]

We must work together in a broad range of legislative and non–legislative areas. It is the responsibility of the people in this House representing all Canadians to ensure that hate and the manifestations of hate are eradicated from this society.

It is very important that we educate today's youth about hate crime: how to understand it; how to sense it; and how to speak out against it. We have to emphasize the determinant role they will play both in terms of prevention and in terms of the promotion of peace and goodwill.

In that spirit our multiculturalism department in many ways with its cross–cultural and intercultural activities and its race relations undertaking and in partnership with society has developed many programs. Among them are the very helpful programs of educational materials developed for students and teachers on human rights, prejudice, racism and racial discrimination.

We have acted in many ways with the schools. I have travelled across this country and have seen students in action. It has been a pleasure to listen to these young students who understand, recognize and respond to racism. They know prejudice when they see it. Unfortunately, it is when they get home that it often gets reinforced. It is very important that they learn the lesson of speaking out, so it never happens again.

Our program uses a variety of public educational tools to speak out against hate and racism. It explains that each one of us can make a difference and that Canadians need to work together to ensure peace and harmony. It works particularly when we work in collaboration with different ministries, for example with the Solicitor General and the Minister of Justice.

The multiculturalism department has done some very extensive work with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and many other such structured institutions.

This bill will give all of us another tool that can be used to educate while addressing the issues of hatred.

• (1520)

Unfortunately this century has and continues to demonstrate in many parts of the world the end result of unchecked acts of hatred based on who you are and not what you are. Canada is a place where this is not to happen any more. Canada is one

example to the world that we are determined to live in a respectful environment in a respectful society. Those who do not wish to share and participate in this Canadian experiment shall be given an appropriate sentence with this new bill which indicates we shall not accept these expressions in our society.

I said I wanted to pay attention to two aspects of this very extensive bill. The other aspect I want to discuss is the key element of the amendment package, sexual assault involving a breach of trust.

Under this bill if a person is found to be guilty of sexual assault and that person was in a position of trust or authority with the victim, that fact will be considered an aggravating factor which will affect the severity of the sentence. This is very important particularly for women and children for they are the primary victims of sexual assault.

The fact that sexual assault involving breach of trust is a grave problem in this country is very disturbing on the one hand and is plain to see on the other. Canadian statistics revealed that in 1993 over three–quarters of reported sexual assault victims knew their assailants. That StatsCan survey was a true eye opener. On taking the microscope and magnifying the study through the language in the Criminal Code we found statistics that were quite revolting with respect to sexual assault and the victims. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

According to a national phone survey done by StatsCan, only 6 per cent of the women who told interviewers they had been assaulted had never reported it to the police. They were frightened. Why? One of the reasons is that that women report sexual assaults they do not believe they will be treated fairly by the judge listening to the case within the court system.

The new directions and the new directives on sentencing are going to help change that attitude. The judges will be enlightened as to what this government believes should be the proper action and the proper response given in these circumstances.

In a society in which prejudice and stereotype still exist, a woman is often blamed for being sexually assaulted. What is happening as well is women are seeing the inappropriate sentences that are given to perpetrators. This helps reinforce their attitude that they are not being considered fairly in the decisions that are rendered.

For too long our justice system has operated without any clearly defined understanding of breaches of trust in cases of sexual assault. Indeed in some cases the fact that the aggressor occupied a position of trust either as a good parent or a pillar of the community has even led to lighter sentencing. This is wrong, terribly and shockingly wrong. It is totally unacceptable. I am very pleased that the Minister of Justice acknowledges this and has brought to bear some changes in the system which will enlighten the judges in this regard.

To state it plainly, when someone violates a position of trust, whether he is a relative, an employer, a teacher, a doctor or some other figure of authority, he may do even greater damage to the victim than the anonymous rapist who attacks in the dark alley. This is particularly true if the victim is young. I would like this House to know that 63 per cent of sexual assaults involve victims under the age of 18 years. I say this is wrong. It is terribly wrong and it has to stop.

[*Translation*]

Victims of aggressions involving breach of trust could well suffer irreparable emotional and psychological damage.

Women and children who were molested by a friend, a family member or a mentor can no longer trust and love. They lose part of their humanity.

It may be difficult for a woman who has been victim of an aggression to maintain healthy intimate relationships, whether with close male friends or members of their family and even with their own spouse.

• (1525)

Many have to quit work, while others can no longer trust certain professionals. Their pain and suffering is often exacerbated by the fact that their aggressor does not face prosecution or gets off with a slap on the wrist.

[*English*]

A national study of court cases conducted by the metro action committee on public violence against women and children looked at how sexual assaults involving breaches of trust are dealt with in our justice system. It concluded that judges often fail to recognize a breach of trust.

In the many court cases studied 47 per cent involved an offender who was a father, a paternal figure, a relative, a friend of the parent, someone in a position of authority, or someone in a professional role. They all had had privileged relationships with the victim. Yet in over 40 per cent of these cases this privileged relationship was not even mentioned in the judges' comments or in the discussion of aggravating factors.

Furthermore when judges do recognize a breach of trust it is not always evident that they have given it appropriate weight in determining the offender's sentence. This bill will begin to rectify that situation by giving judges clear directives about what constitutes a breach of trust. The reformed Criminal Code will be better equipped to deal with this form of sexual abuse.

This provision will also send a message to individuals in a position of power. It says that if you use your relationship to take advantage of women or children, you will be treated harshly by the system. In other words, the greater a person's influence, the greater the responsibility to treat others with respect, and the

greater the consideration of a stiffer fine and sentencing. Not even a fine, sentencing.

The amendments in this reform package, especially those dealing with hate crimes and breach of trust, will help rebuild people's faith in our justice system. It will encourage women to be far more courageous and more open and to feel that they will be better treated if they bring the cases before the courts. That faith has been sorely tested in recent years as we have learned of the extent of violence against women and have lived through many incidences of hate motivated crimes.

I am grateful to the Minister of Justice for moving swiftly to deal with these problems. This bill is an example of our government's commitment to a just and peaceful society, a safe society with safe streets. If those words sound familiar it is because I am repeating them. They are printed and published in our best seller, the red book. We have kept our promises. These proposals follow through on the commitments we have made. They are the result of extensive consultations and co–operation with the provinces and the territories on sentencing reform.

In the name of all of our citizens, the women, men and children of this society, I am very pleased with this bill. I hope as it goes though this House people will recognize the importance of the fairness of this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what the hon. member had to say. She mentioned hate, and I agree that is not acceptable. However, legislation does not necessarily make certain acts more acceptable. And she had something to say about what is legislated and what is not legislated, and she has a point. I would like to ask her something in this connection. When she started on the word hate, I thought: hate is the opposite of love.

In Canada, there are broken families and broken individuals as well. She referred to big cities like Toronto and Montreal. And she is right.

• (1530)

She referred to what happened at the polytechnical institute, which shook us all. These were young women with a brilliant future. Today, in our schools, even in our secondary schools, twelve, thirteen and fourteen year–olds have suffered because we have no comprehensive social plan, as far as I am concerned. We have no plan for families, and as a result, we end up with laws that are harsh and sometimes very much so.

It is easy to say we have no choice, that the facts are there and crimes are being committed. However, if we look at the causes, and my question is all about this, could we not do a lot more in the way of prevention? Could we not provide more help for Canadian families? Could we not give more help to single–parent families and children? What about changing family allowance payments, considering the reduction in unemployment insurance benefits, and the increase in the number of hours people must work, since the unemployed have so much trouble making ends meet?

I think we should look at the whole picture and not just this particular legislation, even if we must change it.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I must say that the question, if we can call it a question, was actually an expression of concern and an analysis of our society which, I think, is well–founded and I share the concerns expressed by the hon. member. As I believe I said at the beginning of my speech, legislation is part of the greater picture, which includes education, awareness and appreciating the differences in our society. And that is probably why I referred to the diversity that, to me, is a splendid aspect of our society but also a very fragile one, just as democracy is fragile. If we do not take care of it, if we do not approach it with that "stirred in the pot" love when we tend this splendid and colourful garden, if I may use this metaphor, our failure to do so will cause problems and a great deal of pain.

The problems are caused by a lack of understanding, a lack of information and stereotypes that are rooted deep down. That is why the department of which I am Secretary of State, the multiculturalism department, is so important. For what it takes to buy one chocolate bar a year for everyone in Canada, we are setting up programs to bring people together, education programs, awareness programs and programs to promote what we are as Canadians and the mutual respect that should be part of everything we do.

We must understand this. We must realize that when you come from another country, another culture, and speak a language other than English and French, you have a lot to learn, and it takes more than a year or two to do that. After a few years, you get to the point that you are in a position to learn and you can learn. The groups we find in our communities and our neighbourhoods are there to help each other, to give a helping hand to new residents and help them understand Canadian democracy, the way we act and the way we speak and what is acceptable and what is not, and that hate and any kind of sexual assault are not acceptable, period.

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, before getting back into the routine, I would like to wish the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Acting Speakers the very best for this session. Your patience no doubt will be tested and I pray you will continue to make the decisions that are in the best

interests of all of the citizens of this great country. I wish you the best.

• (1535)

I also bring greetings from the constituents of Yorkton—Melville in Saskatchewan to all the members of Parliament and sincerely hope that all the members will direct their efforts to the most serious problems facing us at this time, problems like the debt, the economy, unemployment, criminal justice reform, as we are dealing with now, and the desperate need to reform our social programs.

I hope that we will focus on these things and apply ourselves to dealing with them.

We have heard from a number of Reform MPs who have expressed their qualified support for certain provisions of Bill C–41. We have also heard of some of their recommendations for improvement. While I share my colleagues's support for the general principles and intent of this bill, it is clear that it is not a bill that a Reform government would have drafted.

For example, section 745.6(2)(d) will now permit judges to receive and consider information provided by a victim at early parole hearings of murderers sentenced to life imprisonment supposedly without eligibility of parole. These people have been sentenced and now, under section 745, they have the possibility after 15 years of applying for parole.

While Reformers would rather have seen the complete repeal of section 745 and have these convicted murderers stay behind bars and serve their full sentences, we commend the government for at least taking a step in the right direction by recognizing that victims do have some rights to be heard at these hearings.

I am concerned that this specific amendment does not specify how the judge may receive the information from the victims or the victims' relatives. Will it simply be a victim's statement or will the victims themselves be allowed to appear in court and give evidence under oath? This has to be clarified during the committee stage. There is no clear evidence here that victims will have any more rights than criminals throughout this entire reform of the criminal justice system. That is a principle that we must clearly enunciate in our legislation and that has not been done in this amendment.

The minister cited the experience of Marie King Forest. Will she have the right to appear before the parole committee and give evidence of the impact the murder of her husband, a policeman, had on her life and the lives of her children? That murderer is now applying for parole and these people are still trying to put their lives together. Will there be clear, ample opportunity for her to personally testify at these parole hearings? That is not specified in this amendment.

After reading Bill C–41 I could not help but conclude that it is a make work project for lawyers. I was listening to the hon. minister a few minutes ago. I am convinced that this legislation will provide more and more work for lawyers in our courts. There seems to be more of a focus on bureaucratic procedures than imposing sentences and getting tough on crime. That is not acceptable and Canadians are calling for this government to get tough and not make more procedures and more work for the lawyers.

When I see that certain murderers will get a more serious or stiffer sentence because their crime was motivated by hate rather than doing something for kicks, as was the case with this policeman, or for some other reason there is a serious flaw here. It will be a lawyer's dream to now work with this new legislation.

Trials will now have this new added dimension. As they discuss this they of course will be accumulating revenue. Let us focus on the crime.

• (1540)

Now to my real concern about this bill. The Minister of Justice has spent the last six months getting Canadians all riled up about gun control. The first opportunity that he has to do something about it, the first opportunity that this government has to address this problem and to do something about the criminal use of guns, they do nothing. They have missed their chance. That is a major concern of mine and of many Canadians. Everyone knows that this is a serious deficiency not only in the use of section 85 of the Criminal Code but also in the sentences meted out by judges.

For the benefit of this House and the Canadian people, section 85 provides for a mandatory sentence for any person using a firearm in the commission of an indictable offence. The sentences can range from a minimum of one year to a maximum of 14 years for the first offence, and for a second or subsequent offence a minimum of three years and a maximum of 14 years. Section 85 also requires that the sentences be served consecutively, added on to their other sentence.

The Minister of Justice talks about imposing more inane restrictions, empty foolish restrictions, on law–abiding, responsible gun owners while he did not take this opportunity to put more teeth into the sentencing of criminals convicted under section 85. That is a grave omission.

I know the Minister of Justice has asked the provincial attorneys general to ensure that more charges are laid under section 85 rather than using it primarily as a plea bargaining tool. The studies show that even when section 85 is used by the police the sentences are rarely in line with what the public would consider punishment fit for the crime or anything near what the people would consider a deterrent—completely lacking.

Before we look specifically at the sentencing under section 85, we must look at the overall leniency of our criminal courts. In 1991–92 the Canadian centre for justice statistics completed a study of the sentencing of adult criminal provincial court in six provinces using a data base of over 600,000 criminal convictions. It found that the maximum penalties were imposed very rarely in adult provincial courts. Of the 52 offences carrying an identifiable maximum penalty, 31 of the crimes had never had the maximum penalty imposed; 17 had the maximum penalty imposed only one per cent of the time and only four had the maximum penalty imposed over 5 per cent of the time.

I ask the members of this House is this what the government means by getting tough on crime?

Let us look at this study and see what it tells us about sentences for the use of a firearm during the commission of an offence. First of all, the number of convictions is important to look at. The study by the Canadian centre for justice statistics found that in the 1991–92 year in just six provinces there were only 52 convictions under section 85 for using a firearm in the commission of an offence. Compare this with 12,287 convictions for violent crimes that same year; 52 convictions out of 12,287 convictions for violent crimes under section 85 for using a firearm in the commission of an offence.

• (1545)

Here is a breakdown of those violent offences: manslaughter, 73 convictions; robbery, 2,181 convictions; sexual assault with a weapon, 94 convictions; assault with a weapon, 5,787 convictions; careless dangerous use of a firearm, 2,130 convictions; the possession of a firearm or weapon, 2,022 convictions. Out of all of these, there were 52 convictions under section 85 of using a firearm in the commission of an offence. This is a total of 12,287 convictions for violent crimes.

Granted I can hear some people saying we do not know how many convicted criminals actually used a firearm, but we are certain that it was a lot more than 52 times out of 12,287 in all of these violent crimes that I have given here. Robbery, 2,181—did all of these people rob without a gun?

Section 85 is not being used. The Minister of Justice is trying to convince the provinces to instruct their police forces to use section 85 more. Let us look at the sentences for 52 section 85 convictions in 1991–92. The minimum sentence under section 85 of the Criminal Code is one year and the maximum is 14 years.

In all 52 convictions under section 85 every single one of them received the minimum one year sentence. That is getting tough on the criminal misuse of firearms? I find this statistic so amazing I have to say it again. In 100 per cent of the 52 convictions for using a gun during the commission of a crime the criminals received the minimum one year sentence, one year in jail. This is proof positive that something has to be done with regard to sentencing for section 85 convictions.

Bill C–41 that we have before this House must be amended. If the courts will not use the sentencing provisions of section 85 to deter the criminal use of guns then Parliament must. We must not neglect our duty. We must use the responsibility that people have entrusted us with to make our criminal justice system work in this country.

If judges persist in sentencing criminals who use guns to the minimum time in jail then Parliament must act to increase the minimum mandatory sentence to three years. I think section 85 should be amended to read "use of weapons", not just "firearms". That is a serious loophole in the law that must be closed.

I ask the government to do what makes sense and do what the vast majority of Canada is asking: get tough on crime. Do not look at legitimate gun owners and see what restrictions we can put on them. Target the problem where the problem exists.

I cannot believe that this government left such an important provision out of the sentencing bill. What possible reason could it have for this oversight? Could it be that it is not serious about getting tough on crime? Could it be that all the focus of its efforts to control crime will be directed, as I have said, at law–abiding, responsible gun owners rather than at the criminal who uses guns? Why should it be left to Reform MPs to identify the major deficiency in Bill C–41?

I hope now that it has been pointed out that all the members of the justice committee will support an amendment of this bill related to the sentencing for convictions under section 85.

Let us look at how section 85 might be better applied in a recent case. Everyone has heard about the Just Desserts killing in Toronto on April 5. Four men walked in, robbed the patrons of the restaurant and used a sawed–off shotgun to kill one of the customers. Three men have been charged so far, one with murder and 12 robberies and the other two with manslaughter and 12 robberies. As far as we know charges have not been laid under section 85 of the Criminal Code.

• (1550)

Since the Just Desserts killing there have been calls for more gun control by people with the mistaken belief that controlling guns will somehow control crime. It will not. The criminals in the Just Desserts killing were already using a prohibited weapon, a sawed–off shotgun. What are we doing? Are we going to prohibit them even more than they already are?

There have been very few calls for what is really needed, more crime control and not gun control. One way to control crime is to send a clear message to all prospective criminals that the public and our criminal justice system will not tolerate the criminal use

of guns. The best way to send this message is to hand out tougher sentences.

The persons in the Just Desserts killing should not only be charged with murder, manslaughter and 12 robberies but should also be charged under section 85 for using a firearm in the commission of an indictable offence, one section 85 charge for each of the robberies and another section 85 charge for the murder.

This would give the judge the option of sentencing another 182 years in jail for the sentences for each of these convicted of the senseless, horrific crime. What if, after the conviction, the newspaper headlines read: "Just Desserts killers get just deserts, sentenced to a maximum of 507 years each"? "Justice minister promises they will never get out to kill again". This would be the maximum life sentence for the murder, the maximum life sentence for each of the 12 robberies and the maximum sentence of 14 years for using a firearm in each of the robberies and another 14 years for using a firearm in the murder.

Would this not send a clearer signal to those who are going to use guns with criminal intent? Would this not be a clearer deterrent than making laws which ban guns which the criminals disobey anyway? They will still continue to saw off their shotguns and use them any way they want to.

There will always be those who will be saying that sentencing a criminal to 507 years is ridiculous and of course 507 years is impossible to serve. However, it is even more ridiculous to let killers serving life sentences with no eligibility for parole back on our streets in 15 years by using the Liberal loophole of section 745.

What is more ridiculous? Compare those two things. It sounds ridiculous to sentence somebody to 507 years but it is even more ridiculous to let them off easy. I appeal to this government to get tough on crime. The criminal misuse of guns,rather than what they are doing now should be addressed instead of putting in more stupid regulations on law–abiding citizens.

Liberals are very famous for big government, higher taxes and intrusion into the lives of Canadians. More common sense is needed in this legislation. Do not just make it appear like the government is doing something. Really get to the root of the problem and solve it. Do not just talk the talk, walk the walk.

The Minister of Justice said this morning that he has been planning this for 14 years. Why did the government not come up with something more substantive if it has had that much time? Surely it could have closed some of these loopholes and addressed some of these problems.

The minister had many Canadians telling him this summer the ideas that he has been floating with regard to gun control do not get to the heart of the problem. He had an opportunity to do something and he never did it. I hope some amendments will be made in this committee. I look forward to making some suggestions to the minister.

• (1555)

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to the hon. member's comment about the Liberal loophole of section 745. The rationale I believe the member used for not removing section 745 entirely was the will of the Canadian people to get tough on crime.

I would like to draw to the hon. member's attention that section 745 is a judicial review heard with a judge and jury where two thirds of the jury must make the finding for a convicted person to be released.

I would ask the hon. member is that not dealing with the people through our judge and jury system, trial by our peers? What objection does he have to that?

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, the question is a good one.

If the member is familiar with what is happening with regard to section 745 at the present time, I do not have the statistics at my fingertips, but what is happening is that over half of these people are being released because a lot of the evidence is not admissible in these court trials and it is being used as a loophole to get these people off after 15 years.

Part of the problem is being addressed by the legislation and I commend the government for doing that because it will allow victim impact statements to be submitted but it does not indicate how those victim impact statements will be used in these trials. Will the person be able to testify before this jury? At the present time they are generally not allowed to do so unless the judge rules otherwise in some provinces.

In most cases those people who, if we had capital punishment, would not even be here are being released on to our streets. That is what people find unacceptable. These people who in more than half the cases were given a life sentence are now being released. That is the problem.

Much of the testimony that should be given because of other legal loopholes is not even allowed at that trial. It is a very interesting study to see what is happening under section 745 and to see how the criminal element has more rights than the victim with regard to all of this legislation. That is why we would like to close some of these loopholes.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and a question for the member of the Reform Party.

It seems like every time we deal with the issue of crime and justice which is certainly a very difficult issue, I get the impression that they would have us be like the United States of

America with the death penalty and sentences that go into hundreds of years.

The member made a comment about not talking the talk but walking the walk. I wonder if the member is aware of a number of studies that have been done particularly the one by Dr. Anthony Doob, one of the foremost experts in the area of public perception of the judicial system. The points Dr. Doob made in his conclusions were based on the following.

He gave a group of people the transcripts of what actually went on in a court case. Covering the same court case, he had another group of people who got the reports from the printed media. The findings were that people who responded on the appropriateness of the sentences and who used the media as the source of their information in many cases had the same attitude espoused by members of the Reform Party such as the justice system is not working and that judges are being much too lenient.

• (1600)

The other group of people who had transcripts to refer to so they could decide if the sentencing judge had given an appropriate sentence concluded that the system was working quite well and that in some cases the judicial system was more harsh than it needed to be. The public even proposed that things like fine option programs and alternatives to incarceration should be tried.

The question I want to pose is this. Surely the members of the Reform Party recognize that we do not, in Canada, follow the model of the United States in terms of criminology. We happen to be a little bit more enlightened. Surely the member of the Reform Party recognizes that Canada is a much safer society than is the United States. If capital punishment and the kind of justice they are talking about were to work, the United States of America would be a safe place to live. It is not. Compared to it, we are doing very well.

I am really troubled with this pandering to the worst misconceptions that the member and his party seem to cater to.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question. I will address the first part of his question concerning capital punishment. We do not have to decide that question here. We can have a discussion.

That question can be decided by the people of Canada in a binding referendum. That is who should decide it. I call on this government to hold that binding referendum.

In reply to the other issue that was raised, if the hon. member has had any experience with the criminal justice system, if he has been wronged, if his constituents come to him and describe their experience with our criminal justice system, he will realize very quickly that it needs fixing.

I could cite example after example of where people have been the victims of crime. Those people then go to the trials; they appeal to the judge for some justice; they go to the police and cannot get justice because people hide behind loopholes in the law.

That is the kind of experience I am talking about now. People have had experiences like this. They see that horrific crimes have been committed. There was a murder in my constituency of an elderly man just a very brief time ago. One of the perpetrators got four years. Now he is eligible for parole. That man's wife cannot understand how this can be. You can use all the elitist arguments about how the biggest brains in this country know so much more than the ordinary person, but I do not buy it. That is a typical Liberal attitude: they know better.

It is about time we listened to some of the people who have experience with the way the criminal justice system works and how they, the victims, have virtually no say in that system.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

EXTENSION OF HOURS OF SITTING

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties. I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That on Wednesday, September 21, 1994, the House shall continue to sit from 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. for the purpose of considering the motion by the Minister of Foreign Affairs with regard to peacekeeping, provided the proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38 shall be taken up at 8.30 p.m. and provided that no dilatory motions or quorum calls should be receivable after 6.30 p.m. on that day.

(Motion agreed to.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1605)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Telegdi: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The previous speaker referred to the fact that if one had some experience in the criminal justice system. I wish to inform the hon. member that for 15 years I worked with victims and offenders in the criminal justice system.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I say respectfully to all our colleagues in the House of Commons that is not a point of order.

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, as a practising defence lawyer with 17 years experience in the criminal justice system I commend the Minister of Justice for introducing sentencing practices which are responsive to the concerns and values of Canadians and which address the many existing injustices inherent in the criminal procedure process and the practices of our criminal justice system.

Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code of Canada with respect to sentencing is a bill which reflects the government's commitment to a renewed criminal justice system that is balanced, fair, and encourages respect for the law.

Justice, law and equality are the fundamental elements required to maintain a balance within our criminal justice system. However, the determining factor is the human element.

It is the human element that determines the success or failure of our criminal justice system. The human element includes ourselves as individuals who are to be law–abiding citizens, the community at large which develops public opinion, the role of our law enforcers which is to enforce law, the role of our prosecutors administering justice within the system, the role of defence counsel defending and protecting rights of the accused, the role of the judiciary rendering a decision, the role of our probation officers, psychologists, social workers, health care professionals, penal institution employees, our clergymen regarding the rehabilitation of the accused, and the role of we here today, the legislators, enacting the law.

The success of the system does not primarily rely on legislation. The fundamental success of our criminal justice system relies on the ability of man to administer justice without abuse of authority and power, and the ability of man to administer justice coupled with equity and mercy.

Justice, law and morality are inseparable. If a moral society existed there would be no need for criminal sanction. It is a requirement for this criminal sanction in our society that necessitates government to deter, to punish, to rehabilitate its members of society.

Bill C–41 on sentencing reform introduces changes to the sentencing system while also reorganizing and rationalizing it. The reforms provide a balanced, sensible and broad range of options that address the public's need for safety, the victims' desire for restitution, and the important principle that serious offenders should be treated differently from minor or first–time offenders.

The amendments are the result of extensive consultations in co–operation with the provinces and territories that are responsible for administering the criminal justice system.

This bill provides the courts with more options to distinguish between serious violent crime requiring jail and less serious, non–violent crime that could be addressed more effectively at the community level.

For those Canadians who demand equity in sentencing, Bill C–41 addresses this concern by introducing a statement of purpose and principles of sentencing within the Criminal Code.

No statement of purpose and principles of sentencing currently exist in the Criminal Code. While court rulings have determined principles, these may vary from province to province. To date Parliament's role has largely been limited to setting maximum penalties for specific offences rather than dealing with the policy objectives of the sentencing process.

Under the proposals, a statement of purpose in principles of sentencing will be added to the Criminal Code. This statement will provide direction to the courts and the fundamental purpose of sentencing to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society.

• (1610)

The statement describes the objectives of sentencing as follows: first, helping in the rehabilitation of offenders as law–abiding persons; second, separating offenders from society where necessary; third, providing restitution to individual victims or the community; fourth, promoting a sense of responsibility by offenders, including encouraging acknowledgement by offenders of the harm done to victims or to the community at large; fifth, denouncing unlawful conduct; and sixth, deterring the offender and other people from committing offences.

In achieving these objectives the court will be guided by a number of fundamental principles: first, a sentence must reflect the seriousness of the offence; second, the degree of responsibility of the offender; third, courts must consider aggravating and mitigating circumstances; fourth, give similar sentences to offenders who have committed similar acts; fifth, when an offender receives more than one sentence, the total should not be unduly long or harsh; sixth, the offender should not be imprisoned if less restrictive alternatives are appropriate; and seventh, all reasonable alternatives should be considered when sentencing offenders.

The statement of purpose and principles will also note the importance of crime prevention to public safety. In addition, it will recognize that wherever appropriate, alternative measures designed to meet the special needs of aboriginal offenders should be used. The statements of purpose and principles in the Criminal Code will emphasize unity and coherence in the criminal justice system. These measures will ensure greater

consistency, balance and fairness within the criminal justice system as a whole.

Adding a statement of purpose and principles makes the sentencing process responsive to public concerns by ensuring that it is governed by principles set out by Parliament. Clearly defining the purpose of sentencing also makes the system more understandable, predictable and accessible to the public.

A national policy statement on sentencing will also provide the legal community with a more consistent direction on how to approach sentencing in Canada.

The proposed statement of principles also says that when an offence is motivated by hate based on the race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation of the victim, this must be considered an aggravating circumstance.

Any offence motivated by hate against any individual in Canada should not be tolerated. I wish to reiterate this statement, that any offence motivated by hate against any individual in Canada should not be tolerated.

However, I wish to go on record today as taking exception to the specific inclusion of the wording of "sexual orientation" in the Criminal Code amendment. The inclusion of this wording in effect gives special rights, special consideration, to homosexuals. The reference to sexual orientation in the code and its proposed inclusion in the human rights legislation gives recognition to a faction in our society which is undermining and destroying our Canadian values and Christian morality. Such a special recognition of sexual orientation in our federal legislation is an overt condonation of the practice of homosexuality which is being imposed on Canadians. It has the effect of legislating a morality that is not supported by our Canadian and Christian morals and values.

Canadians do not have to accept homosexuality as being natural and moral. Homosexuality is not natural, it is immoral and it is undermining the inherent rights and values of our Canadian families and it must not and should not be condoned.

The public expresses legitimate concerns for victims of crime. Bill C–41 provides enhanced provisions for victims. Some courts have excluded victim information from being considered at section 745 hearings because this information was felt to be a form of victim impact statement, which according to the Criminal Code can only be heard at sentencing hearings.

• (1615)

The amendments to the Criminal Code would allow victim information at section 745 hearings. This would ensure that a victim has the opportunity to speak about the harm done by the offender and that the victim's experience is taken into account in determining whether the period of parole ineligibility should be reduced.

Bill C–41 addresses the concerns of Canadians with respect to the issue of restitution. The bill contains proposals that were developed co–operatively by the federal government and the provinces. They would allow judges to consider restitution to cover property and personal injury.

Expanded restitution would also be available in situations where a person acting in good faith unwittingly becomes the victim of criminal activities by, for example, unknowingly buying stolen property that is later confiscated by police.

Provision is made to ensure restitution orders can be enforced by the civil courts. Victims will also be notified of restitution orders. As well the code would specifically state that any restitution order by a criminal court would not limit a victim's right to sue for damages in a civil court.

Bill C–41 also addresses payment of fines. Currently one–third of adult offenders in jails in Canada are there because they did not pay a fine. Research shows that aboriginal people are especially likely to be jailed due to non–payment of fines. To ensure that fewer persons are ordered to pay fines they cannot afford, the proposals would require courts to determine that an offender can pay the fine being considered.

Offenders who cannot pay can instead be subject to other options such as community service or probation. A number of measures are also being proposed to help the provinces in collecting fines. These include authorizing the provinces to use the same mechanisms that they use enforcing fines imposed under federal statute.

Designate officers of the court such as the clerk or registrar to enforce fines rather than the court itself allows for more cost efficient administration with respect to the collection of fines.

Ultimately these proposals would result in less crowded, safer prisons as well as decrease costs. They would also lessen the potentially damaging effect of imprisonment on people unable to pay fines. However, maintaining prison as a last resort for people who can pay fines will ensure that the law is respected.

Another important issue the bill addresses is with respect to reform regarding probation. The probation provisions of the Criminal Code have been changed to encourage better information for the court. Together with greater penalties for breach of probation this is intended to increase confidence in this widely used sentence.

Under the proposals the Criminal Code would be intended to specify the basic information that must be included in a pre–sentence report. The provinces will also be given the flexibility to include in their own regulations any other information they wish to have included in this pre–sentence report.

The criminal justice system often fails Canadians and therefore we need alternatives in Canada to court proceedings. Alternative measures are ways that disputes and minor offences can be dealt with rather than using expensive and unnecessary formal court proceedings.

Alternative measures have two central aims: to prevent more criminal behaviour and to lessen the harm that can sometimes be done when minor offenders are dealt with through the courts.

They also involve the community and put greater emphasis on victim–offender reconciliation than do formal court proceedings. At present the Criminal Code contains no provisions for alternative measures.

The bill would allow the use of alternative measures for adults by permitting each province to set up and administer its own alternative measures program. This proposal is similar to one successfully used in various jurisdictions for young offenders. As a result first time and less serious offenders could be diverted from the courts. This would promote protection of the public by lessening the negative impact of incarceration on less serious offenders while freeing up valuable and scarce resources to deal with the more serious cases. Canadians should know that the bill would add a new sanction called a conditional sentence to the Criminal Code. Courts would be permitted to use conditional sentences when the jail term that would otherwise be imposed will be less than two years.

• (1620)

A judge would impose certain conditions on an offender similar to the conditions of a probation order. At the same time the judge would impose a jail term but suspend it as long as the offender meets the conditions that had been imposed.

Offenders who do not comply with these conditions can be summoned back to court to explain and to demonstrate why they should not be incarcerated. The court can cancel the suspension of the sentence and send the offender to jail for the remainder of the sentence, or it can impose new conditions.

The proposal would mean that less serious and first time offenders who otherwise would be in jail could serve their sentences under tight controls in the community. This promotes protection of the public by seeking to separate more serious offenders from the community while providing less serious offenders with effective community based alternatives. It could also mean that scarce funds could be used for incarcerating and treating more serious offenders.

As a defence lawyer I have great concern with respect to the existing rules of evidence and procedure for the sentencing hearing. At present there are no clear guidelines in the law governing the sentencing hearing to indicate when information should be made available to the court, what powers the court should have to obtain that information, or how that information should be assessed in determining sentences. Previous court rulings may be referred to but they do not cover all situations and may differ significantly from province to province.

The bill proposes amendments to the Criminal Code to clarify how sentences should be handled in the courts. The bill also requires every judge to present reasons for their sentences in cases. These amendments bring greater consistency and fairness to the sentencing process.

The Criminal Code of Canada as a statute requires restructuring and in particular the restructuring of part 23 of the Criminal Code. Our current legislation with amendments leaves us with a piecemeal approach to our Criminal Code. The bill would amend part 23 so that most matters dealing with sentencing would be consolidated within this part of the Criminal Code rather than scattered throughout. Because of the restructuring in such a logical way our Criminal Code would be more understandable and accessible to criminal justice professionals and to the public at large.

Often injustices arise in a criminal justice system on the basis of technicalities. Technical amendments are required and Bill C–41 addresses this point. A variety of technical issues are either not addressed by our current legislation or are being confused. These include when a probation order should begin, how a judge can direct the manner in which escape sentences are to be served in relation to previously imposed sentences, what happens to a sentence while an inmate is unlawfully at large and who can authorize the transfer of a probationer from one province to another. The bill intends to clarify some of these issues.

In conclusion the reform and the renewal of the criminal justice system in Canada must be priorities with our government. Canadians demand justice and equity. They must be reflected within the criminal practices, procedure and process in our criminal justice system.

The sentencing amendments proposed by Bill C–41 affords Canadians sentencing practices and procedures that are just and equitable throughout Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I also wish you a good session, because I am glad to see you again after the summer break. I want to thank my colleague for her speech; to tell you the truth, I do not at all consider myself an expert on justice issues, but having listened very closely to the hon. member's speech, I feel some obligation to get into debate with her, in my capacity as human rights critic for my party, especially on one aspect of her speech.

She said that this bill is a necessary reform and talked a little about homosexuality in what I thought were rather pejorative

terms. She said that homosexuality was immoral and that Canadians were not prepared to tolerate it.

• (1625)

I remembered the speech that her colleague, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, gave earlier this afternoon, saying that Canadians should become more tolerant of one another.

I feel the need to say so because I really have the impression that the present Minister of Justice will also propose some reforms concerning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, making it an illegal ground for discrimination.

I would like to ask my colleague whether we as parliamentarians should not rather recognize that homosexuality is a different way of expressing one's sexuality. Should we as legislators not recognize, especially when discussing this kind of situation, that homosexuals are estimated to constitute about 10 per cent of the population in nearly all societies and that they are entitled to legal rights? Is calling homosexuality immoral not rather reactionary and intolerant, contrary to what the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism urged us to be?

I would like to know what she thinks because I want to say where I stand when we have the opportunity to discuss these issues in connection with the amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act that the Minister of Justice will present to us. I hope that, whatever side of this House we sit on, we will find a little more open–mindedness.

[*English*]

Ms. Skoke: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very important issue which I think has to be and should be addressed on the floor of the House. Certainly it is an issue that I have not shied away from. It is not always a very comfortable issue to talk about.

My learned friend indicated 10 per cent of the population. We have the majority. We have a democracy. I am representing in my viewpoint the majority of Canadians. We have to concern ourselves with the fact that justice, law and morality are inseparable. We are legislators. When we are legislating and making laws we must ask ourselves whether our laws are just and moral.

Morality is constant. Morality does not change with the tide. We cannot change morality to adhere to a particular faction or special interest group or to adhere to the whims of 10 per cent of our population.

When we talk about sexual orientation we are talking about imposing upon and insisting that all Canadians condone what in my opinion is immoral and unnatural. We have natural law. I have gone on record as stating quite clearly that I am opposed to the inclusion of the words sexual orientation in our Criminal Code. I have also gone on record as saying in my speech that certainly in Canada we cannot and should not tolerate hatred of any kind toward any individual.

As far as the moral issues that are raised here, we have to be very concerned and considerate of the rights of families in Canada. Families have inherent rights. Families have existed before the church and families have existed before the state. The rights of families in my opinion are being undermined and are being eroded because of 10 per cent of the population that is promoting special rights and interests for homosexuals. I am strongly opposed to that. I will continue to be very vocal about it. I feel it is time the majority of Canadians stood and were counted.

• (1630)

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I am one of the 10 per cent to whom the hon. member just referred. I am not a member of a special interest group. I am not a member of a faction. I am a member of a family and gay and lesbian people in this country, as the member should know, are also very much not only members of families but are also families themselves.

I want to take a couple of minutes to respond to the comments of the hon. member. I want to tell the hon. member that what we are debating here is legislation which which will ensure that when a crime is motivated by hatred or intolerance or bigotry, whether it be based upon sexual orientation, religion, or race, that crime is punished more severely.

A couple of weeks ago for example the brother of a young teacher from Toronto came to my office and told me about how his brother had been brutally murdered by five teenagers in a Toronto park. He had been kicked to death because he was a faggot according to them.

I also met with people who were attacked and whose arms were broken by a group of thugs in a restaurant on Davie Street in Vancouver. They were attacked for no other reason than the fact that they happen to be gay.

This legislation says that when attacks are motivated by that kind of hatred they should be punished more severely.

I want to challenge this member and I want to leave her with time to respond to this. The hon. member, and I use those words advisedly, has suggested that "homosexual couples are not families in natural law. They will not be family. To condone homosexuality which is an inhuman act would make us a pagan nation". She goes on to suggest that gays and lesbians do not deserve any protection against discrimination and that homosexuality is in the same class as pedophilia and bestiality. I might say as well that I heard hon. members from the Reform Party saying "hear, hear" as she spoke.

My question for the hon. member is a simple one. Will she now stand in her place and retract those hateful comments she made suggesting that people, homosexualists as she called them, were promoting and advancing the homosexual movement which is spreading AIDS. That kind of fear mongering, that kind of hateful conduct has no place in this House.

I want to ask the hon. member to stand in her place and take this opportunity to withdraw those hateful words. Failing that, I want to ask other members of the Liberal caucus when will they end their silence and when will the Prime Minister end his silence and say that this woman has no place in the Liberal Party of Canada?

Ms. Skoke: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I have probably squared off on this issue before. I stand here in my place as a member of Parliament and under no circumstances would I ever retract the statements I have made. I have a right as a Canadian. I have a right as a Christian to defend the values of our country and to defend the traditions and to exercise my right of freedom of expression on this issue.

My learned friend raised the issue that they were hateful comments. They are not hateful comments. They are true comments shared by the majority of Canadians with respect to issues regarding morality.

My learned friend talks about families. The sole purpose, the sole agenda behind the homosexualists in our country is with respect to redefinition of family. I oppose that. I will fight strongly against that and I ask my colleagues to do the same. I ask all Canadians to do the same.

Homosexualists enjoy the same rights as every other Canadian. They do not enjoy any special rights. I as a member of Parliament will work to ensure that the rights of the majority of Canadians and that the values and the morality of this country are upheld.

• (1635)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve—Human rights; the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing—Social spending; the hon. member for Yukon—National forum on health; the hon. member for Richelieu—Mass layoffs; the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton—Great Lakes sport fishery.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak on Bill C–41. I am very pleased we are now dealing with the subject of amendments to sentencing and other aspects dealing with crime.

It is surprising when we look at the economic difficulties this country has that the public's concern on economic issues is pretty well at the same level as its concern on crime and public safety. We have to ask ourselves why that is happening and what the reason is for this concern.

First we have to say that on reflection our criminal justice system is working quite well. A lot of things need to be changed and that is what the Minister of Justice and this government hope to achieve in this Parliament. Then we will be able to say to the people in the next federal election that we have done a great deal to add to public safety.

Before starting down that road however, we have to say that our system operates quite well. We could bring forward statistics which say that crime is not increasing to the level some people would have us believe but frankly, when it comes right down to it statistics are of limited value.

What we have to face is the public perception of what people feel is their relative level of safety. That is what we have to deal with. Canadians must tell us what their concerns are and we have to listen. In that respect we have to dialogue with Canadians. We also have to bring forward laws that are going to work for Canadians, that are meaningful and are going to have an effect. This bill is very standard in that regard. The people of Canada have expressed concerns. This piece of legislation goes a long way in addressing those concerns.

I want to mention some of these concerns and how this legislation has addressed them. First, the very question of balance is paramount. We have to balance the needs of Canadians with good judicial legislation. I think we have done that here.

Bill C–41 addresses directly the purpose and principles of criminal sentencing. No such statement currently exists in the Criminal Code. There is no statement in the Criminal Code which deals directly with the purpose and principles of criminal sentencing.

We compare that with other areas of activity in this country. For instance we compare it with taxation, international trade, or unemployment insurance. All of these areas deal with very important subjects. In one way or another all of them have purposes and principles set down as to what has to be achieved and how the desired effect is going to be achieved.

• (1640)

That is as it should be. Bringing into this bill and bringing into the criminal justice system the purposes and principles in sentencing is paramount. In sentencing we are dealing with the very question of incarceration. There can be no greater infringement on the lives of individuals frankly, than to incarcerate them. So the very least we can do is to have purposes and

principles of criminal sentencing in the bill that deals with that very important subject.

Sentencing is an area around which the whole court system revolves. When someone is charged and brought before the courts, the whole exercise revolves around the sentence this person is given. We have listened to the counsel on both sides, the prosecutor and the defence counsel; we have read the laws and the briefs they presented. We have tried to understand the societal implications. We are familiar with incarceration and the other penalties. With all of this knowledge, background and experience in our criminal justice system, we then bring forward a sentence. That sentence is vital. That sentence is tremendously important in the future of our community safety. If we do not sentence properly, we are not only abusing the system but we are not doing society a favour.

If we incarcerate someone who perhaps could be rehabilitated, a young person who has not committed a violent crime, we are not really doing that young person justice nor are we doing society justice. Incarceration might make that young person bitter. Perhaps by putting that young person to work in a community program he or she could achieve a better understanding of his or her place in society. That is very important.

This bill does another important thing. It sets out a number of objectives for the sentencing process. For instance, in this bill one of the objectives is that we denounce unlawful conduct. We also speak of separating the offender from society where necessary. I say where necessary because it may not be necessary or even preferable in certain circumstances.

We also talk about rehabilitation of the offender. Regardless of how people feel the offender should be punished, in most cases that offender is going to leave incarceration and will be back in society. Part of our system has to cast an eye to that time when that offender is back on our city streets. We have to try to anticipate what kind of a person will be released back onto the streets. If we can make that person someone who is less likely to offend then that is also something we should consider.

Another objective in this bill is reparations. This bill says that it is important to fine somebody, but it is also important to give that person an appreciation that while they cannot get away with the crime, that going to jail may not be the greatest punishment for them.

● (1645)

Maybe it is where they can do it that they should be made to pay back a certain portion of what was stolen or damaged that will give this person a true appreciation of exactly what the victim has lost. That may seem rather simplistic and silly but sometimes when people commit crime they do not put themselves in the place of the victim.

They are only doing what they think they want and what they want to achieve. They do not in the heated moment when the crime is committed think of the victim and the ramifications for the victim. In that regard it is important that any person where possible who is going to be punished be made to think of what the victim has suffered and as distinctly and as carefully as possible that offender should be put in the place of the victim.

Reparations would do that by having to pay back. It should not be necessary that the victim have to apply to a court that these reparations be made. The court should consider it and we are saying that these reparations should be a consideration as an objective of sentencing. The victim should not have to apply.

We also in that same vein are trying to promote responsibility in the offender. We are trying to make the offender more responsible from that point forward. We are also saying that an objective is that the penalty should be proportionate to the seriousness of the crime and the degree of responsibility of the offender.

These objectives are very important. It is a checklist for judges and those involved in the criminal justice system. We should be looking for and achieving this. As I said initially we should be looking for this balance in our criminal justice system so that there is repudiation and punishment but there should also be a benefit to society in reparations, fines and in the fact that when that person goes back to society we have looked to that day and tried to do everything we possibly could to make that person more acceptable and more responsible in society.

No one would deny that punitive acts should be deterred by incarceration and that incarceration in most cases is a deterrent. There is no easy cause and effect relationship between the crime and the deterrent as to the value that is going to have. There is no magical formula which says that certain punishment is going to be the best way to deal with certain crimes.

There are these intangible factors in dealing with human beings in our criminal justice system that do not allow anyone to make a hard and fast rule. This is the reason we have to allow the flexibility in the courts. This is why we need the best minds possible on our benches in Canada.

We need the best judges we can possibly have and we need the best support system for these judges. We also feel, as I mentioned, that restitution be given priority in the courts. We think this is something that has to be considered.

We have also looked in this bill at section 745 of the Criminal Code which allows for a review of life sentences and allows the person serving a life sentence to apply for parole after 15 years.

We have not said that we are going to do away with that provision. We have said, however, that we want to include in that review victims' impact statements. Those impact statements

have not been a part of the review before now and the Minister of Justice certainly feels very strongly that they should be.

I and the minister think that this is going to have a tremendous impact on the hearings and on final decisions on these section 745 reviews.

• (1650)

We also state in this bill that where a victim impact statement is provided to a court the court shall consider the statement. That is not something that is just shoved in with exhibits and literature in a court hearing. The actual victim impact statement has to be taken into consideration.

This is important because most people in the House have been conscious of the fact that victims certainly have not received the attention they should. Certainly victims have brought forward that message loud and clear. We have to in our legislation look more to the victims and what they are suffering, the loss that they have endured and how we can possibly make their point of view known at the time of the hearing and have the impact of what they have gone through and what they have lost impressed upon the mind of the judge and all of the pertinent officials.

We also, where possible, need alternatives to incarceration. We can look at that from various points of view. The first thing is that one–third of all the people incarcerated in this country are incarcerated because they have not paid a fine or some other sum of money that they have been required to pay. In a lot of cases the people do not have the money to pay the fine or the required sum of money. We are putting these people in jail.

We are also saying that people who commit sexual assaults or violent crimes need to be punished for longer periods of time. If we are saying that we want to keep some of these people who have committed violent crimes in our penitentiary system for longer periods, we have to look to our correction system. To put people in a penitentiary because they have not paid fines in this day and age really has to make us wonder, particularly if they cannot afford to pay.

There has to be a better way of doing it. One of the ways would be public service. If they cannot pay the fine then why can they not be allowed or forced to provide some kind of public service?

A second area that we are recommending is the curtailment of provincial services. If a person has not paid his or her fine then perhaps they should not be issued a hunting licence or a driving licence until that fine is paid. These are things that we with the provinces should look at to perhaps get away from incarceration for non–payment of fines. This would go a long way not only as far as having a better result, but it would give more respect to our criminal justice system.

Another thing that we want to try as a result of Bill C–41 are conditional sentences. At the present time we have the process where a person is put on probation. If they reoffend they are brought back and charged, they go through the court process again and they are once again sentenced. Here we are saying that through conditional sentences a sentence will be levied on the person. The person then will be granted freedom to act in a diversion program in their community or an alternative to incarceration but the sentence has been imposed.

If the person violates the terms of his or her sentence while they are in one of the alternate processes they are then brought back to court and it is determined if in fact they have broken their conditions. If it is determined by the courts that they did then what they must do is finish the unfinished portion of their sentence that was imposed on them initially. You do not go through the whole trial re–evaluating or reappraising their past history. The sentence is there. If it is proven that they have violated the conditions of that conditional sentence then the unfinished portion of their sentence has to be served. I think that will do a lot to ease the burden of our court system and once again be more meaningful to those involved.

• (1655)

We are also saying to those who are on probation that if they break probation they break the trust of society. They are not only breaking the trust of the criminal justice system. They are breaking the trust of society that wants to give them a chance. We do not want to impose incarceration. We want to give them the benefit of the doubt as much as possible because we think they are worth it. Now if a person violates probation then he or she is breaching that trust.

We are saying in Bill C–41 that there should be harsher penalties for those who breach their probation. We are also saying, as was brought up earlier, that if there is a hate factor in the committing of a crime then this is an additional motivating factor and should result in a harsher penalty. We are saying this unequivocally. We are saying this as a result of a good deal of dialogue and consultation we have had with minority groups and different religious groups all across the country. This is something they want very badly and which they feel is needed and it is something to which the Minister of Justice agrees.

I think this bill is going to go a long way to help us fight crime in Canada and get back a lot of the respect for our criminal justice system that we have lost and will give the people of Canada more confidence that the government has control of the fight against crime and the restoration of safe streets in this country.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member opposite. First of all in terms of alternatives to incarceration you mentioned several possible

alternatives. I am just wondering if you have considered seriously—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I know we are just coming back from the summer recess but I think we want to remind one another to direct questions, comments, any interventions through the Speaker. I know good habits are hard.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member if he has considered corporal punishment as an alternate deterrent to crime, an alternative to incarceration.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, no we have not.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to address a question to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice.

The parliamentary secretary is a member of this House for whom I have considerable respect. We have worked together on the justice committee over the years. The member was present in the House a few minutes ago when one of his colleagues from his province of Nova Scotia made certain comments with respect to this bill and in particular with respect to the provisions dealing with crimes motivated by hatred, prejudice and bias on the issue of sexual orientation.

The parliamentary secretary may be aware as well of the fact that this Liberal from Nova Scotia in question has made a number of similar comments to those that she made in the House. In the House today she stated among other things that homosexuality was immoral and unnatural.

An hon. member: Right on.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I hear a Reform Party member saying "right on". I hope that member will have the courage to stand in his place and defend that particular—

• (1700)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. This is a debate that requires a great deal of sensitivity in which members want to give their utmost respect. I know the member for Burnaby—Kingsway is a very experienced parliamentarian.

We want to make sure we direct everything in the respectful fashion that is owed to this topic and all topics within this Chamber.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I do indeed look forward to hearing the comments of my colleagues from the Reform Party on this issue. Among other comments made both inside the House and outside by this member are the following:

> There are those innocent victims that are dying from Aids and then there are those homosexualists that are promoting and advancing the homosexual movement and that are spreading Aids. Aids is a scourge to mankind and there will be no cure for Aids. So this love, this compassion between homosexuals, based on an inhuman act, defiles humanity, destroys family,—and is annihilating mankind.

She goes on to state, as I indicated earlier, that homosexuality is in the same class as pedophilia and bestiality.

My question for the hon. member, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, is a straightforward question. This member is obviously entitled to speak as she wishes. It is a free country. She has freedom of speech. Will the parliamentary secretary undertake to raise the issue directly with the Prime Minister as to the appropriateness of this member continuing to sit as a member of the Liberal caucus, the Liberal Party of Canada, when she espouses views which, if they were spoken with respect to any other minority, perhaps a religious minority, a racial minority, any other minority, would be met with widespread outrage and anger by that member's colleagues?

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary what action is he prepared to take to break the silence of the Liberal Party and the Liberal caucus on this question? I see the chair of the human rights committee of this Parliament who was present during those comments. Perhaps she may wish to comment on this.

At this point I want to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice precisely what action is he prepared to take to ensure that Canadians understand very clearly that these kinds of hateful, bigoted, homophobic comments have absolutely no place either in this Chamber or certainly in the Liberal Party of Canada?

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I accept the comments of the hon. member because I know they are sincere. I have respect for his position and his contribution to this House of Commons. He has been an excellent member of Parliament.

I cannot comment on the member to whom he refers because she as he stated is entitled to her own opinions. We have stated here in this act the position of the government which is that hate motivation is going to be dealt with more strongly in the criminal code. That speaks volumes for the position of the government.

The Minister of Justice has stated and fully intends to bring forward amendments to the Human Rights Act in the next few months. I would hope that the hon. member will look upon these as a major step forward. I cannot possibly predict what is going to be in the legislation.

I do feel this government is moving in a direction that is very creditable. Its record is going to indicate that.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, for his remarks to this House today. Over the past six years I have often approached my experienced and

learned colleague for advice on the issues we have been addressing.

I appreciate his and our minister's belief that the sentencing practices in Canada must be responsive to the concerns and values of Canadians. For the most part Bill C–41 reflects the government's commitment to a fair and balanced justice system, hence my support for it.

I am here to represent my constituents from Hamilton West and others across this country. My support is for victims of violence and their demands that section 745 be repealed.

• (1705)

This is not a new subject for the parliamentary secretary in discussions we have had in the past. It is a courageous first step that our minister is going to permit the victims of violence to make their impact statements at those judicial reviews. It was a curious statement by the parliamentary secretary that it was a tremendous impact on judicial reviews. A tremendous impact how? What is the aim of that statement? What would result if a victim had their say?

Can the parliamentary secretary to the minister explain why section 745 would not be completely repealed, and if at committee there is proof in the pudding—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I believe in trying to facilitate each member's ability and opportunity to engage in debate and I do not want to take up much time either here because the purpose of my getting up is to try and keep the debate going because we have gone a little too long. I would ask the parliamentary secretary for a very brief response, otherwise I will be on my feet once again.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think I can reply to that very quickly.

The difference is in having the actual response of the victims. Before there may have been a document which said what this person did, the person being reviewed, that he or she is being reviewed because of such and such and this is what they did. When you have the victims there to actually state from their point of view what happened to them or a member of their family or a neighbour, that has tremendous impact. Those of us who have been to committees to hear the actual stories from the people who were the victims have seen a monumental difference in how we feel on a particular point.

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak on Bill C–41.

Canadians across the land are genuinely concerned about their criminal justice system. The law–abiding citizen looks to this House for common sense to ensure the passage of legislation which protects them and not the criminal.

Having said that, there are a couple of areas in Bill C–41 that I can support. The provision regarding victim impact statements is long overdue, and the parliamentary secretary just waxed eloquently on that. Victims must be permitted to make representations at hearings held to determine whether the court imposed period of eligibility for parole should be changed. I am also in favour of the part of Bill C–41 that will enable the courts to order offenders to make restitution to victims of their crimes. Finally the victim is getting some consideration from a system which has not served the interests of Canadians.

Unfortunately Bill C–41 does very little to address the real problem that plagues the law–abiding citizens of Canada. It appears that a criminal justice system does not even exist. What we have is a legal industry dominated by lawyers and judges who play a bureaucratic game with laws which tend to serve the criminal, not the public.

Since being elected as member of Parliament for Yellowhead my office has been inundated by constituents' concerns about our so–called justice system. They are frustrated with a system that bends the law for criminals and does little to protect and serve the community. As far as the majority of my constituents are concerned, offenders convicted of violent crimes, those whose crimes impact violently on others, should be stripped of their rights. I share their views. The commission of violent crimes against others is a violation of society and those who choose to engage in these acts should not be a part of it.

Mary Waites is one constituent of mine who has seen the law up close and personally and she did not like the view one bit.

• (1710)

Her son Julian was one of Canada's most wanted criminals for his involvement in a violent sexual assault earlier this year. Julian and another man are alleged to have brutally raped a woman at knifepoint.

Mrs. Waites wants her son put behind bars indefinitely because he is extremely dangerous to the community but Mrs. Waites knows the courts will eventually let her son back out on the streets so that he can continue to commit heinous crimes against innocent people.

Why does she know this? She has seen her son breeze through the court system time after time on charges of armed robbery, assault with a weapon and possession of stolen property.

He has a violent past. Twice during robberies Julian drew blood by holding knives to his victims' throats. He served sporadic jail terms but was always released. He will be released again I suspect.

Is this justice? Bill C–41 does nothing to ensure that dangerous repeat offenders like Julian Waites remain behind bars.

Margo Gurgens is another constituent of mine who has seen the legal system serve the criminal. Her younger brother was stabbed to death at the hands of Tim Mead. Mead was originally charged with second degree murder but when the legal people got their hands on the case, a guilty plea to a lesser charge of manslaughter was accepted.

For killing a man Tim Mead received six months imprisonment. Again our so–called justice system failed. Mead has been convicted of committing crimes against society since 1980. I suspect he will be back on the streets six months after killing someone. Is that justice?

Again, Bill C–41 does nothing to keep dangerous repeat offenders like Tim Mead from posing a threat to society. If the afore mentioned two cases are not enough to show how inadequate our criminal justice system is I ask members to consider the following.

In 1981 Norma van Gundy returned home on the weekend from hairdressing school to visit her family and friends. The youthful 17–year old met up with an old friend and through him she met Larry Read. At the end of the evening Norma's friend asked her if she would take his car and drive him and Read home because they had had too much to drink.

Norma felt obliged to help. She dropped her friend off and proceeded to take Read home. On the way home Read from the back seat of the vehicle viciously strangled Norma to death. Read then raped Norma's body in the car before driving himself home. He parked the car with the windows rolled up and left Norma's naked body in the back seat to freeze in the 30–degree below night air.

For this horrific crime Read was convicted of second degree murder but the judgment was appealed and the charge was reduced to manslaughter. Read spent only six years in prison but the story does not end there, sadly.

When he was released on parole Read made his way to another town where he became friends with a single woman and her 9–year old daughter. On a day when the mother was not home Read paid a visit to her house where her child was alone with their 12–year old babysitter.

The unsuspecting girls let Read in the door and their nightmare began. Read lured the two children to the basement, tied them up and beat them. He then took the girls for a ride in his car where he raped both of them. The psychopath took a knife to the 9–year old girl.

She required 120 stitches to her genitalia. Read is in prison again. The system will undoubtedly fail the law–abiding public again. He will eventually be released.

The shocking part of the story is that Larry Read brutally raped a woman before he murdered Norma and before he violated the young girls. This is our criminal justice system. It made sure Larry Read had his rights. Where was the criminal justice system for Norma van Gundy and the two little girls? Where is the criminal justice system for the families of these victims which are forever scarred by these acts of violence to their loved ones.

Bill C–41 does not do anything to protect society from the Larry Reads out there. Bill C–41 will not prevent sick, twisted individuals from reigning terror on innocent people. Bill C–41 is just another piece of democratic legislation, a band–aid attempt to fix an outrageously flawed criminal justice system. The point to be made is this. The Liberal government has been in power for almost one year. It has done nothing significant to change the way crime is dealt with in this country. To an increasing number of Canadians that is perhaps the biggest crime of all.

• (1715)

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's intervention. In my riding of Parkdale—High Park in Toronto my constituents are very concerned at the trend where streets are becoming more unsafe instead of being safer.

This is why the minister has come up with some tools to combat crime in the streets, to reduce the drug trade, to prevent the violent sex offender from threatening the community. We can all get up and recite horror stories one after another. Is this going to prevent an increase in crime?

I would like to ask the hon. member of the Reform Party this. Does he have any constructive amendments to this bill? This is why we debate, so that opposition parties and members from our own party can improve the bill. The government would be very interested in any constructive amendments that the hon. member can make to improve the bill.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

We cannot support the bill. Even though we support some aspects of the bill we will not be supporting it. It contains too many things we do not support and that we see will really do nothing to solve the stories that have been talked about and to the stories that I have just related.

We need deterrents that will work. We could move amendments but we would be whistling in the dark. We could move an amendment to introduce capital punishment or corporal punishment as my colleague suggested. Maybe we will just do that.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member indicated that there are a number of provisions in the bill that he can support and there are others which he cannot support.

I would like to ask the hon. member specifically, what is the position of the Reform Party or the hon. member himself, if there is not a position in the party, with respect to the provisions in the bill that would ensure that a sentence is increased in

circumstances in which an offence is motivated by among other factors sexual orientation?

The hon. member was present in the House when the Liberal member of Parliament for Central Nova made comments, among other things, suggesting that homosexuality is immoral and unnatural, when she suggested that AIDS was a scourge to mankind which had been inflicted upon the country by homosexuals.

In view of the response of at least some of the hon. member's colleagues from the Reform Party seeming to indicate support for those positions, would the hon. member indicate what is the position of the Reform Party with respect to these provisions of the bill that would ensure stiffer sentences for those hate crimes which are motivated by homophobia, which are motivated by hatred on the basis of sexual orientation. Does he share the views of the hon. member for Central Nova?

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and agree wholeheartedly with what the hon. member from Nova Scotia said in the House some time ago. I agree with her.

As to the increase in sentence if it can be determined that a crime is motivated by hate, I cannot agree with that personally because I do not know how you can go about determining that. It seems to me it would be a nightmare for people but of course a haven for lawyers.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I certainly hear the hon. member when he expresses frustration on the part of the public in relation to portions of our criminal justice system. Certain offences and actions by criminals are abhorrent to all of us. I heard him say he can support some elements of the bill but surely there is more to this bill than a few unrelated sections.

• (1720)

Would the hon. member not agree that this bill, which for the first time in Canadian criminal legislative history codifies the principles for sentencing, a just, peaceful, safe society, respect for the law, imposing just sanctions, et cetera, is not a positive step forward?

In the absence of this kind of a bill would we not be simply on the same treadmill we have been for the last 75 years, without the benefit of those principles that can provide direction to our judges who carry the burden of sentencing in our courts.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that they just do not go far enough. They will not act as a deterrent and the punishment is still not there for the crimes that I described and that we hear about every day.

There is too much going on and that is just not specific to the riding I represent. In fact my constituency has a lower crime rate than a lot of other ridings. Multiply that by all the ridings across the country. I mentioned only a few of the incidents in Yellowhead. The bill does not go far enough. It does nothing to deter. We have to get stronger, tougher laws so that people will think twice before they engage in a criminal activity.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, the member for Yellowhead refers to the hate provisions in the bill, which I very strongly support and which the majority of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus support.

He says he does not understand how judges could tell if a crime was motivated by hate. Let me suggest that if the Heritage Front, or the neo–Nazis were to attack a visible minority group, and say they want to keep this country white, it is a pretty good bet that we are talking about hate.

I really wish that the issues of crime and punishment and justice were as simplistic as the Reform would like to believe. When the parliamentary secretary asked for constructive amendments we got capital punishment, corporal punishment, longer sentences, more jails.

Those things do not work. They have not worked. That is what is so important for the members of the Reform Party to get their minds around.

The things they are talking about have been tried and are being practised in societies like the United States. They were practised in all the repressive regimes in the history of mankind. They have not worked. There is unanimous agreement among people who know the complexities, as well as victims, as well as volunteers in the system, on what has worked.

When I raised the issue before, one of the Reform members said that it was an elitist kind of idea as well as an inexperienced kind of idea. It is so clear that it is not just the experts. It is people in the community who have any involvement, be it with victims, be it with offenders. They are saying the present approach is not working.

The direction this bill sets in place was what was tabled by the committee on justice on crime prevention and community safety which had victim groups agreeing with it, which had professionals in the system agreeing with it, which had police officers agreeing with it.

The member mentioned that he has one of the lowest crime rates in his community. The community I come from, the Waterloo region, has one of the lowest crime rates in Canada. We have a task force called the crime prevention and community safety task force. It is headed by the regional chief of police, Larry Graville. The police officers on that committee are the ones who pushed the strongest for new approaches because they said that the old methods have not worked. We have to look beyond just enforcement, we have to look at the root causes of crime.

• (1725)

The issues are not ones that are going to be solved simplistically. The old approaches, the approaches that are practised in the United States where some states have capital punishment and sentencing which goes back hundreds of years, where they incarcerate more people than anybody else in the free world and they have the worst crime rate in the free world. They do not compare to Canada. The only thing we receive from the Americans is all of the television news that shows how violent their society is.

I say to the members of the Reform Party: Do not pander to those misconceptions. If they insist on doing that, all they are going to be doing is fueling crime. People will believe that their communities are not as safe as they are. Let me say that our communities are a lot safer than they are in the United States. If we were to undertake some of these reforms we could go further. We could go toward the European model.

Therefore the answer is not simplicity. The answer is trying to understand and deal with the complexity of the issue.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): I do not know, Mr. Speaker, did he want me to reply to that? If I would I could be standing here for quite awhile and, Mr. Speaker, you would rise as well.

In so far as hate motivated crime is concerned I did not mention that in my speech. I will say that it would promote a two–tiered system. Is vicious assault less serious than assault just done for kicks? What about equality before the law? Assault is assault regardless of motivation.

The member talks about the high crime rate in his riding. I suspect that if—

An hon. member: It is low in that riding.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): It must be a good community because it sure did not happen because of the system of justice that he promotes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The time for questions and comments has terminated. I would suggest, if the House would agree, that I see the clock as being 5.30 p.m. and move to Private Members' Business. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from April 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C–218, an Act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act (excepted employment), be now read a second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Saint–Hubert and Official Opposition critic for justice, is to redress a major injustice in the existing Unemployment Insurance Act with regard to spouses, children and relatives employed by small family businesses.

By the initiative she has taken in face of a government with a wait–and–see attitude that multiplies reviews and consultations, and introducing this bill, the hon. member for Saint–Hubert has clearly proven that where there is a will to act swiftly, there is a way and you can cut the idle talk and truly promote the development of family business.

Let it be said that paragraph 3(2)(c) of the Unemployment Insurance Act that this bill is meant to eliminate puts spouses, children and relatives working for a family business in the position of actually being deemed potential UI abusers.

• (1730)

Tell me one thing: why are spouses, children and relatives denied the presumption of innocence the rest of the workforce enjoys? Their only fault is to support through their work the efforts of an entrepreneur to whom they are related. Why force them to prove their honesty to Revenue officials instead of recognizing them a right every other worker automatically enjoys?

Nearly one million Canadians, of which 650,000 are women, are subjected to this unfair treatment while the Minister of Finance continues to want us to believe he wishes to promote the development of small business. If he is sincere—which he may be—he will unhesitatingly support this bill.

As you know, this government has been saying for months that it is going to reduce the bureaucratic red tape to a minimum for small business. Here is a golden opportunity to prove it means to act by supporting this bill introduced by my colleague. Otherwise, it will be clear that its main motivation is appealing to voters but when the time comes to act, it would rather consult and take orders from big business.

We all know that owners of budding businesses need the support of their families to overcome the enormous difficulties associated with starting up and developing a business. We also know they find absolutely disheartening the slow governmental

process, and particularly the bureaucratic loops they are forced to jump through. I think that the commitment the government has made in that respect meets the wishes of the public, but what the public is expecting now is action. And action is what this bill is about.

The bill provides the government with an opportunity to translate its promises into action and this is a chance I hope it will not miss. But if they do miss it, I can assure you we will be here to remind them over and over.

Some will say that this unfair provision of the Unemployment Insurance Act is meant to curb abuse. Let it be quite clear that we all agree to curb abuse. This is indeed desirable. But, to do so, is it necessary to assume that a whole class of citizens are potential UI abusers? Is abusive use more tolerable on the part of bureaucrats than on the part of the unemployed? Are bureaucrats' abuses less costly than those of the bureaucracy itself? It is far from obvious, as I am about to show you.

Between 80 and 90 per cent of the spouses, children or parents who went through the whole process imposed by this act won their cases, and if the others had appealed, this percentage might be even higher. So can you explain to me why, after realizing that those who followed the process succeeded in having their rights recognized, we continue to put so much red tape in their path when the energy they spend on this could be used to make their businesses more successful?

The Unemployment Insurance Act has become increasingly linked to the whole issue of job training access. It is not only a matter of benefits. We are in the process of turning the unemployment insurance system into a permanent system for training and re–training workers. We are thus depriving these people of the right to benefit from training programs because many of the programs offered require that trainees be entitled to UI. People who set up family businesses often need job training. They often have a basic idea, are determined and have managed to raise enough capital, but often need the training offered by these programs.

By refusing them protection under the Unemployment Insurance Act, we deprive them of the right not only to collect benefits but also to receive job training. And this is an extremely important factor in the success of small businesses.

• (1735)

If my riding for instance, they set up economic and community development corporations specifically aimed at promoting entrepreneurship. So, on the one hand, we put in place programs to promote entrepreneurship while, on the other hand, we let red tape discourage just about everybody.

According to all the surveys, the priority all small businesses agree on, other than the need for capital, is that they must be allowed to work and given access to what they are entitled without having to walk through endless corridors only to find in the end a bureaucrat with the discretionary power to decide whether or not they have that right.

It is an excessive measure. In order to keep abuses in check, we penalize 80 per cent, 90 per cent, even 95 per cent of the people honestly trying to create jobs and develop our economy. I think that if we want to foster the confidence that will enable us to promote entrepreneurship, we must take concrete action. So far we have only heard speeches from the government; I hope that all members and parliamentarians will support my colleague's bill.

I can assure you that we, in the Bloc Quebecois, consider family businesses to be major players in job creation and economic development. We just gave concrete proof that we can take action. We will continue to do so and honestly hope that the government will support this commendable initiative from my colleague, the hon. member for Saint–Hubert.

[*English*]

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the private member's bill before the House. I hope to put the hon. member's mind at ease and to assure the House the government is committed to women and to their concerns.

I begin by stating unequivocally that I admire the hon. member's motivation in presenting Bill C–218. She perceives an injustice which she believes must be addressed. Surely this is the mission of each of us as representatives of the people. Every one of us is charged with a duty to ensure that the rights and privileges of all Canadians are respected.

The values and principles upon which our social security system are founded are part of what makes Canada so distinct. It is one of the reasons we have again been named by the United Nations as the number one country in the world in which to live.

Our social security net has been established purposely to protect those least able to fend for themselves, and economically disadvantaged women are certainly one of the government's priorities.

I absolutely agree with the hon. member that if discriminatory regulations are found within the act they must be removed. However I want to make it abundantly clear to the House that the government is open to and committed to reviewing all aspects of our social security programs and to correcting flaws wherever we find them. It is precisely with that purpose in mind that we are undergoing the social security review.

The government acknowledges that our programs are far from perfect. Some may have outgrown their usefulness. Others have not kept pace with the times. In fact we recognize that in some cases our programs are not working well at all.

The basis for reforming our social security system is that we want to be sure the system is providing the appropriate supports, not penalizing people trying to help themselves. We want to knock down the barriers that prevent people from fully exploiting every opportunity to achieve dignity and self–sufficiency.

It is important the hon. member bring her concerns about this one piece of the overall puzzle of what is wrong with our present structure to a forum where all Canadians can help find the right fit. There is no point at this time in patching up a system that is clearly out of date and no longer capable of meeting our current needs, so I invite her to join us in the larger debate on social security reform.

• (1740)

In the meantime I should like to respond to a few points raised in Bill C–218 that I think must be clarified. I believe the hon. member may have come to the wrong conclusion about the government's attitude toward people in family businesses.

Let me remind the House it was precisely to address the problem of sexually discriminatory regulations that the act was amended a few years ago by the previous government. It was not so long ago that employed spouses were automatically disqualified from receiving UI benefits simply because of their family status. Clearly families that work together were put at a disadvantage by the government and thankfully such antiquated thinking is far behind us.

How does the system work today? The Unemployment Insurance Act stipulates that workers related to their employers are covered and are eligible for UI benefits if they qualify as any other worker would. In other words, each and every employee of a family operated business has equitable access to unemployment insurance protection. Like any other claimant seeking social assistance employees in such cases must satisfy certain criteria. The determining factors are rate of pay, conditions and length of employment, as well as the type and importance of the work.

These are not new eligibility requirements. The same rules and regulations apply to all UI claimants regardless of their workplace or any association they may have with their employers. While family employees have the same rights, they also have the same obligations under the current law as all other Canadians. Otherwise the legislation would indeed be discriminatory. Workers who are related employers are assured the same protection as those with a strictly business relationship. If there is a clear employer–employee association that the act calls an arm's length working relationship everyone is treated equally.

Furthermore the fact is that the vast majority of Revenue Canada's decisions on arm's length relationships in family businesses do work to the individual's favour. Over the past four years since the regulations were amended family businesses have fared well under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Tens of thousands of employees of family firms, up to 90 per cent of all claimants who are in arm's length relationships, have received the benefits to which they are entitled.

It is very obviously the nation's business to be concerned about women in business. We know, for instance, that more women than men run small businesses and that those companies now provide more new jobs than large corporations. We also know that women are extremely successful in keeping their companies running.

It is frequently women who need to hire staff as their businesses expand. Many women want to employ their family members. As the law now reads, provided they are in an arm's length relationship those family members can expect to be able to pay into and collect from the unemployment insurance program if and when they are entitled to, if and when their wife or mother lays them off or if and when their father or husband lays them off.

Many working couples are opting to start their own operations as a way to juggle work and family time, another serious issue facing many Canadian families. More and more parents, male and female, are making a home based business the career of choice as the way to balance professional and family responsibilities. They too can rely on UI if and when the need arises and they meet the criteria.

The reality is that women are frequently compelled to step into the workforce to respond to family demands, particularly taking care of dependants. It is usually women in the so–called sandwich generation who care for either their children or their parents and all too frequently both.

For this reason the government recently changed the UI act to take these special circumstances into account. The dependency benefit rate has increased UI benefits to 60 per cent for people with low incomes who have a dependant or have a spouse with a dependant. It is one of the measures we introduced to address the inequities of the existing system.

The hon. member is quite right. There are many challenges confronting working Canadian women that need much closer examination. I have every confidence if there are oversights which need correction or outright discrimination which disfavours women they will be addressed through our social security review. I am committed to making sure that this is the case.

I encourage her and others to participate in the process to create a better system for all Canadians, men and women.

• (1745)

There will be ample opportunity in the months ahead to debate the merits and drawbacks of the current legislation as we grapple with the new realities facing Canada's social welfare structure. We must work together to improve Canadians' quality of life. I look forward to the hon. member's joining us in that cause.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, back in April my colleague, the member of Parliament for Yorkton—Melville, outlined some very good reasons for not supporting this particular bill. I would like to briefly review those reasons before providing some thoughts of my own.

The changes proposed by the hon. member for Saint–Hubert would amend the Unemployment Insurance Act be revoking the arm's length provision used by unemployment insurance adjudicators to determine if family members employed by other family members are in a true employer–employee relationship and therefore insurable and eligible to collect UI benefits should they be laid off. This includes employment by husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters.

Therefore, as I understand it the net effect of this bill would be to allow all family members employed by their immediately relatives, mainly husbands and wives, to become eligible to collect UI benefits without giving the government any means of determining if the employer–employee relationship is legitimate.

Government officials predict that this change would result in at least 3,750 additional claims for unemployment insurance being allowed each year. Considering that the average benefit paid to each UI claimant in 1992 was $6,613 we are talking about a minimum annual increase in UI payouts of about $25 million. These figures were confirmed by the office of the hon. member who is proposing this bill.

Reformers oppose this bill for the following reasons. There are four of them. First, it opens up the Unemployment Insurance Act to yet another avenue of abuse and waste of taxpayers' dollars at a time when we should be tightening up the system, tightening up the loopholes and saving employers' and employees' UI premiums to cover UI claims by workers and families hardest hit by today's high unemployment.

Second, it would increase payout of UI benefits by many millions of dollars.

Third, it directly contravenes Reform Party policies which support elimination of fraud and abuse on returning UI to true insurance principles.

Fourth, spouses employed by their partner already have an advantage over other Canadians because they can split their income and reduce their taxes. Reformers support income splitting for all married couples, not just those running their own business.

I would now like to respond to some of the rationale used by the hon. member for Saint–Hubert when she spoke during the first hour of debate on this bill. The hon. member said the current law presumes that family members who work for their relatives are guilty of defrauding the UI account and must prove they have a legitimate employer–employee relationship with their husband or wife, mother or father, brother or sister.

Reformers say this is simply a reasonable safeguard in a system in which there is real potential for abuse. I must point out that Revenue Canada identifies over 3,750 UI claimants a year who are denied benefits because they do not work in a true employer–employee relationship and are denied benefits as a result.

The hon. member says the current law discriminates against women, not technically but socially because most of the people affected by this law are women. Reformers say that this particular section of the UI act is not discriminatory and is just a reality of small family businesses.

• (1750)

If a woman works for her husband in a small business, then she must be prepared to convince Revenue Canada that she is in fact in a true employee–employer relationship, not just hired on in fiction to add a nice windfall of UI benefits to the family income some time down the road.

The investigations carried out by Revenue Canada on behalf of unemployment insurance every year identify significant abuse in this area.

Why would we want to throw the door wide open to allow still more people to take advantage of the system. If this safeguard were not in the system there would undoubtedly be more abuse and many more millions of dollars wasted on bogus UI claims. The end result would cost workers and employers millions more dollars in UI premiums.

I want to emphasize that these premiums would be funded by an increase in payroll taxes which come directly out of each worker's pocket. People not trying to take advantage of the system who are legitimately and truly employed by immediate family members are not penalized. Why should we not support rules to deny abusers the right to rip off other workers?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development also spoke against this bill in April. He told members of this House that of the tens of thousands of claims filed by employees of family businesses 15,000 had been reviewed by Revenue Canada and 25 per cent, the 3,750 claim-

ants I mentioned earlier, were found not to qualify for UI because they were not in a true employer–employee relationship.

Reformers agree with the government's concern about preserving the integrity of the unemployment insurance fund. Reformers think the current law is balanced and fair and must be maintained.

Our policies are developed by ordinary members of our party. This is the policy these average Canadians have put in place concerning unemployment insurance: "The Reform Party supports the return of unemployment insurance to its original function, an employer–employee funded and administered program to provide temporary income in the event of unexpected job loss". Reformers encourage the government to get on with its efforts to reform the unemployment insurance system.

The Minister of Human Resources Development promised an action plan in May, delayed it until June and then postponed it again until this fall. Yesterday in response to a question from our leader the Prime Minister said a discussion paper, not an action plan, will be released in October.

Canadians are fed up with the waste, fraud and abuse in the UI program and they want it cleaned up. Canadians want action, not still more discussion. Reformers believe that Canadians want real reform of unemployment insurance, not just more liberal tinkering around the edges.

Here are the issues Reformers believe are fundamental in any consideration of changes to the UI program. Do taxpayers, workers and employers think the UI program should be compulsory as it is now, or voluntary? Do taxpayers who are present employers think the government should continue to control the UI program or should unemployment insurance be administered by the employees and employers who pay the premiums?

Would workers like to have a choice to invest their money in their own savings plan to protect them against unexpected unemployment rather than being forced to pay UI premiums?

Would workers get a better return on their investment than the government run UI program offers them if they invested their money privately?

Should the UI program be turned into a self–financing program administered by the employees and employers who pay the premiums with government safeguards?

Should unions and employers be permitted to opt out of the government run UI program by establishing privately administered unemployment insurance programs for the benefit of their workers?

We know that the hon. member who proposed this bill has a genuine concern for the plight of unemployed Canadian workers and their families but she will not help them by allowing their pockets to be picked by fictional employment arrangements allowing bogus UI claims.

• (1755)

The UI program will take $19.8 billion this year directly out of the pockets of people trying to keep businesses afloat and people trying to earn a decent living. That is approximately $1,485 for every single Canadian worker covered by the unemployment insurance program.

I have suggested some fundamental issues that ought to be addressed in order to design a reformed system that truly works for the benefit of those who are paying the big dollars to support it. Rather than increasing the burden on these working people, I urge the member to work with us to find ways to make the system more efficiently and effectively meet the very real needs of Canadians who suffered the distress and hardship of unexpected job loss.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I rise to support Bill C–218 proposed by my colleague, the hon. member for Saint–Hubert.

The purpose of this bill is to exclude, from the definition of excepted employment, employment where the employer and employee are not dealing with each other at arm's length.

Contrary to what the government's spokespersons claim, we must not wait for a global reform of the legislation to act. We must immediately correct this injustice created by the previous Conservative government, which excluded spouses from being eligible to UI benefits. We know that this same government not only did not want to correct this injustice but went so far as to extend the scope of that provision. Indeed, it is no longer only spouses which are excluded, but all those who are not dealing with their employer at arm's length.

I mentioned on several occasions in this House that the unemployment rate in my riding is very high. Chicoutimi and the Lower Saguenay region have often had the highest level of unemployment in the country, a distinction which they could gladly do without, believe me.

In spite of the new government in Ottawa and the promises made during the last federal election campaign, the situation remains the same. Unemployment is still very high and our young people keep moving to large urban centres.

It is not a happy event for people when they have to claim UI benefits. I do not know anyone who is happy to become a UI claimant and only get 55 per cent of his or her regular income. But it is even worse to be totally excluded for the reason that you are not dealing at arm's length with your employer. If you have worked for your parents, or if you are working for your spouse, you are perceived as a potential abuser and an inquiry is

conducted to see if your employment is insurable. These workers regularly show up in our riding offices.

Understandably, they cannot figure out why their UI claim ends up at Revenue Canada, Taxation, for an inquiry. All this for the simple reason that these people worked for their parents or their spouse. In the majority of cases, the UI office does not tell people about this when they first submit their claim. Only once their file is transferred to Revenue Canada, some three weeks later, are these people told that officers from that department will conduct an inquiry, at the conclusion of which they will finally know whether or not they are eligible for UI benefits.

• (1800)

Revenue Canada takes three months to determine the eligibility of a claimant. When you are waiting for money to buy the groceries and pay the rent, let me tell you that three months can seem like a long time. This procedure penalizes taxpayers in Saguenay, in Quebec, and in Canada in two ways. Quebec City processes the claims for my region. We just got Revenue Canada officials to sign their decisions so that taxpayers who wish to discuss their file can do so. Of course, these taxpayers have to pay all the costs they incur to contact these officials.

Let me review briefly how these civil servants work. They have pretty extensive investigative powers and can ask to see the company's accounting books, ledgers, minutes of meetings, copies of cheques, and much more. They audit bank accounts and check with the suppliers. They are looking for people who cheat the system. What else would you call it? At least that is what the people under investigation believe.

As often as not, we are dealing with very small businesses, family businesses whose owners hire their immediate family members. We often hear: "Charity begins at home". How many businesspeople among those who made it big started their businesses in their basement or garage with only their spouse or their sons and daughters as employees? There are a great number of success stories. Let me give you two examples everyone has heard about.

First, there is the Louis Garneau company, and closer to my riding, the Chlorophylle corporation, two businesses which are now renowned all over the world. But before they can become this famous, a good number of our businesses operate on a seasonal basis, which means that their employees must apply for UI benefits. That is when the fun begins and the investigation gets under way.

Think about all the people who are discouraged by the system. If Revenue Canada finds that your employment is not insurable, you must file an appeal. That means another delay, another 90–day waiting period, not to mention all the costs you will have to incur for postage and long distance calls, for example. During the summer, I saw in my riding office a couple who were about to appear before the Tax Court of Canada. Although they had legal opinions to support them, the couple decided not to appear before this new court, because they were tired and discouraged. They did not have the strength or the money to fight any more, unlike Revenue Canada which can afford lawyers.

So, these people gave up. I sincerely believe that we have to support the bill introduced by the hon. member for Saint–Hubert if we want several of our family businesses to survive. God knows we need these businesses to fight the disastrous unemployment situation. Although everybody decries the situation, few suit their actions to their words. We must ensure that the people who still have the desire to achieve something, to create their own job, can survive.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, I start by thanking the hon. member from Saint–Hubert for bringing to light what she perceives to be a serious problem facing Canadian women. We respect that the hon. member is very knowledgeable about women's issues and is sensitive to the various forms of bias from which they suffer.

This country is founded on the firm conviction that each and every citizen, regardless of gender, age, race or abilities has a right to receive a wide variety of health and social assisted services. It is our practice and not just our policy to ensure equitable access and respectful treatment in all our dealings with the citizens of this country. It is a part of our social heritage, an affirmation of Canada's commitment to human dignity. It is an expression of our dedication to the ideals of social justice, equality and personal security.

I also want to make it crystal clear to the House and the hon. member that this government is open to reviewing any aspect of all our social programs, including the Unemployment Insurance Act. The obvious need to re–evaluate the efficacy of our social safety system is at the very heart of social security reform.

This government was elected on a platform of creating opportunities for Canadians. In our view the social security review is crucial if we are to achieve that goal because ultimately, reform is nothing less than a response to a desire for change. It offers us a rare chance to redefine the values, the assumptions and working principles with which to deal with the questions of opportunities for all Canadians. Through this renewal process we will reach a consensus about what our priorities should be and how we can achieve them, given the money and tools available.

I assure the hon. member there will be ample opportunity to carefully consider her concerns for the plight of economically disadvantaged women within this overall debate.

Imposing conditions on the basis of gender would indeed be discriminatory, as would imposing restrictions on the basis of family status, but the current law does not do that. I think it would be helpful to look at just what section 3(2)(c) says. This provision of the Unemployment Insurance Act stipulates that all employees, regardless of gender or marital status, are assured the same protection. The law simply defines the kind of business relationship people must have before they can receive UI benefits.

Every working citizen of this country, whether male or female, be they employed by a spouse, a sibling, a parent or a child, is eligible to pay premiums and to receive benefits so long as there is an employer–employee relationship. It is what the act calls an arm's length relationship.

Unemployment insurance relies on Revenue Canada to determine what constitutes an arm's length relationship between employers and family members in their employ regardless of gender. More than four times out of five, Revenue Canada rules that a true business association does exist and payments are made accordingly. The record shows that people in need employed in family firms are obtaining their rightful benefits.

In 1992–93 for example workers of family businesses filed tens of thousands of claims for unemployment insurance. Of those, 15,000 cases were reviewed and more than 75 per cent were accepted at face value with no questions asked. Of the remainder, a further three–quarters were eventually accepted. Only 10 per cent of claimants were unable to satisfy the criteria.

I do not want to appear to downplay the possibility of discrimination in our legislation. Canadians justifiably demand dignity, respect and equality for all, an obligation this government is committed to fulfil.

I should point out however that the provision being examined by Bill C–218 was included in the act precisely to remove objectionable regulations which did discriminate against married couples working in family businesses. Previously, employed spouses were automatically disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits because of their family status. Paragraph 3(2)(c) has reversed that regulation and made the system more equitable. That is in keeping with the new reality in the workforce.

• (1810)

As members of this House are well aware, women today play a crucial role in our economy, especially in the burgeoning small business sector. As the engine of national growth, women are clearly in the driver's seat. We know that more women than men start small businesses today in Canada and that those companies now provide more jobs than the large corporations.

For more than a decade over 150,000 small businesses have been started each year. They account for some 90 per cent of all new jobs created annually in this country. We also know that women enjoy a very high success rate in keeping their companies running. Between 1975 and 1990 the ranks of self–employed women in Canada grew by a phenomenal 172 per cent compared with 50 per cent for self–employed men during that period. It is also a fact that a large number of these small companies are owned and operated by families, often employing spouses or other members of the immediate family. We want to do everything we can to ensure such progress continues.

One of the objectives of our social security reform is to assure our social spending supports and nurtures women in business as they blaze a trail to the next century. If that means the Unemployment Insurance Act needs to be modified, so be it. When we make those changes, we will have to preserve the delicate balance between managing the program responsibly and ensuring that benefits go to those who need and are entitled to them.

Taxpayers are counting on us to ensure the fair and equitable provisions of UI benefits. They expect that our social security supports should be flexible enough to accommodate workers' changing needs.

Canadians want assurances that any changes to the system are implemented on the same principles of fairness and integrity, which have been the cornerstones of our society and system of government. That is precisely what we have been working to achieve.

The hon. member is correct in pointing out that many women in our society are still in a position of economic disadvantage. It is certainly one of the primary issues which has prompted this government to want to undertake the social security review. However we will not sit idly by awaiting the outcome of that process. Work is already under way and we will continue to address some of these inequalities.

In fact, we recently made adjustments to the Unemployment Insurance Act to increase UI benefits for low income parents. I am referring specifically to the dependency benefit rate. It is a provision that provides extra benefits to people who earn a low income and who support a dependant, or whose spouse supports a dependant.

People qualifying under this category, most frequently women, are now eligible to receive 60 percent instead of the 55 per cent benefit rate. This measure respects the important role women play within our families and supports them in that task. It recognizes that the person providing care for a dependant is contributing to the social and economic health of Canada and should be compensated accordingly.

It is just one example of the ways we are attempting to better manage the social security system to make it more responsive to the realities facing Canadians. It is also proof of this government's commitment to a thorough review of all our social programs. We want to see where all of them should be updated and improved to prepare for the future.

That is why the bill before us should not be considered in isolation. Rather, it has to be looked at in the context of the global process of recommendations and options being developed as part of the overall renewal of our social security system.

That does not mean the hon. member should abandon her passion for the plight of economically disadvantaged women. I suggest she should instead take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the social security review to represent the interests of women.

Members on the government side of the House are convinced that we can put our energies to the best use by working together to confront the full range of the very real and pressing problems that must be addressed. We invite the member for Saint–Hubert to join us in that process of reform.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, the current Unemployment Insurance Act was proclaimed on October 23, 1990 with an extended section 3(2)(c).

It maintains a hidden discrimination mainly against women whose regular work helps their spouses' business.

The amendment now extends this discrimination to all close relatives of the employer but, in fact, wives are still affected the most.

Meanwhile, the Liberal government advocates job creation and, to this end, gives greater importance to small and medium–sized businesses. The situation of these businesses is such that they sometimes must involve only the family, since, among other things, they need to minimize start–up costs and the family members can, if needed, make an additional effort.

This is especially true for seasonal businesses. These need a flexible and very devoted staff to ensure a viable work organization in the short run.

Spouses involved in an allegedly fraudulent employer–employee relationship should be considered just like employees who buy work weeks from their employer to complete their number of insurable weeks. This is more and more frequent and yet no discriminating provision adresses this issue in the law.

On the other hand, in the insurance cases that concern us, the applicants have the burden of proving that their normal work is distinct from family activities. In effect, they must demonstrate to the civil servants processing their file that because of the volume of work, the wages paid, the conditions of employment, they should be considered to be dealing with their employer at arm's length.

Bill C–218 to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act must allow businesses to use the most qualified and available workers, whether they be family members or not. Of course, the government must remain vigilant and exercise effective control in order to prevent abuse. Cases of family relationships must be dealt with in the same way as any other unemployment insurance application. If there is a serious concern about fraud on the part of the client applying for benefits, the official of the Department of Human Resources Development will ask the Investigation and Control Office to look into the legitimacy of the request. On the other hand, a worker not dealing at arm's length with his employer is required from the outset to demonstrate that his situation is normal.

To change this state of affairs the client must prove, by his or her own means, that he or she is not defrauding the system. It can often happen that this person must engage the services of a lawyer, and I can tell you that those who find themselves in this situation are not the wealthiest members of our society.

In this regard, the act must recognize the true employee status of those who face this situation. Those people's work should be compared with that of individuals in similar positions in companies of the same sector, with a comparable level of activity and where the owner and employees are unrelated. We should consider the amount of work done, working hours, and salary in each company to determine whether the job could be held by someone who is unrelated to the employer.

Small business people strive to reduce operating costs in order to survive. They will often set up their office in their own home, and tax deductions for that are accepted by Revenue Canada. Hiring one's spouse to perform certain tasks for the business is another way of reducing costs and minimizing supervision.

I will now describe two cases of employers and employees with family ties. They live and work far from big cities in remote communities, where working from the family home is more frequent, where work is structured differently and not always done in office buildings, shopping centres, or plants.

• (1820)

Section 3(2)(c) leaves the door open to interpretation on the part of the officers who have to administer it. At present, all applications where the employee and the employer do not deal at arm's length are examined individually by the Department of Revenue and the ruling depends solely on the officer's interpretation of the section of the Act and on his opinion concerning the operational context of the applicant's former job.

Naturally, there are some criteria to be taken into account, but these are so broad that there are as many interpretations as there are officers administering the Act.

Let us take for example the owner of a hunting and fishing equipment store, which is a seasonal venture, where the employer has a full–time job elsewhere. In order to ensure the proper operation of his business, he must have employees to look after the customers. Therefore, he hires two part–time employees for evenings and week–ends. To keep costs at a minimum, he sets up his store in a building adjacent to his place of residence and he hires his spouse as a replacement for him when he goes to work.

The tasks of his spouse are equivalent to those of the other two part–time employees. Business hours are regular, the payroll record and the cheques issued are proof enough of the authenticity, the reliability and the regularity of the payroll and the hours worked. These items should be sufficient as references in the absence of any contract. But, because the work is done in the same building as the home, and given the fact there is a reason for dependence, the applicant was declared not entitled to benefits.

Moreover, if we compare that with another company from the same area of activity and with a comparable volume of business, the company has to hire a full–time seasonal worker to do that kind of job. Of course, the job description, supervision and work control should also be part of the work agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to give you another example, in this case a forestry contractor from the northern part of my riding of Champlain. His workplace is in a forest area, quite far from his place of residence. For the needs of his company, he must set up a forest camp where approximately thirty people are working. To ensure the operation of the camp, and since he must be frequently absent, he must hire a supervisor, who happens to be his wife. She acts as the camp supervisor, as would anybody in such a business. But just because she is related to her employer and has no work contract, her employment is deemed uninsurable. If we compare these circumstances and the volume of work that has to be done, all this is similar to what an unrelated person would do.

The act as it is presently written is open to much interpretation and subjectivity about an employee who is related to the employer. That employee is considered uninsurable.

As you know, the Department of Human Resources Development lets the Department of Revenue decide on the interpretation and enforcement of clause 3(2)(c) of the Unemployment Insurance Act and forces the applicants to prove that the fact that they are members of the same family has no influence whatsoever on the nature and parameters of the work performed.

That clause is discriminatory and its enforcement causes frustration among applicants. There are more and more administrative and judicial procedures and in spite of the amendment made in 1990 to the section we are dealing with, women who work with their spouses are still the most affected population group.

Discrimination based on marital status jeopardizes co–operation and entrepreneurship in remote and sparsely populated areas, where employment is often of a seasonal nature. For many people, working for a relative is the only way to enter the labour force and for small businesses, it is the only way to get reliable and dedicated labour requiring little supervision.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from St–Hubert introduced on February 17 a bill which is close to my heart. It is close to my heart because, as a lawyer, I have a great deal of difficulty in accepting that some people are treated differently. We call that discrimination, not only in law but also in the dictionary.

• (1825)

If bill C–218 introduced by my colleague is rejected by the House of commons, discrimination will continue, a large number of citizens will be treated inequitably.

Since the Unemployment Insurance Act was passed—it received Royal assent on October 23, 1990—our party has denounced, in the House and outside, the aberrations it contains. Normally, according to Canadian legislation, we are all innocent until proven guilty and the burden of the proof rests with the accuser, that is the minister or the Crown in criminal matters.

However, when an employee leaves his or her job, he or she must prove that it was not without compelling reasons, and the burden of the proof falls on the potential UI claimant. We are in a democracy and we are never guilty until proven so. This is what we call the presumption of innocence guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The new Unemployment Insurance Act changed the rules of the game in 1990, and it allows some employers to abuse their employees and to require of them more work, extended working hours and total submission, a wholly unacceptable situation in a democratic society like ours. It is nothing short of blackmail!

If an employee objects and leaves his or her job, that employee must prove that he or she had good reasons to do so. Worse, during the period of objection the former employee will find social assistance hard to get. Indeed, Quebec social assistance regulations do not permit the payment of any benefit as long as the official has not received an unqualified denial from unemployment insurance. So, Mr. Speaker, you can imagine that before quitting a job, employees may be abused by their employers for a very long period of time.

This is the reason why the Crown lost out under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The various courts which were asked to rule in this matter, namely the human rights tribunal of the appeal division, the Federal Court, the Tax Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Canada, all declared null and void former sections 3(2)(c) and 4(3)(d) of the act. Canadians won.

It was to be expected since they were just as discriminatory, and that was the objective of Bill C–218 introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Saint–Hubert, as denying benefits to a spouse working for her husband or a family–owned business. Whom was this piece of legislation aimed at especially? Women working for their spouses. This is another example of the legal subordination of women to their spouses.

Under the circumstances, the previous Conservative government took steps to amend section 3.(2)(c) in accordance with these decisions. It had no other choice. From now on, not only spouses, but all workers not dealing at arm's length with their employers will be excluded. In this way, it may seem less discriminatory, legally speaking, as long as the courts have not ruled on the constitutionality of this amendment.

But in reality, what does it mean to not deal at arm's length? It means that in all cases the presumption of honesty is from now on replaced by a presumption of fraud. It is now up to the employee to satisfy the official in charge—who is vested with discretionary powers—that the work contract met the same requirements as if the job had been given to someone who was not related to the employer.

How many people will be left stranded without any income until a case is heard by the Supreme Court of Canada? This measure, I should say this injustice, concerns close to one million Canadians, 650,000 of whom are women. It is unacceptable.

• (1830)

On going through Hansard of April 21 of this year, I noticed that an hon. member on this side of the House, but not from the Bloc, opposed the bill proposed by my colleague from Saint–Hubert by arguing that her proposal would lead to the filing of at least 2,000 supposedly unfounded unemployment insurance claims which would entail the payment of $13 million dollars. This is absurd.

The unemployment insurance legislation was adopted—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise briefly or should I say provide a brief update on one of the obvious inconsistencies in the discourse and policy of this government, namely the relationship that may, and indeed must, exist between the Canadian foreign policy and human rights promotion.

To address this contradiction we have no reason to be proud of, I shall refer to a question I had put to the Deputy Prime Minister on June 10. I asked the Deputy Prime Minister this question on June 10, following a visit by the Prime Minister in exile of Burma to the Standing Committee on Human Rights.

We realized, as a standing committee responsible for the promotion of human rights both within Canada and outside, how much of a discrepancy there was between what this government said —all this talk about legislative instruments and active involvement outside the country being required to promote human rights— and reality.

Such discrepancy is easy to understand considering that as early as 1990, the Canadian government had been pressing for democratic elections to be held in Burma, which is currently run by a military junta. Canada can be said to have participated in this international campaign for elections in Burma.

We realized in the committee that, while Canada had lobbied for Burma to be requested to uphold human rights within its boundaries—because as we know, Burma is one of those Asian countries with the darkest, most worrisome history in that respect, a country where the Nobel Peace Prize winner is imprisoned, where torture is practised and very serious cases of abuse are reported—it also prohibited Canadian businesses from trading with Burma for reasons relating to human rights that we agree with. We believe that foreign policy and the promotion of human rights should be linked somehow.

Imagine our surprise when we discovered that, in the case of China, there was a double standard. And yet China is the main country supplying arms to the military junta currently in power.

The question we can ask ourselves is this: if Burma's human rights record is so important that Canadian companies are not allowed to do business there, why is China, which also commits its share of abuses, which is also inconsistent in promoting human rights—as the 1,200 executions recorded in Amnesty International's latest report demonstrate—not subject to the

same policy? Must there be two types of countries from a political standpoint? The Canadian government will overlook the human rights record of important countries with significant growth and large markets while imposing restrictions on countries with less impact on the international economy.

• (1835)

I say that there should not be a double standard. The government must make adjustments and use the same language so that when we talk about promoting human rights abroad—and I think the government has a responsibility to talk about it—we should have exactly the same requirements for a country of 1.2 billion people as for a country of 3 million inhabitants.

This is—and I will stop here as my time is up—an example of an inconsistent policy the government has no reason to be proud of.

[*English*]

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the member's question directly. Canada's relations with Burma are limited because we remain concerned about the deplorable human rights situation and lack of progress toward democracy in Burma.

Human rights abuses continue unabated and the military have made it clear that they will not relinquish power. Canada suspended its aid program in 1988 and military sales are not allowed to that country.

Furthermore, the Canadian government does not encourage Canadian business activity in Burma. Petro–Canada pulled out of Burma in November 1992 and Canada has worked actively through bilateral and multilateral channels to promote democratic development and respect for human rights in that country.

At the 1992 Association of Southeast Asia Nations Post–Ministerial Conference Canada called for an international embargo on the sale of military equipment to Burma, bearing in mind that country's lamentable human rights record.

Canada made strong statements on Burma in its human rights speech at the United Nations General Assembly in December 1992 and contributed to the resolutions on Burma at both the United Nations General Assembly and the 1993 United Nations committee on human rights. We continue to be very active at the UN third committee and the UN commission on human rights.

We are among the larger donors of multilateral humanitarian assistance to Burmese refugees and we continue to press for the immediate release of Nobel peace prize winner Madam Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

SOCIAL SPENDING

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to return to an issue I raised in June with the Minister of Human Resources Development when I asked him what plans he had in place to ensure that Canadians and their families would not be subject to the level of poverty that they are presently subject to.

We know from experience that Canada has to a very large degree eliminated poverty among its senior citizens. There is still a category of senior women who are subject to severe deprivation, but on the whole we have responded to that problem. We have essentially eliminated poverty among senior citizens, although quite clearly we have not done so with regard to our children. There are now 1.3 million children in Canada living in poverty, more than when this government took office. There are 2.3 or 2.4 million Canadians living on social assistance and 1.6 million living on unemployment insurance.

We clearly have a major problem in terms of our economy not working for those four million Canadians and in particular for those 1.3 million children.

In response to the minister when he talked about unemployment insurance—and I do not quite know why he did that—I want to return to the point that I made with him because I think Canadians need and this House deserves to know what specific plans the Minister of Human Resources Development has under way to eliminate poverty among young people and in particular young children. We know that this House in 1989 unanimously committed itself to eliminating child poverty by the year 2000. We also know that this House is unlikely to see any improvements in that regard as long as we continue in the direction we are taking.

All we have seen from this government are plans to cut billions of dollars from social programs spending at a time when Canadians are in record numbers experiencing difficulties.

• (1840)

We see a continuation of the Mulroney agenda where unemployment is blamed on the unemployed. The notion is that the problem is with the unemployed.

If you look at the documentation presented by the minister, you will see that his response to unemployment is to say that there is a problem in the employability of Canadians, that they need more training, more skills and so on.

We all know that we can do with more training. All of us in this House can do with more training. If there are no jobs for Canadians at the end of this training as is plainly the case at the present time, this training goes for naught. In particular the sort of training programs that have been put in place by this

government and other federal governments has cost enormous amounts of money to train the participants in the program.

If we look at the works program, we see a huge drop–out rate in the program. We see a huge cost in terms of training those Canadians. We see this in the context of further deep cuts to social program spending. We do not need to move to an American approach to social programs, which this government is continuing. It is a trend that the Mulroney government introduced.

We do not need that Americanized approach. We need a compassionate, caring approach. We need to look at countries that have been more successful than we have in dealing with those problems of poverty.

As we all know, only the United States has a worse poverty problem than Canada in the industrialized nations. We should look to those European countries which have taken a very much different approach to this problem, an approach which has enabled more and more citizens to live in dignity.

We have a choice in Canada. We can if we want to continue to slash programs as this government plans to do or we can instead focus on the core problem which is that we do not have enough jobs in this economy. This economy is not producing enough jobs for those Canadians who need them. We have no leadership in that regard.

The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Human Resources Development have said basically they will take a hands–off approach to this except for a couple of programs involving the youth and involving the infrastructure program. It has put some Canadians back to work but still left millions not working.

They said they will take a hands–off approach and let the private sector develop those jobs. Over the last 15 years the private sector has simply not done that. The private sector has not created the jobs that Canada needs. It requires a concerted approach from the government in conjunction with the provinces, in conjunction with business and labour and the various communities across this country.

The point I really want to make with the minister is that there is a need for urgency. We do have to come to grips with this problem of insufficient jobs in this economy. We cannot deal with the deficit unless we attack that problem.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that since the October 25 election this government has worked very hard to bring about positive change in the lives of young people here.

I am happy to report to the House that the unemployment rate for young people has decreased from 17.5 per cent in 1993 to 16.4 per cent in August. This is a result of 20,000 new jobs that were created for youth and 29,000 young Canadians were no longer unemployed. This is just part of a package.

The summer employment strategy for young people created approximately 60,000 jobs to give young people the skills required to be competitive in a very different world.

We also moved quickly on the youth service Canada lead–sites. Seventy–five per cent of the 67 lead–sites are fully operational. We expect that the others will be operational shortly.

We have also moved in the area of youth internship and apprenticeship training programs because we recognize as a government that we do live in an era where young people must be given tools to be competitive in a very competitive world marketplace.

We have not forgotten of course the importance of staying in school and through our stay in school initiative with a budget of approximately $31.5 million, we expect to assist over 10,000 young people through direct interventions this year, not to take lightly our contribution made to the Canada Student Loans.

• (1845)

A review took place and there again positive change to the legislation resulted in greater accessibility to funding for young people so that they could access post–secondary education. We as a government understand that higher education is necessary for us to compete.

As members know, above and beyond that young people will be an integral component of social security review. I am sure the hon. member and his party will participate fully in this very historical event.

NATIONAL FORUM ON HEALTH

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, on June 8 I asked the Deputy Prime Minister to assure Canadians that her government would maintain and enforce the Canada Health Act and, further, for her government to release the terms of reference and timetable for the promised national health care forum.

I suppose I have heard of no issue of more concern to Canadians across the country being discussed over the past few months when the House was not sitting than the future of health care. Seniors are worried about the future of health care. Others are worried about whether they will have the universal health care system of which Canadians have so rightly been proud.

One promise of the Liberal government and specifically of the Prime Minister was that he would chair a national health care forum that would deal with these many issues and the changes, I assume, although we have seen no terms of reference. I would hope such a health care forum would also deal with the change that needs to take place in our health care system.

Certainly as a New Democrat I am absolutely committed to the principles of universal, accessible health care for Canadians. However I am not adverse at all to changes within the Canada Health Act to guard the five principles of the Canada Health Act to make it more appropriate for Canadians.

Three months after I asked the question of the Deputy Prime Minister we still do not have a date for the national health care forum. We do not have a clear statement from the government as to the expectations for this forum. The Liberal Party has committed itself to upholding the five principles of the Canada Health Act, but we need to have a really comprehensive vision for health care.

The government's first budget, for example, was not a good sign of what was to come. The Conservative policy of freezing transfers to the provinces for health care continued. If this strategy continues there will be no federal funding for health care by the year 2015. Canadians want to hear the government say that it will not happen and that they will continue to have a universal health care system.

Further to the issue of the national health care forum, if it is truly to be a forum to develop a new vision of health care it would be hoped that the terms of reference would include a wide spectrum of groups that would participate on this forum. It would also be hoped that it would include all provinces and territories.

I would certainly like to know from the government spokesperson if the Prime Minister has any indication, since he will be the chair, whether all provinces will participate in a national health care forum. If not, will the Prime Minister be proceeding without the participation of all provinces?

We have seen the government allow provinces to develop systems which do directly contravene the Canada Health Act. For example, the province of Alberta with its private clinics specifically contravenes section 12 of the Canada Health Act. I have asked the Prime Minister in the House to raise the issue with the premier of Albert with whom he is meeting today. The Prime Minister refused to say that he would do so and said that it would be done at some other time in some other place.

That is not good enough for Canadians. Canadians want our national health care system to be a priority of the government and of all parliamentarians and a fundamental right as health care should be for Canadian citizens. It is also, I might add, one of the biggest supports for business in the country.

• (1850)

When will the national forum be? Will all provinces and territories participate? Will those provinces that are now contravening the Canada Health Act be dealt with by the government? When will we get an answer? When will the Prime Minister act?

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it would seem the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party must have read the press release of the Minister of Health which she sent out in June with regard to the forum. She just listed all the things that were mentioned in it. The forum, as indicated in the press release, is to be an ongoing four–year forum.

Ms. McLaughlin: Let's start.

Ms. Fry: It is going to begin in October, as the press release indicated. Of course it will involve federal and provincial relationships. It will involve public input and working groups that will deal with many of the issues the hon. member just raised in her question.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. I know these interventions are rather short, being four minutes on the one hand and two in which to respond. I am trying to facilitate everyone by giving them the opportunity to complete their remarks. I hope we allow the parliamentary secretary to conclude her remarks over the next two minutes.

Ms. Fry: The mandate of the forum is to develop a vision for health care in the 21st century. It will create a dialogue among the public, federal, territorial and provincial governments for renewing the better health of Canadians. It will deal with and identify priorities concerning a consensus for change in all the provinces. At the same time it is determined to respect the five principles of health care upon which medicare was built.

Obviously the forum will have to deal with issues such as setting guidelines for technology. It will have to deal with issues such as the aging society. It will have to deal with what kind of financing is required for a future health care system. All these things have been said by the minister in her press release in June and they will happen.

With respect to the hon. member's question concerning the transfer of payments in federal financing, the member well knows the government has made a commitment to stable financing in health. We have made that commitment by not cutting transfer payments for this year.

In the year 1995–96 we will begin to have our federal transfer payments financed on the gross national product minus 3 per cent. Given that we will still the following year be putting in $214 million more than we will be putting in this year, The population growth will be factored in and therefore the transfers will be increased according to population growth each year.

One of the things we will be doing in financing is that we are not touching the tax transfers. This means a sizeable amount of money is still going to be put into provincial coffers with regard to financing the health care system.

The member well knows that the health care system does not only depend on—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I regret to interrupt the parliamentary secretary but the format of four minutes and two minutes is quite clear. I have been more than generous if we consider that we have only had three of the five interventions so far which would normally take in a very strict manner 18 minutes. I guess I have been more than generous.

[*Translation*]

MASS LAYOFFS

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, I asked for four minutes of speaking time for myself and two minutes for the parliamentary secretary to answer the question that I asked in June about mass layoffs. At that time, I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development and of Western Economic Diversification whether he agreed with giving the Sorel employment centre a $2.2–million fund because of the mass layoffs at Soreltex, Tioxide and Beloit in the Sorel–Tracy region.

Further to that answer, this request for $2.2 million more was made by the employment centre through the normal channels at the regional level and then on to the national level, and the employment centre got a good hearing from senior officials.

• (1855)

I asked the minister to confirm it for me, and then had a second question concerning the specific program for mass layoffs that was abolished. The minister's first answer to me was completely off topic, referring to the fact that I had been a Conservative member. It was an arrogant, incompetent, flippant, almost cowardly answer, showing the minister's unconcern for the workers' needs and the respect owed them and his lack of attention to a recommendation from his own senior officials.

Since I raised my second question, the Sorel employment centre received more funds to help the victims of mass layoffs, thanks to the remarkable work of senior officials in Sorel, the director of the employment centre and senior officials throughout the Quebec region. One thing that has not been restored is the specific program for mass layoffs.

Now, when there are mass layoffs, the general fund is drawn on and if it is used up, the special fund is no longer available. Restoring this fund would provide assistance when a disaster like the one in Sorel–Tracy strikes, where there were two major shutdowns, Beloit and Soreltex, in quick succession. In that case, the general fund was used since the special fund is now included in the general fund and there was no more money. So we now have a situation where we have no way of getting back any funds to deal with the situation.

It seems to me that reinstating this fund would be essential to good management. The minister's answer was vague, once again. As I see it, this mass layoff fund should not only be reinstated but should be flexible as well.

For instance, a number of workers at Soreltex have from 25 to 35 years of experience, but their average age is between 50 and 55, so they are not eligible for POWA, the adjustment program for workers 55 and over, so they fall between the cracks, because they cannot be retrained. Often they do not even have a high–school diploma. They only went to grade school, and they cannot be retrained for work other than the kind they have done for 35 years.

Perhaps this mass layoff fund could provide some form of remuneration for people between the ages of 50 and 55 who fall between the cracks, lose their homes and their savings and end up on welfare. That is why I think the fund should be reinstated and expanded so that employment centres can tailor the program to specific cases and are not hampered by criteria that are too restrictive.

I hope that today, the minister will have a more open mind on the matter than he did when he answered my questions.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must know by now that this government has demonstrated that it places a high priority on the training and adjustment needs of Canadians.

As a matter of fact in the Sorel–Tracy region which he cited when companies such as Sorel Tex were having difficulties the Department of Human Resources Development intervened. In that case assistance was provided through the industrial adjustment service. It is recognized as a very effective program for assisting those individuals who are affected by major layoffs to make the adjustment to new employment opportunities.

In addition I am pleased that the Department of Human Resources Development has recently freed up a further $54 million in Quebec. These funds will provide a significant increase in the resources available to provide assistance to those individuals across the province of Quebec who require training and employment assistance in order to make the transition to new employment.

• (1900)

I am pleased also that $622,000 has been provided to the Sorel–Tracy region alone. This will assist individuals in this region to receive the necessary skills and training so that they can be once again reintegrated in the labour force.

Adjournment Debate

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHERY

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a topic which is much less glamorous but is related to a question which I asked on June 20 of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The question concerned what action the government was taking to fight the increase in sea lamprey eel population in the Great Lakes.

I realize that this is not a topic which has a great appeal for someone who lives in a place like Airdlie, Alberta or Moncton, New Brunswick. At the same time I think it is important that all Canadians understand the importance of the Great Lakes and their ecosystems.

Every year some 75,000 Canadians have jobs and some $2 billion or more are generated simply as a result of the commercial and sports fishing industries which exist on the Great Lakes. Every year some 4 million sports people try their luck on the waters of this lake system.

It is also important that we remember the recent past when the sea lamprey first appeared in the lakes and flourished at a rate which threatened the very existence of all fishing in the Great Lakes.

The result of this predator, which came in from of the ocean when the seaway was opened, an eel which can live in fresh or salt water, was the absolute annihilation of commercial fisheries for a time in the 1950s.

In the 1950s governments did react. Governments used the best technology of the time to combat and limit the population of eels in the lakes so that the numbers of certain species did in fact come back to an acceptable level where an industry could exist.

As is often the case, there is a certain level of complacency which sets in at the government and at the naturalist level. It is a complacency from a governmental perspective in that dollars directed to controlling the sea lamprey remain flat and in some cases actually marginally decreased to the point that less was being done to control the populations of the sea lamprey.

At the same time due to joint Canadian–American efforts water quality in the Great Lakes started to improve. We are all aware of the efforts taken to improve water quality. This opened up new habitats for lamprey eels. The combined result of improved water quality and less money for control has resulted in a real resurgence in lamprey populations.

Naturalists have now confirmed that lamprey eels take more trout out of Lake Superior than do all the commercial sports fishermen on that body of water.

Finally it is essential that this threat be always considered in light of the 75,000 jobs and the $2 billion plus generated by the fishing industry on the lakes.

When I asked the question of the minister I was very pleased and surprised by his response that the government has acted to protect this industry and these jobs. The minister has recognized the seriousness of the problem and has moved to address it in a timely fashion.

The government has increased funding to the Great Lakes fishery commission by one–third. The fishery commission, as some may realize, is a joint Canadian–American agency which deals with ecological issues in the Great Lakes system. We must however realize that this problem emanates from feeder rivers on both sides of the border.

Canada has increased its contributions in a real and significant fashion. It is now necessary, indeed imperative, that pressure be brought to ensure that the American government will match the Canadian proportionate increase, failing which I would suggest that a multi–billion dollar industry and tens of thousands of jobs will continue to be threatened.

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has noted, predation by sea lampreys is considered to be one of the major causes of the collapse of the lake trout and whitefish fisheries in the 1940s and 1950s.

In response to this concern the Great Lakes fishery commission was created between the United States and Canada to find ways to manage sea lampreys and to develop a research program to sustain fish stocks in the Great Lakes.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which represents Canada as a party to the Great Lakes Fishery Convention, is actively involved in the planning and implementation of the lamprey control program.

This program, according to statistics provided by the commission, has reduced lamprey populations by approximately 90 per cent from historic levels. Given the economic importance of the Great Lakes fishery to our fishing community, there is still work to be done. That is why Canada recently increased its funding to the commission by 33 per cent to a total of $5.145 million. We have secured assurances from the U.S. government that it will follow Canada's lead and increase its funding to the commission as well.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is proud of the work that Canada and the U.S. have done to support lamprey control on the Great Lakes. We have managed to build this fishery up to a $2 billion to $4 billion industry annually.

We will continue to support this commission in the future. It is our belief that it is now time for those who directly benefit from the Great Lakes fishery commission's efforts to join us and begin contributing to the cause of the lamprey control program.

We all have a responsibility in maintaining a healthy and prosperous fishery for the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.07 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 21, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, it was reported in the media Tuesday that the minister of supply and services has struck a committee of bureaucrats to find ways of moving supply and services jobs from Ottawa to Atlantic Canada.

I strongly disagree with the study and any decision to move public servants from the national capital region.

[*Translation*]

At the present time 31.7 per cent of federal public servants work in the national capital region, whereas in each province and territory the number is proportionate to population.

[*English*]

The minister has no intention of either pursuing Tory practices or, even worse, applying the Reform Party's right wing agenda vis–à–vis the public service. He informed me today that the study is just that, a study. I am confident that we will treat any suggestion of transferring public servants out of the capital as an ill advised, bad public policy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN ECONOMY

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Mr. Speaker, the recent figures in the Work Competitiveness Report show that Canada is in a very bad position. In 1989 Canada had the fourth most competitive economy among OECD countries. Five years later, it stood fourteenth!

This drop is the predictable result of the federal government's inability to control its deficit. The government's stubborn insistence on using its spending power to intervene in provincial areas of jurisdiction is a waste of public funds and is slowing down job creation. Labour training, a tangle of federal–provincial overlap, as the Quebec manufacturers association pointed out yesterday, is a perfect example of the ineffectiveness of federal intervention. And who is paying for all this? Taxpayers and the unemployed.

* * *

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to call upon the government to properly compensate my constituent, Mr. Walter Jerram.

His bull was seized because its only crime was being imported from the United Kingdom and just may have been exposed to BSE, mad cow disease.

Last Thursday Agriculture Canada and the RCMP seized the bull at 6.30 a.m. They cut through his chain fence, seized his bull and were gone in 20 minutes. No warrant was produced and a curt letter was left behind informing him that because he had resorted to legal recourse he would not be paid the routine, if low, $2,000 in compensation.

The handling of this case is despicable. They came as thieves in the night. Canadians deserve better from their government. I call upon the minister of agriculture to pay the compensation my constituent deserves and launch an inquiry into the handling of this case.

* * *

NEW DIRECTIONS

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago in my riding I had the privilege of attending the graduation ceremony of 14 young Vietnamese men who found an alternative to their lives. Of these young men two–thirds were on drugs and three were in jail. They were all part of gangs, did not have families and were all on social assistance.

These young people participated in a project called New Directions. For a year they were coached, taught, put through school, and they are now all free from drugs. They all have become part of society and some are continuing with school. It was an uplifting experience. Fourteen lives were saved. There is an alternative to crime but we must be proactive.

Congratulations to immigrant services societies and the agencies involved and to the instructors and young people who had the courage to complete the program.

* * *

RAILWAYS

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, Canada's railway policy lacks a short line railway strategy. Several American states, our most important trading partners and stiffest competition, have dynamic, comprehensive plans to strengthen and expand their short lines.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, and particularly in the province of Ontario, CN and CP are abandoning their branch lines at an astonishing rate.

[*English*]

This includes Midland–Uhthoff subdivision which will be abandoned as of October 8, 1994 unless the petition to governor in council I presented on August 30 is successful in keeping the line open.

[*Translation*]

These closures are taking place at a time when Ontario's new labour legislation does not allow operators of secondary lines to buy and run abandoned lines at a profit.

[*English*]

Canada needs a strategy to address this grave situation before our short line network has been completely dismantled. I urge the Minister of Transport to come up with a plan quickly to save our short line network.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, on September 15, 1994 the Government of Canada entered into two administrative agreements with the province of Saskatchewan. These agreements provide for the more effective administration of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the pollution provisions of the Fisheries Act and the complementary Saskatchewan legislation.

The agreements are among the first of their kind in Canada. They apply to the areas of environmental protection and are jointly regulated by federal and provincial groups. The agreements will lead to more effective environmental protection programs by reducing duplication. The agreements ensure co–operation and reduce duplication in areas of reporting spills, spill response, inspections, investigation and information gathering.

The agreements reflect the federal government's goal to effectively protect the environment through federal–provincial harmonization and to ensure wise use of our limited resources.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MANPOWER TRAINING

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis–Hébert): Mr. Speaker, when the people of Quebec make a little noise and threaten to walk out, you can always find some well–intentioned English–speaking Canadians to tell them that their Canada includes Quebec. The fact of the matter is that the rest of Canada usually greets Quebec's claims with: "Your demands are inadmissible and unacceptable. But we really like you and would want you to remain within Canada."

That is precisely what happened yesterday at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce convention, where the delegates from English Canada rejected a resolution from the Sainte–Foy Chamber of Commerce asking that manpower training be transferred to the provinces. "Quebec, we love you", said the Premier of Alberta yesterday.

For an increasing number of Quebecers, the English Canadian mermaid's song is losing its appeal and fast.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

ROD HAY

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, my very first member's statement in the House was about a young cowboy from the heart of Yellowhead country, Mayerthorpe, Alberta. I spoke about Rod Hay, a tough cowboy who has seen it all.

I am not talking about the beautiful countryside. I am talking about mud, dust and pain. In fact Rod walks around with plates, screws and wire holding his hip together because of a rodeo mishap three years ago.

He is almost in as bad shape as I am. All of the pain and hard work has paid off for this 25–year old cowboy. Today Rod is $50,000 richer thanks to the biggest rodeo win in his life, the saddle–bronc championship at the greatest outdoor show on earth, The Calgary Stampede.

The win puts an exclamation point on Rod's illustrious career as the best bronco buster in Canada. Rod is also the reigning Canadian saddle–bronc champion and he will represent Canada at the world championships this fall.

I ask all members to join me in cheering for Rod Hay.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

CANADA

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, during the first week in September I had the privilege of being part of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations conference on population and development in Cairo, Egypt.

There were many significant things to be learned. One of the most interesting was an understanding as to how the world community views Canada. Canada is nation to be trusted. It is a nation turned to when issues are polarized and emotions are frayed.

We are truly the honest broker on the global stage. This is important for us to understand right now because initiatives here at home threaten to tear our country apart. For Canadians that means risking the loss of the rich culture and heritage that is so much a part of Quebec and her people. For the world there is a risk of loss of a great partner, the likes of which could never be replaced.

* * *

1999 PAN-AMERICAN GAMES

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I announce to the House that during the summer break the city of Winnipeg won the bid to host the 1999 Pan-American Games. We view the games as an opportunity to bring the world to our doorstep, to extend friendship and to exchange cultural traditions with our close cousins in the American hemisphere.

Indeed showcasing Canada to the world by hosting international games contributes immeasurably to forging international bonds. At the same time it instils in Canadians a sense of national pride and unity and a better understanding of the diversity of linguistic and cultural identities.

It will be a great celebration in 1999. Winnipeg has a long tradition of excellence in playing host to major events. I am proud to have had the opportunity to work with the excellent co-chairs Don Mackenzie and Barbara Huck, the mayor of the city of Winnipeg, the premier and the numerous volunteers to bring the games home again.

I would like to say a special thanks to the Prime Minister for supporting the bid to its success.

* * *

MICHAEL STRANGE

Mr. Gary Pillitteri (Niagara Falls): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise in the House today to congratulate a constituent of mine, Michael Strange, the gold medalist in boxing, 60 kilograms class, at the 25th Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia, where Team Canada won 128 medals.

Michael's achievement was remarkable, given the many adversities that he and his team mates encountered outside the ring. His outstanding performance is testimony to his skills, hard work and commitment to excellence. The efforts, teamwork, sportsmanship and dedication of athletes like Mr. Strange constantly make Canada's sporting scene one of the best in the world.

If we are to enjoy a repeated performance by Team Canada at world events we must, as Canadians, continue to recognize the positive influence these young athletes have on Canadian youth and support the valuable contributions they make to the Canadian identity.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, as we know, Quebec spent $45 million in 1992 to organize its own referendum on federal offers. Yesterday, we learned that the federal government refused to refund the $26 million, or one quarter of the total costs, the people of Quebec have contributed toward the referendum held in the nine other provinces.

All told, the cost of the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord to the Quebec taxpayers was $70 million, as compared to $80 million for the rest of Canada. Moreover, the Deputy Prime Minister was pleased to hear this yesterday. She said that separation is expensive.

• (1410)

Unfortunately, Quebec is not a sovereign state yet and the Quebec taxpayers have paid three times as much as those from the other Canadian provinces for the referendum that buried any hope of federal renewal to be held. It was expensive indeed just to find out that federalism equals status quo.

* * *

[*English*]

THE REFORM PARTY

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that yesterday the Reform Party broke new ground in Ontario. Three Reform MPs, the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, the member for Prince George—Peace River and I, participated in the international ploughing match special class competition for members of Parliament. This took place in Pembroke.

I am proud to say that we ploughed the competition under and left them in the dust. My colleague, the member for Prince George—Peace River, was straight and focused to the end. His winning performance proved that with hard work and perseverance we will be the voters' choice as well.

Give us a chance and we will plough under the national debt which today stands at $531,298,621,000.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, like millions of Quebecers, I understood that there was some confusion following a telephone conversation between Premier Parizeau and the Prime Minister of Canada. However, I clearly heard Mr. Parizeau make an election commitment to hold a referendum within 10 months. That statement is the only one that matters.

[*English*]

I say ignore the advice of the Leader of the Opposition to put off the referendum until the climate is more favourable. I can assure Mr. Parizeau that these are not the winds of change he hears from the Leader of the Opposition. It is simply hot air.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Parizeau, hold the referendum in 10 months as you had planned and promised Quebecers during the election campaign. It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to respect the democratic choice of Quebecers and the commitment made by Premier Parizeau, who stated that the referendum must be held quickly, that is, 8 to 10 months after the election.

* * *

HAITI

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, Sunday night's agreement between Haiti's illegal president and Mr. Carter, which was drafted without consulting President Jean-Bertrand Aristide or the United Nations, is a tragic betrayal of the Haitian people. The hoodlum Raoul Cédras and his associates did not sign anything, do not have to leave the country and will even enjoy a general amnesty.

Last week, President Clinton strongly denounced Cédras and his army of thugs and condemned his reign of terror. Today, according to him, he is an honourable man. President Aristide has called for the implementation of Resolution 940 and of the Governors Island Accord, and I hope that the Government of Canada will support him while denouncing this repugnant agreement.

TERRY FOX RUN

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues in this House to the 14th Terry Fox Run which was held on Sunday, September 18.

[*English*]

At 3,400 different sites across Canada on Sunday, hundreds of thousands of people took part in the event which raised a total of $8.5 million in 40 countries worldwide last year and is expected to raise more this year.

These donations pay 20 per cent of all the cancer research in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Over half a million Canadians walked, ran, pedalled or skated in memory of Terry Fox, who died of cancer in June 1981. I would like to pay tribute to the Canadians who once again volunteered their time to promote this cause they care about. Volunteers are needed now more than ever.

* * *

• (1415)

RADIO-RESTIGOUCHE COMMUNITY RADIO STATION

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, a dream came true in my constituency of Restigouche—Chaleur. Last Monday, Radio-Restigouche, a community radio station also known as CIMS-FM, went on the air.

For the last few years, a great number of volunteers and employees have been working relentlessly to reach this goal. This community radio station aims at promoting the Acadian and French culture and at providing high quality regional news. CIMS-FM will also give its many volunteers the opportunity to train in the communications sector.

I want to congratulate all the members of the Radio-Restigouche team for their hard work. Such commitment by volunteers is worth mentioning. Long live Radio-Restigouche.

* * *

[*English*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery today of Major-General Roméo Dallaire, des forces armée canadiennes.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: It seems that his reputation has preceded him and rightly so for all members of the House. I welcome you home, Major–General Roméo Dallaire. This is your place and we are glad to have you here.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

HAITI

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the brutal repression which the Haitian police and army carry on is getting worse in Port–au–Prince, as the American soldiers watch impassively. For his part, exiled President Jean–Bertrand Aristide has publicly repudiated the agreement reached between Washington and the military junta, referring back to the Governors Island Accord. The UN special envoy who was in charge of negotiating these accords has just resigned. His name is Dante Caputo.

I ask the minister who seems to be increasingly embarrassed by the growing confusion to tell us if negotiations are now going on in Washington to ensure the speedy and effective return of President Aristide.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my answer is yes. As much as the Leader of the Opposition, I deplore this carnage that has followed the arrival of multinational troops in Haiti. These are certainly unacceptable actions which should have been expected from the military who are losing control of the country. I think that we must see what is happening there in that context and I would ask the Leader of the Opposition not to make a partisan issue of it but to accept that the Government of Canada is playing a very important and very useful role with President Aristide, who will return to his country very soon.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I always thought that Canada's policy was to support President Aristide. I wonder if President Aristide cannot rightly ask whether Canada did not support him by signing an agreement with an impostor president who has taken his place, without any reference to President Aristide's own legitimacy.

[*English*]

Did the minister intervene on behalf of Canada with Washington in order to ensure that the return of President Aristide takes place under conditions which respect the Governors Island agreement rather than according to the terms of agreement negotiated last Sunday with the U.S.?

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should know; if he does not, he should talk to President Aristide, who will confirm for him that he fully supports what the Canadian government is doing.

• (1420)

President Aristide has always shown himself to be very interested in and very close to the positions taken by Canada. He knows that the Canadian government is a dependable friend and ally.

So I do not accept the Leader of the Opposition trying for partisan reasons to create dissension between the Government of Canada and President Aristide when there is none at all.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, let us limit the debate to whether or not Canada is meeting its commitments to democracy and the support promised for President Aristide.

In this regard, if the government really played an important role, how could it let this agreement be reached with an impostor president, with no mention of President Aristide, who is supposed to be Canada's protégé?

In particular, I ask the minister whether he agrees with the clauses in the latest agreement that provide for amnesty, despite what was in the Governors Island Accord; according to our information, these clauses are the main obstacle to President Aristide's return.

[*English*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I find it particularly interesting that the Leader of the Opposition is now second guessing the actions of President Carter and the emissaries who at the very last minute obtained capitulations from the military junta.

What took place there at the last minute was that decisions were made by the Haitian junta to accept that multinational forces would arrive in Haiti without any confrontation in order to ensure that there would not be any loss of lives. That is what took place. Nothing else.

All the elements of resolution 940 will be carried out and will be exercised by the military forces that are there. That will ensure the speedy and safe return of President Aristide.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COLLECTION OF UNPAID TAXES

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Auditor General of Canada, Mr. Denis Desautels, is understandably concerned by the problems experienced by the government in collecting unpaid taxes. In the last five years, the amount of taxes owed by Canadian taxpayers has nearly doubled, going from 3.7 to more than $6.2 billion.

Will the Minister of Finance recognize that, before targeting the poorest ones through a social reform, he should first set up a more efficient system to collect the more than six billion dollars owed in taxes?

[*English*]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I read the account by Norman Delisle in this morning's *La Presse* of the speech by the Auditor General, and I must say I was very encouraged and pleased by what I read. He has identified the close to doubling of the taxes owed during the last five years of the Tory administration of which my hon. friend has made mention.

He has made it perfectly clear that this is indeed an area which the Government of Canada must pursue vigorously to make sure that all Canadians pay their fair share of taxes and that the business community is faced with a level playing field so it does not have to compete for contracts against those who do not pay their share. It is clear that he has identified a problem which we have recognized.

I remind the hon. member that within three weeks of becoming minister I announced a major campaign in consultation with my friend the hon. Minister of Finance to make sure that we would be able to address these very problems that the Auditor General mentioned in Quebec City yesterday.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, the results are yet to come. The minister and his government were elected a year ago. Will the minister tell us why his government did not make as much effort to collect taxes owed to the Treasury as it does to cut social benefits through its upcoming reform of those social programs designed to protect the poorest ones in our society? Why did the government not make as much effort to collect those unpaid taxes?

• (1425)

[*English*]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that within three weeks of becoming minister we launched a major campaign against the underground economy and against those who are not paying their fair share.

I pointed out that this was an important initiative of the government. The member seems to have overlooked the fact that revenues are up dramatically for this period over last year and that a considerable part of this, approximately $700 million, is due to improved efficiency of collection. He has overlooked the fact that we are doing much better.

He has also overlooked the fact that the Auditor General in this article to which I referred earlier said the following:

[*Translation*]

The Auditor was very pleased by the decision of the federal Revenue minister to intensify measures to collect amounts owed to the Treasury.

[*English*]

Had the hon. member bothered to read the story and the speech of the Auditor General, he would have noticed that the Auditor General is congratulating us for the actions we are taking.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal premier of New Brunswick has expressed the view that Canada will sink into a lower economic order if the federal government does not come to grips with the debt problem.

He says that the efforts of the provinces to control their spending are being held back by the federal government which has yet to show a clear demonstrable commitment to fiscal management that would inspire international investors.

The Prime Minister will not heed advice from members on this side with respect to this subject. He does not heed advice from the taxpayers and the investment community. Perhaps he will heed the words of his Liberal colleagues and provide a clear demonstrable commitment to sound fiscal management.

Will the Prime Minister publicly direct the finance minister to reduce the deficit, not by raising taxes but by further spending reductions?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the Minister of Finance is doing.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister apparently has no idea of the uncertainty that these non–answers and political answers create with respect to investors and taxpayers.

Many resource companies, particularly in western Canada, are starting to make money for the first time in a number of years. They are in a position of trying to decide whether to invest those profits in Canada or take them elsewhere out of the reach of the government.

Since the Prime Minister, given his track record on this issue and the uncertainty, creates only more uncertainty by responding, will the finance minister clear the air by stating categorically that he is not planning any tax increases on the resource industry?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to know that the leader of the Reform Party is conceding that when we had a Conservative government even less right wing than his, business was not making money and with the Liberal government in power it is starting to make

money. It does not know where to invest it. It is better to have that problem than the problem it had with the Tories in government.

Talking about uncertainty I would like the leader of the Reform Party to be a bit objective. It is on TV every night and every morning that the Canadian dollar is going up. The interest rate is going down. The international community has more confidence in Canada than ever before. He should rejoice. That is simple.

• (1430)

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): I read the papers, Mr. Speaker, but I am more conscious of the fact that the government is spending $110 million more per day than it takes in, and a lot of other people recognize that as well.

If the Prime Minister cannot answer this question with clarity and resolve uncertainty in the resource industry perhaps he can say something that would calm the uncertainty among RRSP investors.

Yesterday the Prime Minister would not give a straight answer on whether the government is contemplating a raid on RRSP contributions. These investors are already organizing themselves to oppose an expected tax grab while we wait for an answer from the government on how many more dollars will seek a safer haven elsewhere.

My question is for the finance minister if the Prime Minister cannot answer. Will he clear the air on this issue by stating categorically that he is not planning a tax raid on RRSP contributions?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear that we are about to embark on the most comprehensive, deep consultative process in the budget preparation that has ever been done. There will be extensive opportunity for debate. We welcome that opportunity.

The challenge I lay before the leader of the Reform Party is to rise to that opportunity. Or, is the Reform Party going to do what it did in the pre–budget debate, what it has done throughout the summer, and that is refuse to be constructive, refuse to tell us what it would do and refuse to face the fundamental challenges facing the country?

* * *

[*Translation*]

DUPLICATION AND OVERLAP

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, we now know that in five years, Canada has dropped from fourth to fourteenth place among the 24 OECD countries as far its competitive position is concerned, mainly because of the unprecedented extent of the federal debt, inefficient government policies that undermine job creation and, above all, the wasteful overlap in manpower training.

My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Considering this disastrous state of affairs, what more will it take for the Minister of Finance to decide to make a move, act responsibly, eliminate the inefficiencies in federal spending and at last do something about duplication and overlap?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we have every intention of dealing with overlap. In fact, the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal has been given that role.

I may add that the problems are more fundamental and that we will have to deal with the loss of our technological edge, the manpower issue, and, of course, the issue of the debt. That is why the Minister of Human Resources Development is going to start on his program to restructure our social programs, why the Minister of Industry is going to start on his program to restructure industry, and why we intend to reach our objective of bringing the federal deficit down to 3 per cent of GNP.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, earlier I heard the Prime Minister refer to the Conservatives. I now hear the Minister of Finance saying exactly the same thing he said about a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, I will put the question to the minister: What has he done for the past year, aside from conducting some pretty useless consultations, to cut operating expenditures? What has he done to eliminate overlap and duplication? What has he done to help the government make a sensible decision, which would be to decentralize all authority over manpower training to Quebec?

Eight hundred thousand unemployed individuals are waiting for this to happen. They are waiting for the glimmer of hope that the Minister of Finance and the government are certainly not giving them. So what has he done? That is my question.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, what we did? Real growth was 6.4 per cent during the past quarter, the best performance of all our G–7 partners. Consumer spending was up 3.5 per cent during the first half of 1994. Exports were up 0.6 per cent in July, and I can go on.

• (1435)

The hon. member asked me what I did. Well, I am not entirely responsible for all this. The government is.

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, you will know there has been some debate outside the House this week concerning the date of a referendum in Quebec. You will also know that many Canadians, after 25 years, are sick and tired of this separatist merry–go–round.

I would like the Prime Minister to clarify for the House whether he has clearly communicated the position of his government, of the vast majority of members of the House and the vast majority of the population of Canada that the premier of Quebec should fulfil his commitment to have this referendum as soon as possible. What assurances has he received in that regard?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, and the commitment was not only in a private conversation. It was made public on the Wednesday afternoon during a press conference when Mr. Parizeau answered a question by a CBC radio reporter stating he was to fulfil his commitment. I took his word in the press as well as what he said privately.

I see that the Reform Party is trying to make money on that subject by having a 1–900 telephone number. It is pretty awkward for a political party to want people to express a view and pay money to the Reform Party on a divisive issue like this one.

It is unbelievable and not very ethical to take a controversial problem, one that is very divisive and ask the people to pay to make money for the Reform Party. I can understand why the Reform Party has problems with its funding at this time, if we judge it by its performance in the House of Commons.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

It is in the interests of this party and should be in the interests of the government to get the views of all Canadians on the unity of the country. I am surprised that the Prime Minister does not want that.

[*Translation*]

Here is my supplementary question: Does the Prime Minister intend to contact officially the new Quebec Government to urge it to respect its commitment and hold its referendum as quickly as possible, on the simple question of Quebec separation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I already called them, as I mentioned before in this House, and I made a speech in Quebec City, before the Canadian Chamber of Commerce last Sunday, so my message is well known. We want this question to be resolved in a civilized manner and quickly, so we can turn our attention to the other problems facing this country.

I would like to tell the hon. member that his party should have subscribed to a 1–800 number, instead of trying to make money with a 1–900 number. This is quite inappropriate.

* * *

FRANCOPHONES IN KINGSTON

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Once again, this year, Kingston High School students went back to school in shacks without running water or bathrooms because Kingston city council still refuses to let the school board build a school on its land.

On May 31, the Prime Minister pledged to help francophones get their high school without delay. In his opinion, is it normal for the school board to have to resort to the courts to have this fundamental right upheld? Given that the school will not be built soon, does the Prime Minister acknowledge that his May 31 pledge was nothing but hogwash?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have asked ministers who have Crown lands in Kingston to make a site available to the Kingston French–Language School Board to build a school, if it cannot come to an agreement with the city council. The Solicitor General and the Minister of National Defence have been trying to resolve this issue and we will find a suitable site if no agreement is forthcoming.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister recognize that the systematic obstruction and the obvious bad faith of Kingston city council confirm what the Commissioner of Official Languages said, namely that it will be extremely difficult to turn Kingston into a bilingual place respectful of the fundamental rights of francophones in this country?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we intend to take the necessary steps to ensure that Kingston college provides services in both official languages to all its students.

I am surprised to see how emotional these people who want to split Quebec from Canada and have their own army and so on can be. We will do what is good for Canada. We will make sure that anyone attending the only military college this country needs since we reduced our troops to 60,000—will be able to attend a bilingual institution, as required by Canadian legislation.

[*English*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, the Security Intelligence Review Committee has publicly stated that the Solicitor General will have sole discretion in determining the openness of the SIRC report on the CSIS–Bristow affair.

Will the minister assure the House that he will make the entire report public, excluding the identification of confidential CSIS sources, other than Grant Bristow?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it is my objective to make as much as possible of the report public. Once I receive the report I will review it. I will seek such legal advice as I need to make up my mind on how much I can make public.

It is my objective, as I said, to make as much as possible of the report public. If I can make the whole thing public I will certainly do so.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year SIRC tried to convince the justice committee that the fact that Canada was a world leader in the petroleum industry was a national secret.

Will the minister assure the House that he will provide a broader interpretation of what national security is?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think the CSIS act adopted by the House provides a definition. It is a very broad definition.

I appreciate the hon. member's question. I look forward to receiving the SIRC report so that after receiving advice on my legal position I can proceed as quickly as possible to make as much of that report public as possible to help reassure the public about this important subject.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAINTED BLOOD

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The minister said at a press conference on September 12 that the inspection carried out by the Food and Drug Administration resulted from a change in the American regulations.

How can the minister reconcile her statement with that made by Red Cross spokespersons who were saying exactly the opposite, namely that there had been no change in the American regulations.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I must tell the hon. member that there has in fact been a change in the FDA policy. They have decided to require Canadian blood collection centres to have a licence. There was already a request for this licence in their system. The FDA had not required Canadian centres to have this licence for several years.

• (1445)

So, they suddenly changed their mind and now require us to licence these centres in order to meet the US regulations.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whom we should believe. In response to a question I asked at a press conference, she told us that the American regulations have been changed. Then the Red Cross looks into it and says that there has been no change. I am trying to sort this out. I never get a straight answer.

I ask her the same question again: Was there, yes or no, any change in the American regulations? And I expect a clear answer.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, there was a change in the policies of the FDA. Red Cross centres are now required to have a licence. That is all.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. On behalf of thousands of honest law–abiding gun owners in Canada and being one myself as a former president of the Dover Rod and Gun Club and with many legitimate target shooting clubs wondering about their future, will the minister clearly state the government's position on the banning of handguns?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the regulation of handguns is just one aspect of a comprehensive package this government is preparing in response to the Prime Minister's request last May.

I can tell the hon. member we are going to have to deal with handguns. A poll taken less than a year ago showed that 71 per cent of Canadians and a clear majority of firearms owners were in favour of an absolute ban on handguns. I am not suggesting the answer is that simple and no final decision has been made.

I spent the last three months speaking with dozens of pistol clubs, shooting clubs and handgun associations, among others. I am very sensitive to the interests they claim.

A study released yesterday by the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force gave further reason to believe this subject needs attention. We already knew that 3,800 firearms are lost or stolen each year, about half of which are handguns. The study released yesterday demonstrated that about 30 per cent of the firearms

used in the commission of crimes in Toronto were originally legally registered handguns.

We will be turning our attention to this subject. We will do our best to find a solution that respects the legitimate interests of Canadians and at the same time enhances public safety.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

In 1981 Mr. Dudley Vincent Forbes was ordered deported to Jamaica for overstaying his visa. Four years later he was actually deported and the following year he returned. He was deported again and again he returned. Last Saturday Mr. Forbes allegedly walked into a Toronto establishment and opened fire on a crowd killing two and wounding several more.

After having been deported twice Forbes was recently granted permanent resident status. My question is why?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this case is before the police. This individual came to Canada in 1981. He was asked to leave after overstaying and returned in 1986.

• (1450)

If the hon. member is questioning whether people who are deported should not be permitted to return and go through due process then why is it that his party is refusing to adopt Bill C–44? Those amendments would allow the individual to be turned around at the border without legal process. Why is his party saying no to that?

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, this minister's record is not before the police; it is open for the public to look at. Bill C–44 would not have stopped Forbes from entering this country. We will not support the half measures the government proposes.

Will this minister agree today to put the protection of Canadian health and safety ahead of all other concerns in immigration, ahead of procedure, ahead of his friends in the immigration industry, ahead of his own personal ambitions?

The Speaker: My colleagues, we should not in any way impugn motives. That part of the question is out of order. I will allow the first part of the question to stand, if the minister would like to answer it.

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party does not like to deal with the facts, but it should get around to doing that.

The facts are that this individual came to Canada and left some 15 years ago. The police are looking for this individual. Charges are pending. The person is at large. There are deportations on the books of individuals who are convicted of crimes that we believe are due to deportation. Fifteen years after this individual has entered Canada, is charged by the police—not convicted, charged—and is at large, what does that member expect me as minister of immigration to do?

On July 7 this government made a very clear reorientation of how we remove individuals. We set up a joint task force made up of police, RCMP, provincial and federal immigration authorities.

The hon. member does not need to lecture this government about taking the appropriate action. However the member does need a lecture about how our judicial system works and that we cannot deport someone who is charged and at large.

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[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The latest figures from the finance department show a significant reduction in UI benefits from April to July. However, these numbers also show a significant increase in social assistance costs—and that applies only to the federal government's share and does not include the increased costs in the provinces.

Given these figures, how can the Prime Minister take pleasure, as he did last Sunday at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Quebec City, in saying that a growing number of Canadian households no longer need to rely on unemployment insurance or social assistance?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that there has been a significant decrease in the number of people who need UI benefits at this time and that the creation of 275,000 jobs allowed these people to return to the workforce. That is why I said that fewer people need to rely on unemployment insurance and social assistance, since many jobs have been created in the last 10 months.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, if the figures are higher, it is certainly not because there are fewer beneficiaries.

• (1455)

Does the Prime Minister not recognize that the reduction in UI benefits is due in very large part to the reforms, the exemptions voted not only by the former government but also by the current government, that this is a tragedy for individuals and that it simply means a heavier burden for the provinces?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, as far as the reduction is concerned, it is very clear. The figures are there. In Quebec alone, for example, the help wanted index is 10 per cent higher than in 1993. Since we were elected, Quebec's unemployment rate has fallen by more than 1 per cent. Again, in Quebec, 79,000 jobs were created, while 261,000 jobs were created in Canada. That is why the rates are down.

* * *

[*English*]

DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice knows that Keith Legere is a reported pedophile just released from prison for the killing of a six–year old boy. His psychiatric assessment shows he is a pedophile with psychopathic tendencies. The protection of society has to be our number one priority yet there is no mechanism in our system to protect society against people like Keith Legere.

Will the minister take immediate steps to bring in legislation that will indefinitely incarcerate dangerous offenders?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, part XXIV of the Criminal Code calls for the indefinite incarceration of dangerous offenders. Part XXIV has been in place for decades. In the appropriate cases it permits the prosecuting attorney to bring to the attention of the court circumstances which would establish that the accused person is of sufficient danger to society that they should be locked up indefinitely. That happens weekly in the courts of the country.

The government has identified a gap in the system. It is that category of case in which no such application under part XXIV of the Criminal Code is brought. Such persons may be incarcerated for fixed periods but may arguably still be dangerous upon the expiration of those terms.

I am not speaking to the case of Legere but speaking generally when I say that for the past several months the Solicitor General, the Minister of Health and I have been working with our provincial counterparts toward the creation of a nationwide policy with changes to the provincial health acts, if necessary. This is to provide for the continued detention under the health regimes of persons who, upon the expiration of their criminal terms, may be dangerous to the public.

I will be happy to provide the hon. member with details of the state of those discussions. They continue and I remain optimistic as do my colleagues that we can make a significant improvement in the system in that way.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, that is good talk and I would like to see something really happen. However from what I have seen from the proposals and the talk I have heard their policies are going to be as useless as the immigration policies.

I will give another example. A convicted sexual predator, a pedophile named Galienne, will be released in October. Experts say he is not rehabilitated and will prey on young children again.

Washington State has successfully enacted legislation that locks up perverts indefinitely. Will the justice minister implement an immediate moratorium on the release of all dangerous offenders until such time as new effective legislation is in place?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I share the hon. member's concern for the safety of the public, but I suggest that a different approach would be more effective and in the long run necessary as constitutional.

The hon. member may have noticed two weeks ago that an Ontario court upheld a ruling. It would keep in detention a person who had completed a prison term but who was taken into the Ontario health regime and held involuntarily for the protection of the public.

• (1500)

The person challenged that ruling and the ruling was upheld. I took that as very encouraging for the approach that the Solicitor General of Canada, the Minister of Health and I want to pursue, which is working with the health systems to fill that gap.

There cannot be a moratorium because that would not be lawful. It would not be constitutional.

An hon. member: Would it be safe?

Mr. Rock: What is safe and expedient is not always what is lawful. The rule of law must govern. I can assure the hon. member that we will pursue the approach I have described. We are confident it will result in an enhancement of public safety.

* * *

PORT OF QUEBEC CITY

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. In 1985, UNESCO of the United Nations recognized the unsurpassed heritage value of the historic old port in Quebec City, placing it on the world list of heritage sites.

Will the government also recognize the heritage value of the old port of Quebec and monitor the encroachment of developers whose sole interests for prime real estate are for profit?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague for her interest in the historic district of Quebec. Of course Canada played an important role in the development of the world heritage convention.

As minister responsible for heritage sites in Canada, I am always encouraging the very careful management of the lands in the old, historic district of Quebec and in adjacent areas.

[*Translation*]

To reassure her further, I am pleased to report that I was informed that the City of Quebec announced on June 23 that it was pulling out of a project to build parking spaces and, a few days later, the promoters of a Imax cinema project also abandoned their plans for that area.

This means that the district is indeed protected and I have no doubt that we will remain vigilant in the future.

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CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Bernard St–Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources. The 128 workers of Ogilvie Mills, in Montreal, have been on strike for three and a half months now. And there is no hope of settlement in sight, as the company can hire scabs to remain in operation.

Considering that about 70 per cent of the Canadian workforce is already protected by provincial anti–strikebreaking legislation, does the minister intend to table in this House proposals to amend the Canada Labour Code by adding anti–strikebreaking provisions at the federal level?

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reply to the hon. member that the minister met on Monday with several CNTU officers representing Ogilvie Mills workers. He assured them that he was taking a close look at this whole issue of Canadian anti–strikebreaking legislation, an issue which will be considered as part of the in–depth reform of the Canada Labour Code, and that he will give this problem the urgent and serious attention it deserves.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, on February 18 in the House my colleague from Surrey North warned the Minister of Health about the differences between the Canadian blood supply and the U.S. blood supply. The minister's answer was do not worry. We are inspecting the blood supply and by March this will all be taken care of.

If those inspections had been done, we would not be in the pickle we are in today. Were those inspections done, or was this simply to cover the minister's gluteus maximus?

The Speaker: The question is out of order.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

BILL C–41—COMMENTS DURING DEBATE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege, of which I had given notice, related to certain comments made during the course of debate yesterday by the member for Central Nova.

• (1505)

However, following consultation with the Clerk, I understand that this matter may be more appropriately addressed as a point of order. I will certainly pursue the matter at the earliest possible opportunity, after having given notice to the member for Central Nova.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to rise on a point of order regarding question period yesterday afternoon. I asked the Prime Minister a question about an appointment of a lawyer.

I would like to draw your attention to Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 489 which states that the phrase "has not got the guts" is unparliamentary. That comes from *Debates* of May 27, 1959, page 4078.

I would like to draw your attention to *Hansard* of yesterday, page 5898 where the Prime Minister responded to me with the exact words "if the member had any guts she would try to prove that the person is not competent".

I think it is fairly clear that statement is out of order and I would like to ask that the Prime Minister either withdraw those comments or apologize.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking in my capacity as government House leader.

With respect to the point of order just raised, I respectfully submit there are two problems with it. First, I am not aware whether the hon. member gave notice to the Prime Minister that she intended to raise it so that he could be present. More important, I understand that such matters are to be raised at the

first opportunity which should have been yesterday immediately after the end of the question period.

The time has passed for raising this point. However in saying that I am not in any way accepting the premise of the hon. member's point of order.

The Speaker: Many times in the course of debate when we take words out of context they do not always have the same connotation that they ordinarily would have.

Notwithstanding the fact that the hon. member has rightly pointed out that the statement which she quotes as being used is out of order I would refer the hon. member to page 149 of Beauchesne's 6th edition, "unparliamentary language", where it says:

> The Speaker has consistently ruled that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken. No language is, by virtue of any list, acceptable or unacceptable. A word which is parliamentary in one context may cause disorder in another context, and therefore be unparliamentary.

I would say the point has been made. I would rule that it should have been brought up probably at the instant when it occurred rather than a day later. I am hopeful the hon. member will accept it is on the record that these words are indeed unparliamentary. My ruling for now would simply be that I hope the use of these words would not occur again in the near future.

Is this on the same point of order?

Miss Grey: Yes.

The Speaker: Unless it adds something new I would prefer just to lay this aside. Thank you very much.

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, my question was ruled out of order and I would like to request a ruling on that please.

The Speaker: The ruling is simply that it is out of order in the context in which it was made. I think that this kind of language in certain circumstances could be very inflammatory and I would ask the hon. member that in future when he is putting questions that they not in any way stoop to even a hint of vulgarity.

That is not by way of explanation so much as it is by way of asking the hon. member to please refrain from language which could be judged to be inflammatory.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, and pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), the government's response to five petitions.

Routine Proceedings

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association to the Third Annual Parliamentary Assembly of the Conference on Security and Co–operation in Europe held in Vienna, Austria, from July 4 to July 8, 1994.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House the third report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association concerning the North Atlantic Assembly's spring session which was held in Oslo, Norway, May 26 to May 30, 1994.

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CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–267, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (election expenses).

He said: Madam Speaker, with the permission of the House, may I make a short statement on each bill.

The purpose of the bill covering election expenses is to eliminate any reimbursement by taxpayers of election expenses incurred by candidates and political parties.

• (1515)

The Canada Elections Act presently obliges taxpayers to reimburse 50 per cent of election expenses of candidates and political parties if they achieve set percentages of the vote.

Such reimbursement is actually a taxpayer funded grant to a special interest group which should be raising the money from the people it purports to represent. Passage of the bill would ensure that they would have to do exactly that.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

PLAIN LANGUAGE ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–268, an act to promote the use of plain language in federal statutes and regulations.

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of the bill regarding plain language is to ensure that plain language is used in federal legislation so that legislation may be clearly and readily understood by non–lawyers. Some of the bills the House has passed and no doubt will pass in the future are so legally complex that it takes a gaggle of lawyers to interpret and explain the legislation. Even then it is not unusual for the original intent of the bill to end up being lost in legal challenges.

This bill if passed would ensure that the final language of a bill is straightforward enough and in simple enough language that its intent could not be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–269, an act to amend the Canada Pension Plan (income transferred to spouse).

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of the bill is to amend the Canada pension plan to permit income transferred to a spouse to qualify as pensionable and thereby extend CPP benefits to stay at home parents.

The bill is a follow–up to my, Bill C–256, introduced on June 7, 1994 which proposed to amend the Income Tax Act to allow one spouse to pay or split income up to $25,000 to the other spouse who is managing the family home and caring for at least one dependent child who has not commenced full time attendance at school.

This new bill would give further recognition to the principle that caring for children is an important job to be fairly compensated including the extension of pension benefits to a parent working in the home.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

MEMBERSOFPARLIAMENTRETIRINGALLOWANCES ACT

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–270, an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act (money purchase pension).

He said: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce a private member's bill entitled an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act (money purchase pension).

The bill if passed will significantly change the MPs pension plan. It is designed to reduce the burden significantly taken on by taxpayers under the current member of Parliament pension plan.

Currently members of Parliament contribute $1 for $7 of taxpayers' money to the existing plan. This new plan is $1 for $1, taxpayer by member. It will reduce the cost to taxpayers of the pension plan for members of Parliament by approximately $11.7 million per year.

This is a plan that is endorsed by the Saskatchewan Taxpayers Association, the Canadian Taxpayers Association and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It is a plan that is modelled after the Saskatchewan MLAs plan which has been in place for over 15 years and works very well for both taxpayers and members.

It will end unfunded future liabilities of MPs pensions. It will also reduce overall pension payout and set a higher age limit for qualifying for a pension.

I hope to gain support from all sides of the House on this very important bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

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• (1520)

YUKON FIRST NATIONS LAND CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–271, an act to amend the Yukon First Nations Land Claims Settlement Act (Interpretation).

He said: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to introduce an act to amend the Yukon First Nations Land Claims Settlement Act.

One of the more serious flaws in Bill C–33 allows the agreements of the Yukon First Nations to take precedence over Canadian laws. The bill would amend Bill C–33, the Yukon First Nations Land Claims Settlement Act, so that federal or territorial law will prevail where there is an inconsistency or conflict with any final agreement or transboundary agreement.

We are all Canadians and the laws of the land should apply equally to all.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

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MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion. I move:

> That the order of the House of Wednesday, February 23, 1994 respecting the Special Joint Committee on Canada's Defence Policy be amended by adding thereto the following:
>
> That, not withstanding the usual practices of this House substitution in the membership of the Committee shall be in accordance with Standing Order 114(2),
>
> and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint their honours thereof.

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That the Order of the House of March 16, 1994, respecting the Special Joint Committee on Canada's Foreign Policy be amended by adding thereto the following:

That, notwithstanding the usual practices of this House, substitution in the membership of the Committee shall be in accordance with Standing Order 114(2), and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint their Honours thereof.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

VIOLENCE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, these petitioners are concerned as are all Canadians that abuse and violence are real concerns throughout the whole nation.

The petitioners want all forms of abuse and violence controlled and preferably to cease; that is, those forms of abuse and violence that we hear on radio and see on television. They request that the government ask the CRTC to regulate forms of abuse and violence that are contrary to what they are trying to do to raise their families.

• (1525)

These parents point out that their efforts to raise and educate their children are often counteracted by what happens on radio and television.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I rise today to present three petitions signed by my constituents in Capilano—Howe Sound.

The first petition calls on Parliament not to amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

ABORTION

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Madam Speaker, the second petition calls on Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Madam Speaker, the third petition calls on Parliament to prohibit assisted suicide and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I am presenting petitions today on behalf of members of the Kaska Dena Council of Yukon and B.C. These members are from diverse points, Watson Lake, Fort Nelson, including Good Hope.

The Kaska Dena Council requests that Parliament ensure that its fiduciary rights as related to the federal government are respected, particularly in relation to land claims issues in Yukon and B.C. in which its territory spans both that province and territory.

The Kaska Dena Council seeks the support of the minister of Indian affairs to ensure that he carries out this responsibility and former agreements with the Kaska Dena Council.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to present a petition to the House signed by a number of my constituents as well as Canadians throughout southwestern Ontario.

These petitioners call on Parliament to vigorously enforce the Criminal Code of Canada to prohibit assisted suicide and they further call on Parliament to make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

I present this and most heartily concur with these petitioners.

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I am privileged to table in the House today duly certified petitions on behalf of the constituents of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre.

The first two petitions ask Parliament to enforce the present provisions of the Criminal Code respecting assisted suicides and that no changes in the law be contemplated by Parliament.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I table the wishes of persons in Moose Jaw—Lake Centre who humbly pray that Parliament not amend the human rights code concerning the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

I concur wholeheartedly with each of these petitions of my constituents.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table a petition which is signed by residents across Canada, including from the cities of Calgary, Moose Jaw and Mill Bay.

These petitioners draw to the attention of the House the fact that the current Criminal Code denies people who are suffering from terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to choose freely and voluntarily to end their lives with the assistance of a physician.

Therefore the petitions call upon Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure the right of all Canadians to die with dignity by allowing people with terminal or irreversible and debilitating illnesses the right to the assistance of a physician in ending their lives at a time of their choice subject to strict safeguards to prevent abuse and to ensure that the decision is free, informed, competent and voluntary.

BILL C–91

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure on behalf of constituents and other Canadians in Saskatchewan to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. The petition is signed by people from Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Pangman, Ogema, Minton, Oungre, Kenora and Nipawin, all in Saskatchewan.

• (1530)

The petitioners are extremely worried about the impact of Bill C–91 which was passed in the last Parliament extending the patent on some prescription drugs for up to 20 years and guaranteeing drug manufacturers monopoly prices and substantial profits at Canadians' expense.

Prescription drug prices in Canada are the most expensive in the world as a result of the bill. The petitioners are calling for the repeal of Bill C–91. The Liberals in opposition supported the repealing of Bill C–91. The petitioners are asking the government to repeal the bill as quickly as possible to reduce the pressure on drug plans and health care plans across the country.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to provide a petition to the House today from constituents in Fraser Valley West and Langley, Aldergrove and Matsqui.

The petitioners request that Parliament not amend the human right code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

CHILD ABUSE

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, I have a petition from more than 60 people in the riding of Peterborough. These are people concerned about child abuse. They point out that babies and young children lack the ability to defend themselves and they fall victim to sexual abuse and serious physical and psychological abuse each year.

They urge that Parliament amend the Criminal Code to ensure stiffer sentences and mandatory treatment for all child abusers.

FIRST NATIONS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): I have a second petition, Madam Speaker, prompted by the recent death of Debra Redhead and it is presented by people from the Native Friendship Centre in Peterborough. They point out that the existing judicial system continues to fail and in some cases participates in the deaths of incarcerated First Nations peoples. The group Cries to the Spirits is urging the federal government to recognize and act on this.

They petition Parliament to accept and respect First Nations people's right to reintroduce their traditional judicial system which promotes healing as opposed to punishment.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Madam Speaker, I have four petitions to present today, two that relate to opposition to same sex couples, homosexuality and sexual orientation.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): The second petition asks Parliament not to change any legislation relating to euthanasia.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): The final petition asks for protection of the unborn child.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I would like to present petitions on behalf of my constituents to request Parliament not to amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

DIVORCE ACT

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): The second petition is presented on behalf of Canadian grandparents asking Parliament to amend the Divorce Act to assure grandparents of continuous access to grandchildren and to inquire as to the health, education and welfare of their grandchildren.

It is the hope of this member that all members of the House will support our grandparents and realize the needs of our grandchildren have got to be addressed. By addressing their needs we also address the needs of grandparents.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Madam Speaker, it is my duty to present two petitions today pursuant to Standing Order 36, the first signed by 238 constituents of Oxford County who pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by human beings to unborn human beings.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): The second petition requests that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my duty and honour to rise in the House to present a petition duly certified by the clerk of petitions on behalf of constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, Victoria and Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people, binding upon Parliament, to accept or reject two official languages, English and French, for the government and the people of Canada.

• (1535)

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have three petitions I would like to present today on behalf of my constituents in Simcoe Centre.

The first deals with euthanasia. The petitioners request that the current laws regarding active euthanasia be enforced.

ABORTION

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Madam Speaker, the second petition deals with abortion. The petitioners request that Parliament reconsider amendments to the Criminal Code.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Madam Speaker, the third petition deals with sexual orientation.

I wish to present a petition requesting that the Government of Canada not amend the Human Rights Act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners fear that such an inclusion would lead to homosexuals receiving the same benefits and societal privileges as married people.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 36 it is my pleasure to present a petition duly signed by constituents of Wetaskiwin who humbly pray that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code on the grounds that this could include discrimination.

I present the petition on behalf of the constituents of Wetaskiwin.

* * *

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Madam Speaker, unfortunately during introduction of my private members' bills the seconders of the two bills were rotated. I would like to correct that for the records of the House.

The seconder for the bill entitled an act to amend the Canada Elections Act was Grant Hill. The seconder for the act to promote the use of plain language in federal statutes and regulations was Bob Ringma.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): That is fine. I will make sure the corrections are made.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, Question No. 42 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 42—**Mrs. Guay:**

With respect to the cellular telephones in use in all government departments and agencies, (*a*) how many are in active use, (*b*) how many are not in active use, (*c*) are they leased or owned outright and in what proportions, (*d*) what are the costs involved in their lease or purchase, and (*e*) what are the total costs of use and communications?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): The information provided was obtained by soliciting 68 departments and agencies of which 61 had cellular telephones. The legislature (Parliament), the judiciary and crown corporations are not included.

Due to the large geographical area involved, the wide variety of leasing and usage costs, the means and time frames of billing procedures and availability of records, the figures provided are only good for the day they were collated by each government institution.

(a) Active use: 10,143

(b) Non-active use: 367

(Non-active use includes "Seasonal Use")

(c) Owned: 9,261

Leased: 1,249

(d) Purchase cost: Average price in today's market - $400 to $500 per unit.

(As some of these telephones were purchased many years ago, some more than 10 years and records not being available, the total actual cost cannot be provided). Please note that the cost of these devices is continually decreasing in value.

Lease cost: Average monthly - $92,936.38

(e) Cost of use and communications:

Average monthly - $577,075.16

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered.

Mr. Milliken: I ask, Madam Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I ask, Madam Speaker, that all notices of motions stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall all notices of motions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

PEACEKEEPING

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs) moved:

That this House take note of Canada's current and future international peacekeeping commitments in this world, with particular reference to the former Yugoslavia, Haiti and Rwanda.

He said: Madam Speaker, I want to address the House this afternoon about one of the strongest and most enduring traditions of Canadian foreign policy, our commitment to peacekeeping. Almost forty years ago, Lester B. Pearson first developed the modern concept of peacekeeping: a UN Force.

That idea defused an explosive international crisis and led to a peaceful disengagement of warring parties under the United Nations flag.

• (1540)

Today, I may recall that since the creation of the first United Nations Emergency Force in 1956, under the leadership of a Canadian, Lt. Gen. E.L.M. Burns, there have been 26 other UN peacekeeping missions. In every case, Canada has participated in some way. Canadians have served with distinction in all 16 peacekeeping operations currently under way in the UN.

More than 3,700 Canadians are currently deployed in eight international operations, while helping the UN secretary general with the planning of two other missions in which some 700 Canadians might eventually be called to serve. This is a unique record of achievement of which all Canadians should be proud.

A decade ago, the UN had only three active peacekeeping missions, but today, a number of important factors, including the end of the Cold War, the unfortunate outbreak of ethnic and nationalist conflict, and the new co–operation among the members of the Security Council, where veto rights are no longer used to paralyse the UN—have changed the peacekeeping equation.

The United Nations has been empowered to act where once there was a stalemate. As a result, the UN is now becoming the instrument of international co–operation which was the world community's hope in 1945. The fact that the Security Council is now using peacekeeping as a central instrument to bring about peaceful change is a development we should applaud and one we wholeheartedly support. There is no doubt that Canada is one of the UN's strongest supporters.

Next week at the United Nations, I will be putting forward suggestions for making the organization more responsive to a new era in which peacekeeping and related tasks will become even more central to its mandate.

But we have also recognized in recent months, pending the implementation of these vital reforms, that the UN has more peacekeeping mandates than it can realistically handle, involving a variety of tasks which the international community is ill–equipped to manage. It therefore seems a useful time to take stock of the situation and to ask ourselves a series of questions about peacekeeping. What are Canada's national interests in the new era of peacekeeping? How should we play a role in the more diverse and demanding era which is now confronting us? How should we deploy our very valuable resources abroad at a time of

fiscal constraint at home? How should we support the UN in a time of transition to new and more demanding tasks?

In the coming weeks, two parliamentary committees, one responsible for reviewing Canada's foreign policy and one responsible for reviewing our defence policy, will be asked to prepare a report by the end of October, and I am sure that both committees will have some very interesting recommendations to make, as they try to answer these questions.

I am also convinced that today's debate in the House will give many of us an opportunity to intervene and offer the government suggestions on the best way to answer the very fundamental questions I just formulated.

• (1545)

Allow me at this point in time to make a few personal comments.

[*English*]

My view is that peacekeeping is fundamental to Canadian foreign policy. It is not simply a question of continuing a tradition for which Canadians have a deserved international reputation. It is a question of making a concrete and key contribution to international security at a time of instability in many parts of the world. It is also a question of making the United Nations work in directions that are in Canada's interests and in the interests of virtually the entire global community.

In emphasizing the importance of peacekeeping, we have to recognize Canada's strong desire to help the UN whenever we can, but at the same time we have to acknowledge that Canada cannot be everywhere and do everything.

[*Translation*]

In my view, a number of factors should guide our future action. First of all, we should devote time, attention and resources to the planning and administrative functions at the UN which will enable the UN to function effectively in the future. This means developing ideas to make the UN secretariat more responsive to international developments, offering personnel to the UN for explicit planning functions, helping the UN plan and coordinate the initial phases of operations and, in certain cases, offering our leadership in operations, as we did in Rwanda. We had the pleasure earlier today to salute Major–General Dallaire, who was in the visitor gallery, and who so brilliantly served the UN in Rwanda.

This emphasis on the "front end", based on wide–ranging Canadian experience, will help to ensure that UN operations can function with a maximum of effectiveness. Second, Canada should focus on roles in UN missions involving what we do best. In Rwanda this has meant communications and logistics, the supply of fresh water, and the provision of medical field hospitals.

This is also what we have done with our civilian police contributions, through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in Namibia and the former Yugoslavia. This is what we intend to do shortly in Haiti.

Third, we should try, in thinking about our roles, to offer contributions which are not only useful in the peacekeeping phase, but which also make a contribution to the broader reconstruction of society—the "peacebuilding phase" which follows a peaceful settlement. In Kigali, for example, Canadian troops have opened the airports, and helped restore vital communications functions. In Haiti, the UN will use an international force of specially trained police officers, under the leadership of Superintendent Pouliot of the RCMP, to transform the Haitian police into a professional unit appropriate to a democratic society.

Lastly, I believe we should be open and responsive when needs arise quickly and when the international community requires an urgent response. But, to fulfil this fourth objective we will need the necessary resources. The Canadian Government and the Department of National Defence will have to plan, a bit ahead of time, to make available the human resources required to intervene, when the situation requires it, in an area of the world where our traditions or our interests might call us.

• (1550)

I am thinking in particular about the day when peace in the Middle East will finally have been achieved. As you know, Canada was part of the very first UN peace mission in the Middle East. Here is a part of the world where Canada can play a significant and useful role, and I am sure it will certainly be willing to help implement the peace process which seems to be taking shape and in which we are actively involved.

[*English*]

There are no hard and fast rules about Canadian participation. There should be no arbitrary limits to Canada's contributions. What we do in each situation must be judged in light of our interests, in light of the requirements, and in light of our ability to participate.

Resource constraints have become an obvious consideration. A decade ago our share of the total UN cost of peacekeeping was only $8 million. In this fiscal year the Canadian share will be in excess of $150 million.

Other issues need to be looked at. For example, there is the continued deployment of our peacekeepers and the capacity of other countries to participate in these types of operations. There is always value in reviewing our ongoing peacekeeping commitments.

In light of the conditions I have just outlined, the House knows that our future peacekeeping presence in the former Yugoslavia is up for renewal at the end of this month. As members will recall, last February the government held a debate on the same question. Today we are continuing this tradition. We

are looking for advice, suggestions and comments from members on both sides of the House before a final decision is reached by cabinet.

[*Translation*]

Canada has played a key role in the Balkans over the past three years. We joined the European Community monitoring mission in 1991, and committed forces to the UN protection force in the former Yugoslavia in 1992.

We are continuing the humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo in cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for refugees.

We have contributed funding to the investigation of violations of international humanitarian law and to the international tribunal for war crimes. We have some 45 RCMP officers in Bosnia to help in policing operations. Canadian Naval Forces are part of NATO's Adriatic Command. We have participated in CSCE investigative and monitoring missions, and we are about to support the monitoring of the border between the federal republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia.

[*English*]

I believe we have a moral obligation to continue to help. In the field of humanitarian assistance, the Sarajevo air bridge has proven indispensable and its work will continue.

Today I am pleased to announce in addition to what we have pledged already, an additional contribution of $1 million to the International Red Cross and $7 million to be divided among four United Nations agencies: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the World Food Program; UNICEF; and the World Health Organization.

I also want to announce the extension of projects with Care Canada for the installation of water purification units in Sarajevo, and with Queen's University for developing a network of rehabilitation centres for the wounded and the handicapped. All of this is in Sarajevo. Canada will also contribute $500,000 to the special United Nations fund for the restoration of essential services in Sarajevo.

• (1555)

Having said that, I want the House to understand it is increasingly difficult to sustain all of these efforts. This is especially so at a time when the conflict still rages, when the parties are far from a peaceful settlement and when the prospect of lifting the arms embargo may compromise the UN's mandate and endanger all peacekeeping forces in the region.

I am happy to report that the contact group is making a significant contribution to the negotiating process, although the prospect for a settlement remains far from certain.

Canada fully expects to play a role in the diplomatic process commensurate with the size and importance of our peacekeeping contribution. We will obviously be very happy to know the views of all members of this House in regard to our involvement in the former Yugoslavia.

[*Translation*]

I believe it is possible to sustain our role in the UN protection force, at least in the short run. We need to give negotiations a chance to work. We need to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance while political pressure takes effect.

What may prove to be necessary are adjustments in the size or disposition of Canada's contribution at a time when there are other real demands on our peacekeeping forces. Whatever changes we may need to make in the months ahead, the first priority of Canadian policy must be the conclusion of a peace agreement among the parties.

Canada is also playing a key role in the efforts of the UN and the OAS to help in the restoration of democratic government in Haiti.

I think the House will share my relief at the last minute agreement reached between the American negotiators led by former president Carter and members of the de facto military regime. We look forward to an early return of Jean–Bertrand Aristide to his rightful place as democratically–elected president of Haiti.

[*English*]

I understand that meetings are taking place today in Washington between Secretary Perry and President Aristide. There is a full briefing on the activities of the multinational force in Haiti, how it has been deployed, what the mandate is of this force and how it intends to facilitate the speedy and safe return of President Aristide in his country.

I have a quote by President Aristide after his briefing. He compliments President Clinton for what has taken place, saying it was as a result of his leadership. There is no doubt that the operation to unsettle the military junta was and still is a difficult task. Many people have spoken out on it but it took decisive action by the United States of America to fulfil what was considered to be the first phase of an important process in bringing back democracy in Haiti.

Some countries were ready to intervene in the first phase; some were not ready to intervene in any phase. Canada has indicated clearly from the very beginning that we would not participate in the first phase in order to be able to play a greater and more substantive role in the long run. We will participate in the second phase and work side by side with President Aristide to rebuild his country and help its population.

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

Canada will, of course, play a prominent role in re–building democracy in that troubled country, when the time is right. We feel confident that, in a few weeks, we will be able to deploy the contingents we promised. One of their tasks will be to train Haiti's civilian police. Canadian troops would also be part of a UN peacekeeping mission to restore stability so that President Aristide can govern his country without interference from a military junta who did not, does not and will never believe in democracy.

There is much work to be done over a period of time and we are very confident that we can do it in a reasonable amount of time in accordance with the wishes and goals of President Aristide himself.

I must say that we have no doubt that the Americans heading the multinational force in Haiti share our opinion that President Aristide must be reinstated. Never, in all the discussions I have had with American officials, have I doubted a single moment that they were as committed as we are to ensuring that democracy be restored in Haiti and that President Aristide be allowed to complete his mandate as president of his country with the full powers vested in him.

I wanted to clarify this point because my friend the Leader of the Opposition led me to believe, by certain comments and questions, that he assumed the Americans would not stand by President Aristide and would let him down. I can tell him that, as far as I am concerned, his doubts concerning the Americans are unfounded. The Clinton administration must not be imputed motives that it does not have in my view. Each within our own area of responsibility, we must believe in and support this process leading to the return of President Aristide in his country, with him being able to exercise full powers.

Allow me in closing to briefly recall the actions Canada has taken concerning Rwanda. I mentioned earlier the key role played by General Dallaire. I would like to say that, through his contribution and in many other ways, Canada has played a prominent role in restoring some peace to that country. Last May Canada called for a special session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

• (1605)

Canada was also the first country to make funds available to send observers to assess the human rights situation. When the crisis escalated, Canada stood out among UN action supporters by providing substantial financial assistance to the UN mission in Rwanda, in support of General Dallaire as it were.

For a long time, we were the only country to provide air transport to the capital, Kigali, taking in food and medicine and bringing out the wounded or those in danger of dying. I say without hesitation that the Canadian effort to reinforce this UN mission helped to save thousands of lives, including that of the current Prime Minister.

We were also among the first to lend tangible support to the second element of our strategy, encouraging refugees to return to Rwanda, which we think is very important at this time. We sent a 200–person medical unit to Rwanda and we were the first to send experts to see what could be done to restore the infrastructure of the country, its water supply, electricity and telephone services.

But we must realize that this awful crisis is primarily and ultimately political. It is clear that any final agreement must have the support of all parties. That is why Canada will continue to increase its efforts in the UN mission in Rwanda and at other levels, to help stabilize the situation and prepare the ground for a peaceful settlement.

The Canadian Armed Forces may eventually be deployed in as many as ten UN operations, but even with this type of global involvement, Canada will also have the flexibility to respond rapidly in the event of humanitarian tragedies or if the conclusion of peace treaties results in a need for monitoring activities. I say these things because, again, we must consider the choices to be made. We want to make these choices after consulting Parliament, as we promised at the beginning of our mandate, after consulting the elected representatives in this Parliament who can help us forge a foreign policy that fully meets the objectives of the Canadian people and that is fully in keeping with Canada's tradition and interests.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, first I want to thank the government and the minister for providing us with an opportunity to discuss these very important issues today. I certainly agree with the minister that Canadians are very proud of their peacekeeping missions. In fact, if there is one initiative which gets the full support of the public in Canada, it is this collective commitment to peacekeeping missions.

It should also be pointed out that these peacekeeping missions were not an afterthought in the evolution of the Canadian society. They were, from the very beginning, an integral part of our diplomatic efforts as a sovereign state. They were an extension of co–operation efforts which soon led to interventions. Following the very appropriate comments made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I can only endorse the compliments made to the late Lester B. Pearson, who is among those responsible for building Canadian diplomacy, and for the prestige that this country now enjoys.

However, it must be said that while these missions proved very beneficial, albeit not easy, and were perceived as being effective in the first few years, they are now faced with new problems.

• (1610)

These problems are both enormous and very acute, and they could undermine the credibility of Canadian commitments to peacekeeping missions. This justified the setting up, by the House of Commons, of committees which are developing new policies in that sector and are trying to redefine commitments in a way that is more relevant to the current reality.

These problems are not necessarily all new ones but they have intensified and they are enormous. Take the cost issue. Canada is not as rich as it was in the fifties. In those days, the costs involved were probably not a major factor in determining whether or not to participate in a mission. I believe that Mr. Pearson was a happy political leader who did not have to worry too much about this aspect. Indeed, at the time, costs were not very high and, moreover, the Canadian government's debt was almost non existent and its financial stability was such that the public rarely opposed the allocation of monies to that purpose.

However, those costs have increased. Obviously, we need increasingly sophisticated equipment. Some belligerents use very modern equipment; consequently, we sometimes have to face them with inadequate material. And increasingly, we must deploy substantial contingents, so that cost becomes a very pressing issue. Even more so, now that every debate in this House and most of the concerns of the ministers and the Prime Minister focus on the crisis in our public finances, so that taxpayers, who are already taxed to the hilt as a result of our national debt, are starting to ask questions. They are starting to wonder how extensive this kind of international commitment should become.

There is another factor, and I am referring to the complex problems that create situations where intervention is necessary. Mostly, we are looking at conflicts arising from religious or ethnic differences or even worse, they may be connected with the imperialistic designs of those who want to expand their territory and engage in ethnic cleansing, and, of course, conflicts whose causes are rooted in the history of these peoples.

It is very difficult for us to go into these countries, as North Americans who may not have a European's sensitivity to this type of problem. It is very difficult to go in and quickly find a solution, a way to cut through the inextricable tangle of problems that are rooted so deeply in a country's history. I may recall what is happening now in Bosnia. The presence of different ethnic groups within the same territory, in a crazy patchwork of different communities is all due to the impact of historic events and a very complex sequence of developments that is practically impossible to reverse today.

There are also some new questions and principles being formulated, in a debate that would have been unthinkable before. People are now asking: Is it legitimate to violate the sovereignty of foreign peoples? There used to be fundamental principles that were never challenged, at least not until now. A country's sovereignty was inviolable, period. No one would dream of challenging this principle, and those who did were condemned by the entire community.

Anyone who dared to break treaties, invade territory and undue challenge the sovereignty of foreign countries was ostracized by the rest of the world, while today, in democratic societies like ours, at international venues as distinguished as the UN and UNESCO, and elsewhere, we hear sensible people who respect the rights of others asking whether we should not intervene in such and such a country, irrespective of that country's sovereign rights, to impose peace and to neutralize situations that are a threat to human rights.

So we have these new fundamental questions and a new debate. There is a new culture, and there is a new kind of action that countries are being requested to take. And I am afraid that people are starting to wonder more and more about the effectiveness of these interventions. This is of course due to the fact that interventions are taking place in increasingly difficult situations, with fewer chances of being successful, but there is also the issue of modern technology.

• (1615)

Let us take Rwanda for example. I entirely agree with what the minister just said about the outstanding Canadian contribution in that part of the world, starting with Major–General Roméo Dallaire, whom we had the pleasure of welcoming today.

We know that there were outstanding acts of personal bravery, that all the troops we have dispatched did their utmost and that Canada made as much resources available as it could under extremely difficult circumstances. Yet, we realize this is but a drop in the ocean in the context of this conflict and that our efforts, however laudable, had little effect on the magnitude of the horrible massacres that have taken place over there.

Our limited capacity for intervention in any conflict or situation of this sort is reflected most clearly by television, as we can witness these horrible scenes broadcasted live night after night. We will never be able to make everything right. There will always be massacres. There will always be parts of operations that will prove impossible to carry out. Mistakes will be made and be caught on camera. Television crews in the field will faithfully report them for us to see in our living rooms.

People can see for themselves, in their daily life, from their own homes, how difficult any action is and how little we were able to accomplish. That is why they have questions, and some pretty relevant ones at that.

I imagine we will soon take stock of the operations in Bosnia and determine how useful our action was over there. We know about what went wrong in Somalia. As for Rwanda, I think we all saw what happened in terms of the consequences and the acts of cruelty.

There are also aspects of a more political nature that we need to look at. Take the events in Iraq for example. We went over there to free Koweit which had been the victim of an intolerable act of aggression. I remember the rationale for intervention, a legitimate one at that, was to restore democracy. At the time, the government of Kuwait had promised to put in place a more democratic regime. We know full well that these promises were not kept and the bottom line is that the billions of dollars invested by many countries to free Kuwait and put Iraq in its place had very little impact in terms of promoting democracy either in Iraq or in Koweit.

Some may wonder if the intervention was not motivated by more pragmatic considerations. The cause for such a rapid, concerted and efficient action was the petroleum found under the desert sand, was it not? Canadians are asking themselves a lot of questions. I think we must be careful because if we do not answer these questions adequately, we will hurt the credibility of peacekeeping missions. On the day when Canadians no longer support the government's efforts in this area, we will lose that ability.

Again, I am happy to have the possibility in this House to address this issue. It is very important to ask ourselves questions and try to see where we are going. What path should we take? There are no easy answers. We could perhaps take one case—Haiti's case—and see if there are lessons to be learned regarding the approaches and criteria we could adopt in the future. So what is happening in Haiti?

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the minister that I never questioned the Americans' motives, but I did question his. Of course, everyone knows that the Americans are really eager to restore peace and democracy in Haiti and that they are the only ones making a real sacrifice. Despite the minister's heavy rhetoric, despite his lyrical statements, he did nothing. He simply watched the Americans, as we all did. I certainly am not blaming the Americans for anything in this matter, on the contrary. It is the minister I blame for his powerlessness and his sugary speeches. He tells us: "I met with President Aristide, I called him, I talked with him, I like him, he likes me and we will protect him." Yet, President Aristide is still in Washington and it is not the minister who will arrange his return to Haiti. So please, let us not engage in petty politics. Do not attribute to myself, my party and the Official Opposition the slightest intention of undermining the honesty and selflessness of American motives.

• (1620)

That said, it is not because we agree with the approach, because we are satisfied with the first results of this approach that we cannot be concerned about what is coming. There is cause for concern; I am sure that the minister himself is concerned and that it is only through considerable self–control that he manages to hide his anxiety. Because the minister knows full well that Mr. Aristide is now in Washington, that he denounced the agreement that was reached, that American soldiers are now in Haiti, powerless, their hands tied by an agreement they signed with a presidential impostor.

I come from the legal world but I am still surprised to see that this approach, this American operation in Haiti was based above all on the need to restore the legitimate president, the first president to be democratically elected in Haiti, that this was the real approach, the real objective, the basic justification. So I am surprised. The minister himself must have been surprised as a lawyer whose legal knowledge I had a chance to appreciate back in my university days. The minister must have been surprised as I was to see that the first page of the agreement contains only the name of the current president, the disgraced president, the puppet president appointed by the military junta despite President Aristide who was elected democratically a few years ago. So that is rather surprising. It is dangerous to recognize a usurper. The issue arises.

A practical question also arises. The Americans are now there. President Cédras is the one who really controls the situation, who is the trouble maker, the man who has denied all democratic freedoms, who is ultimately responsible for the massacres that we see on television. He has not signed the agreement. He has incurred no obligation. He walks around the streets of Haiti and continues to lead the military junta. On television last night, we saw someone being killed as an American soldier watched horrified, wondering what he was doing there unable to intervene.

There is a problem, basically. The minister is surely concerned about it. I am sure that once he is back in his department with his senior officials, he will continue to express his concern and call Washington and try to use Canada's diplomatic efforts to bring about a quick settlement of the situation, because it is disturbing.

October 15 is mentioned, but it is far off. How many more people will die in the streets of Port–au–Prince? How many will be beaten by the police, by those thugs in the streets of Port–au–Prince who hit unarmed people? How much more will the people have to suffer while the Americans look on powerless? They will not stand for it either. If we Canadians do not like to see that, imagine what the Americans think. What would we say if we saw armed soldiers wearing the Canadian uniform who had gone there from all over Canada and did not say a word but

watched powerless as those whom they had gone to fight strike helpless victims? What would we say? We would not be pleased.

The Americans are not pleased either, I am sure. We must push forward. The minister must intervene, he must speak publicly and tell it like it is; he must stop giving us syrupy speeches on his feelings for President Aristide, on the telephone call he made to him yesterday and Mr. Aristide's call back to him. That is not really serious. That is not the real issue. That is not what a government is responsible for.

The Canadian government must intervene forcefully, speak up and demand that President Aristide return there, and insist that the Haitian army be dismembered and dismantled, because what is going on? The Haitian army is still there, in control. But it has no more structure, no more effectiveness, no more operational integrity. How can President Aristide return under such conditions?

How can we imagine that President Aristide will return to Haiti in a few weeks and that the army, his enemy which fought him and kills and tortures people, will now work hand in hand with him and take his orders, and that General Cédras will go to salute President Aristide every day in his office?

• (1625)

No one can think that. What will happen? Are necessary measures being taken to control the Haitian army? As far as we know, this is not the case. We do not know anything. All we know is that poor President Aristide, who denounced the accord a few days ago, today congratulated President Clinton, even though nothing had changed.

In conclusion, the government has the support of the official opposition to find a solution to this issue. We will not play politics with that issue. There are no votes to be won or lost. We are well aware that this is a matter of honour, a matter of respect for mankind, a matter of democracy. In fact, it is a matter of preserving the credibility of our peacekeeping missions and our role in this type of situation.

We have to intervene and we have to be credible. We have to act in an efficient and pragmatic way, taking our means into account, and our role must be redefined. How do we do that?

The first lesson to be learned from the Haiti operation is that we cannot intervene elsewhere if such a measure is not based on democratic legitimacy. We must not look to General Cedras but to President Aristide. We must not look to the impostor but to the real president. In our reviews, as well as in the criteria to be defined, we should include a requirement to justify any intervention on a democratic legitimacy in those countries. Secondly, and more importantly, we must not compromise with the enemies of democracy. In the case of Haiti, one cannot help but wonder if we made a move to protect the Haitian army rather than the population. Indeed, the Haitian army and police continue to commit abuse.

Thirdly, I think that these interventions should be rigorously planned in a concerted fashion. What does that mean? It means that we should first clearly define the objectives and the tasking orders. What happened in the case of Haiti is that a response force showed up and, at the last minute, in extremely difficult conditions, I agree, an agreement was hurriedly negotiated. However, these people had no framework. No clear objective had been defined at the outset. A compromise was negotiated in the heat of the action, and that can sometime lead to an arrangement that does not take all the relevant factors into account. Unfortunately, this seems to be the case here.

I also said that these interventions should be planned in a concerted fashion. Indeed, even though resolution 940 was passed by the UN, the fact remains that there is only a national force over there, namely the Americans; this is certainly not what you would call a multinational intervention. I heard the Minister use the word "multilateral" several times in his remarks. This does not change the fact that the troops which are there are strictly American. Some will say that this is because the others were not brave enough to go. That may be so, but it is still the case that it is a national force.

What we must hope for the future—and it cannot be done right now, of course—is that the forces there will be more diversified and put under UN command. This is easier said than done. The UN must have the means to do it; we must redefine "peacekeeping"; we must find a new framework for UN missions. This is something we can do. It is better than the minister's speeches; it is a job for Canadians; it is a job for our diplomats.

We should be in New York right now, putting forward proposals to revamp UN mechanisms defining peacekeepers' mandates and mission objectives. This is a job for the minister, a job for his colleagues. Instead of crying on President Aristide's shoulder, let him do something constructive! Let them go to New York! Let them come up with a plan, present it and advise our friends to broaden the forces and to place them under the auspices of the UN, whose main role it is anyway. As long as we are relying on national policing forces—

Mr. Ouellet: It has been done already.

Mr. Bouchard: Did you present a proposal?

Mr. Ouellet: Yes, we did.

Mr. Bouchard: Well then, what are we doing to do now? What is the existing commission doing right now? We need much more than pious hope, we need proposals on how to share the financial burden. Countries should tax themselves, Canada should be a leader in that respect. If we do not take the lead in that matter, let us do it with others. It must be done.

As long as we depend on one national force, we will have complicated situations like the one we have now.

[*English*]

I would like to say a few words about that. Of course we fully support the maintenance of Canada's commitment in terms of peace missions. A basic creed of Canada is to be present all over the place when it is appropriate to do so. At the same time we have to improve the way it is done, not only by us but the rest of the world. We have to make sure that the credibility of our interventions is maintained. If we do not do anything now we will undermine the support this and other governments have been given by the public in terms of tax money and different interventions.

• (1630)

It should be one of the fundamental tasks of the committees now working to define and shape new objectives and missions and to make sure that many countries will share the burden if it cannot be achieved through United Nations activities. We have to be very active at the UN and a strong supporter. We have to stop making empty speeches. We have to make sure the next mission will not be conducted by national forces like the Americans, but that many countries will work together efficiently in harmony so as to achieve clearly defined objectives.

I do not accept the accusation from the minister that we suspect the motives of the American administration. We agree they were courageous. They were the only ones to do it. They had the means to do it and they did it. They had the guts to do it and now they are there. It was possible for them to land on Haiti without any bloodshed. The problem is that now we have to go further because blood is being shed in Haiti every day, the poor people victims, and still the same people are hitting and killing them, those against whom the Americans decided to intervene.

That is why I strongly urge the minister to work closely with the Americans to make sure the commitment toward President Aristide will be fully respected.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Fraser Valley West—Immigration.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for having the opportunity to talk on this most important subject. This certainly is an example to Canadians when Parliament is allowed to speak on a subject of such national interest. I go along with the other speakers in terms of our reputation and the pride we have as Canadians in our peacekeepers.

Since the first peacekeeping mission in 1956 tens of thousands of Canadians have been involved in these missions. Some of them have made the ultimate sacrifice with their lives. We want to thank those people for what they have done; it is certainly appreciated. The millions of people around the world they have helped certainly know what we as Canadians have done. On behalf of the Reform Party and Canadians in general I would like to pay tribute to those people and say: Job well done.

As the House is aware since early this year the special joint committee reviewing Canadian foreign affairs, of which I am a member, has been travelling across the country to find out from Canadians what they think about foreign affairs and our international commitments for the coming decades. It has become very clear to me and to many members on the committee just how deeply concerned Canadians are with events around the world.

We want to stand up and be part of the missions that occur. We do not want to bury our heads in the sand and not take part in all of those things that affect our world.

• (1635)

Canadians are not prepared to give up on their proud tradition of caring and intervention for the sake of peace. These times however cannot be seen from a purely international perspective. Our foreign commitments must be in harmony with our domestic needs. Therefore we must be sure when we do support peacekeeping that we are operating in Canada's best interests and within the very real financial constraints that must be the primary concern of any good government. We must pick our spots and we must choose wisely.

Today's debate is an example of trying to choose those spots and pick the ones that are of most interest. One thing we must make clear is that Canada cannot become the 911 phone number for the world. As much as we want to help others, this desire is tempered by the fact that we cannot be all things to all people. It is better that we help effectively in a few cases rather than spreading ourselves too thin. In this way Canada can protect its own vital interests and provide the most effective help for the international community.

As we examine the issue of peacekeeping it is worthy to note that since the end of the cold war the demand for peacekeepers around the world has skyrocketed. If the past few years has taught us any lesson it is that instability will continue. New hot spots will continue to crop up and Canada must be ready. If more requests come from Africa, southeast Asia or the former Soviet republics how will Canada respond?

Clearly, Canada must establish criteria to test the importance of each request for our help. While this is a sensitive issue and I do not claim to have all the answers, I would argue that the following should be considered by Parliament when deciding whether to approve peacekeeping missions.

First, Canada's economic ties are an extremely important factor when we determine how willing Canadians would be to commit our resources.

Second, the conflict's impact on the state of international stability is another obvious test of whether Canada should get involved. If the conflict has a serious potential to escalate or destabilize the whole region, we should consider this seriously when making our decision.

Third, geographic ties are important. For reasons of regional stability, the world would be a better place if countries co–operated to make sure that their own part of the world remains stable. Where peace does break down, regional organizations should co–operate to make things right. After all it will be the member nations of such regional groups that have the greatest interest in restoring stability. For logistical reasons as well, proximity is an important factor in determining whether a country can respond to a crisis in a timely and effective manner.

Fourth, humanitarian considerations must also be taken into account. While Canadians want bang for their buck, they also want Canada to maintain its tradition for compassion. While I could say more on this item, one of my colleagues will talk on that subject later on this evening.

Fifth, our prior commitments must be given more weight than is the current practice when determining what else we are going to do. We only have so many troops and a limited amount of high quality equipment. Therefore we owe it to our troops to be fair in our decisions where we send them and to make sure that we do not overcommit our forces. My fellow Reformer, the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, will talk on that issue.

Another very important consideration which must be taken into account is that our judgment should not be clouded by the media spin in each crisis, the so–called CNN factor. There are many conflicts in this world which could use the assistance of Canadian peacekeepers however the media does not treat them equally.

The usual process involves one crisis headline becoming really big and bouncing everything else from the front pages. The media raises a hue and cry to be heard throughout the world: Why is the world not helping to do more? Then two weeks or a month later the media drops that story and picks up on something new. That is just the way it works and we have to be conscious of that. Just because the media likes this approach does not mean their priorities are always correct; nor do they always reflect Canadian interests.

• (1640)

To the extent that Canadians do care about what they see in the media, we have to acknowledge the media will always be a factor. However, we must not let the headline du jour drive us into unwise or hasty action. Whether it is a sexy headline or not Parliament should do the right thing, period.

Now that I have outlined some of the basic criteria on which we should be judging our participation in peacekeeping, I would like to move on to two specific cases which we are discussing today, Rwanda and Haiti.

According to the six criteria which I have listed, I do not believe that Rwanda was a fully appropriate peacekeeping initiative for Canada.

First, Rwanda and Canada have virtually no trade ties. Therefore we certainly could not argue that our economic interests were at stake. Other central African countries are Rwanda's main trading partners and they are the ones who are having their trade disrupted.

While the massacres in Rwanda have had an impact on the neighbouring countries, especially in terms of creating large flows of refugees, I do not believe the crisis there represents a threat to regional or world stability.

In terms of my third criteria, geographic ties, Canada is neither close to Rwanda nor do we have a tradition of dealing with that country or its people. Therefore there was a long delay before the majority of our peacekeepers could even get there.

In the future Canada should encourage regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity to build up their capacity to respond when a local crisis arises. Beyond this Europe has many more ties to central Africa than we do. This tradition makes it more natural for them to adopt a leadership role there just as France did.

When taking humanitarian considerations into account, clearly Rwanda is a case which required the world's attention and help. While Canadians will always help in such circumstances, do we always have to send in the troops to show we care? I do not think so.

Many thousands of Canadians spoke with their wallets and donated money to Canadian and international NGOs that were helping with humanitarian relief. This was an appropriate reaction. We would like to do more, but quite frankly others were better placed to provide the peacekeeping in Rwanda.

One of the main reasons that our reaction to the Rwandan disaster was so limited relates to my fifth criteria: our prior peacekeeping commitments. No other country has given more in the cause of peacekeeping or has been on more missions, but our forces are stretched to the limit. It simply is not fair to keep asking our soldiers to go on so many endless peacekeeping missions. They are the Canadian forces, not the Canadian foreign legion. If we scale back or shut down other missions, then perhaps we will have some reserve forces to be deployed upon need, but right now we do not.

According to the last factor, the CNN factor, it is beyond doubt that the extensive media treatment of the Rwandan disaster initiated the response from this and many other governments. Let us not forget that about two years before in neighbouring Burundi many thousands were slaughtered for the third

or fourth time since the 1970s but there was no media reaction, no hue and cry, and no peacekeepers.

In the future, Parliament must do a better job in assessing the seriousness of a crisis. An international crisis is more than the sum of the media coverage it receives.

Before I move on from the topic of Rwanda, I will talk about my experience with Rwanda. In 1971 I read an article in *National Geographic* about the mountain gorillas and the country of Rwanda. I decided I had to go there and 15 years later I managed to complete that dream.

My wife and I experienced a country with beautiful green covered hills and mountains and fertile volcanic soil. There were friendly people who were smiling and happy. I will always remember the markets we visited with the children playing and the people doing their weekly shopping. How can a country change so dramatically? We were aware of the two tribes but not of the hatred. What happened? NGOs and missionaries warned of impending problems but nobody listened. Nobody took the leadership to try to prevent the carnage which was to follow.

• (1645)

If we wanted to get involved in Rwanda it should have been then, when our diplomatic negotiations and leadership could have been more effective. Instead the international community failed to act proactively and went to its old standby: when the damage was already done they called in the peacekeepers, Canadians included.

We must learn from this experience. Proactive measures through diplomatic channels or through international organizations are not only more effective and cheaper than expensive peacekeeping missions but they can save a lot of lives.

Let me go on to Haiti. Once again we have a situation which is seemingly thrust on us, a crisis that requires our immediate attention. However, on closer inspection a very different picture appears.

First, we have virtually no economic interests in Haiti. Neither is international stability threatened. In terms of geographic ties Haiti is certainly in our hemisphere, therefore we should have an active interest. But if we are going to get involved it should be under the auspices of the Organization of American States, not as part of the U.S. led adventure that may be opening a Pandora's box into which peacekeeping nations may enter, never to withdraw.

If Canada is going to Haiti, let us make sure that we know what we are getting into. How much will it cost? When do we get to leave? What are we trying to accomplish? Is Cedras a diabolical murderer yesterday and our partner for the reform of Haiti today? Not in my books he is not. I would gladly kick his butt but I would not shake his hand.

Clearly things are not going as the Americans first planned. Haitians are still being beaten and killed by thugs. Aristide is clearly unhappy. Haitians in Canada are unhappy. The American soldiers are unhappy. In fact the only ones with smiles on their faces are the coup leaders. If this is not a clear warning sign I do not know what is.

On the humanitarian side, there is no doubt that Canada can be of assistance to the poorest and most desperate people of Haiti. Once again, I argue that it is our NGOs that are best equipped to do this; not our soldiers who are already stretched to the maximum when it comes to peacekeeping around the world.

The Haiti crisis is a hot item today in the media. It may be hot tomorrow. However let us not forget that Jean–Bertrand Aristide was thrown out in 1991. This is not a new issue. Haiti's problems were not even new in 1915 when the Americans invaded the last time. Back then they stayed for a generation. Let us make sure that this time next year we are not watching the American troops pull out only to leave our Canadian servicemen and women there for the next generation.

Canada can be an effective world player and peacemaker. Canadians are proud of this and we do not have to prove it to anyone. If we decide not to go to Haiti the world will not hold it against us.

Let us do Canadians a favour and give the Canadian forces a break for once. We will keep our troops at home and instead take a leadership role in the OAS. If we build the strength and credibility of this and other regional organizations then maybe we can really solve the problems of countries like Haiti.

It is in this precise role that Canada excels. While other countries may be known for their strength or guile, Canada has worked long and hard to develop its image as an honest broker and leading middle power. We are a member of all of the strongest clubs, NATO, G–7, UN, OAS, et cetera, and yet we do not have the historical baggage of the world's great military powers. Therefore others look to us and trust in our ability to build up international institutions like the UN and the OAS. Canada will do a great favour for the world if we take this role to heart and help to bring about constructive change.

On a visit to Washington last week I asked the OAS and State Department the same question: Do you feel Canada has played a

strong leadership role in trying to solve the Haiti problems diplomatically? I got a negative response from both. Instead I was told that Canada is very timid and suffers from an inferiority complex when it comes to dealing with foreigners.

• (1650)

We can play a strong middle power role and become a world leader in brokering peaceful solutions to international crises. However first we need government leadership to show the way, to demonstrate a commitment to diplomacy and playing a more active role. We have the education, the foreign staff and most of all a reputation as a reasonable, democratic society that can be trusted.

What we have been lacking is the political will to succeed. Such change would not only be good for the international community but would be good for Canadians, since affected international organizations could go a long way in preventing any future problems. Without a crisis there is no need to spend more money or risk the lives of members of the armed forces.

In conclusion, we should not enter Haiti or any other area until we establish, first, the criteria; second, the cost; third, a plan including the logistics, our specific job, how and when we will get out. We must be sure that Canadians support our actions and that we always debate this issue in the House of Commons.

The time has come for us to take a step back. Before we send our troops on yet another indefinite mission with uncertain dangers and an unknown cost, let us establish a credible set of criteria on which we can depend to make sure that we pick our spots wisely. Canada can make a difference in this world. Canada can still be an innovator and a leader in the area of peacekeeping but we have to make a choice. Any foolish government can say: "Yes, we will help", and it will think it is doing the best thing. It takes a strong government to say: "Meet me half way and then I will help; otherwise you are on your own".

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, I understood there was a brief question and comment period. If so, I have a question for the hon. member.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform you that Liberal members from here on will be using the 10–minute and 5–minute provision; in other words, sharing the time as opposed to the usual format.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): There are no questions and comments for the first three speakers.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I seek clarification with respect to the rules. My understanding was that there were no questions and comments following the initial speaker and then the speaker immediately following the minister. Certainly my understanding is that the rules do provide for a period of questions or comments after that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): On your copy of the Projected Order of Business for today you will read:

> Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Minister moving the motion and Member replying immediately after the motion—unlimited time.
>
> All other Members—20 minute maximum and speeches are subject to a 10 minute question and comment period.

I would also refer you to Standing Order 43(1):

> Unless otherwise provided in these Standing Orders, when the Speaker is in the Chair, no Member, except the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, or a Minister moving a government order and the Member speaking in reply immediately after such Minister, shall speak for more than twenty minutes—

• (1655)

In this case orders of the day read that the first two speakers have unlimited time. As a member responding for the Reform Party he had unlimited time with no questions and no comments.

Because the wording reads "only a member replying immediately after the minister", we will allow the usual question and comment period for the member for Red Deer.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I am not sure my question is that desperately important. However I do appreciate the opportunity put a question and make a comment with respect to the comments of the member for Red Deer as the official spokesperson for the Reform Party.

Certainly I share the deep concern that has been raised, particularly by the Leader of the Opposition with respect to this issue. In fact earlier during question period I spoke myself—

[*Translation*]

I pointed out that Sunday night's agreement between an illegitimate president, a straw man, Mr. Jonassaint, and Mr. Carter, an agreement made without consulting President Aristide or the United Nations, was in fact a tragic betrayal of the Haitian people.

[*English*]

I pointed out as well that President Carter just last week referred to General Cedras and his armed thugs as conducting a reign of terror, executing children, raping women, killing priests. As the dictators have grown more desperate the atrocities have grown ever more brutal.

Certainly many of us are deeply disturbed and angered by this deal which in effect refers to the great honour and integrity of these same people. There is talk of mutual respect. There is talk of a general amnesty, of honourable retirement and appealing to their sense of honour.

I want to ask the member for Red Deer for clarification. As I understand it, the position of his leader, the member for Calgary Southwest, was that Canada should be joining in the military invasion with the United States. In fact the member for Calgary Southwest said, and I quote that member from yesterday: "We can only play this game so long. We do not get our hands dirty at the front end. But we come in after". He suggested we should be going in with the Americans.

I have listened with care to the comments of the member for Red Deer who suggested that we should not be going in at all and

that the OAS was the body that should have accepted responsibility here.

I would like the member for Red Deer to clarify the position of the Reform Party. Who speaks for the Reform Party? Is it the leader of the Reform Party or is it the member for Red Deer?

Finally, I wonder if the member could clarify as well his position with respect to the issue of prevention. Certainly in the context of Rwanda, many of us believe that had the world acted earlier to prevent the genocide that much of the subsequent tragedy could have been averted.

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I really welcome the opportunity to answer that question. I would have thought that a member of such senior rank would know not to believe everything he reads in the press.

• (1700)

To clarify, it is great that I have that opportunity. What my leader did say in response to the reporter's question was that Canada should have played a role in leadership in the OAS and in the United Nations and that if we were to be involved and entered the country we should be entering with an OAS force, not a U.S. force.

That makes a major difference because going in with the OAS and the United Nations is the big problem that we have. I welcome the opportunity to clarify that and to make very clear that the leader and I are speaking from exactly the same song book.

Regarding the preventive measures, I hope I have made that clear as well. In 1985 when I spent a month visiting Rwanda, the country was not in turmoil. Shortly after that and with the underlying problems, there were many NGOs and many government people warning that there was an impending problem.

It was at that point that we had to get in there and negotiate a settlement between those two tribes. When it comes to prevention, that is how one prevents those kinds of things, not waiting until they start killing each other because emotions take over as they did in Yugoslavia and as they do anywhere in the world when one has a problem like that.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I would note that until 1992 the previous government was providing substantial government to government aid to the brutal regime in Rwanda. We allowed into Quebec City as a visiting professor one of the people who had been most vigorous in his incitement of genocide when he was living in Rwanda.

Mr. Flis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We do need clarification. My interpretation of the standing orders is that when we divide a 20–minute period into 10 and 10, it is 10 minutes plus 5 minutes for comments and questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry. We have not yet started to divide our time. We will be dividing it after the defence minister's speech. Questions and comment for 10 minutes for the hon. member for Red Deer.

Mr. Robinson: Nice try, Jesse. Madam Speaker, the member for Red Deer in his comments did not make any reference to the situation of Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia. Obviously this is one of the important elements that the House is addressing.

I personally had the opportunity to visit our troops in Gradacac in Croatia. Certainly the men and women there were doing a very fine job under very difficult circumstances.

Could the hon. member for Red Deer clarify what his position and the position of the Reform Party is with respect to the role of Canadian peacekeepers in Bosnia and in Croatia? The hon. member is doubtless aware of the recent concerns.

Just today there was a report that some 750,000 Muslims and Croats have fled from Serbian held areas of northern and eastern Bosnia over the past two and a half years. According to the representative of the United Nations, hundreds of thousands of them are victims of ethnic cleansing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but the hon. member for Red Deer has 30 seconds left in his questions and comments. Would you like him to respond to your question?

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, I await with great interest the response to the question.

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, some of the money that is being sent out there is a major concern. We have to tidy up the whole CIDA program, that whole area. In answer to the very first question, that would be my answer. Yes, we have to improve on that.

Second, in terms of Bosnia and Yugoslavia, the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt will be speaking on the subject of divided countries. The hon. member will hear the answer. He will have to wait.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I would like to remind hon. members that the government has decided to divide its time with 10 minutes each. There will be 5 minutes for questions and comments after each speaker.

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, I will take 10 minutes. I will be succinct.

• (1705)

I had some comments planned but I am absolutely shocked at what I have been hearing this afternoon, the cynicism of the member for Red Deer who just spoke on behalf of the Reform Party dealing with our engagement in Rwanda and Haiti. I understand my colleague, the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, will deal with that in her speech following me.

However I am even more shocked at the belligerent tone of the Leader of the Opposition both in question period and this afternoon in what had been until now really rational and well ordered debate. His belligerent criticism of what happened on the weekend, the agreement that former President Jimmy Carter ironed out in Port au Prince, is beyond belief. His shooting from the hip is incredible. If he conducts the affairs of his party that way then I do not know what the rest of this parliamentary session is going to be in for.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition should have reflected and been a bit more statesmanlike. He perhaps would have found that the deal that was made on the weekend had to be explained to all the parties and indeed has been explained. Shortly after three o'clock this afternoon, President Aristide issued a statement in Washington. I quote: "In the past three days something has happened in Haiti to uphold democracy which was the result of President Clinton's decision for the commitment to lead a multinational effort in carrying out the will of the United Nations to help restore democracy in Haiti".

He has thanked the United States for its military intervention to restore him to power. He said he will be back within 24 days. He also said that to help foster the environment of civil liberties and political stability he has asked his minister of defence, General Jean Beliotte, to head a transition team and recommend the next steps to be taken in order to ensure the quick restoration of constitutional order.

To listen to the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon one would have thought that he did not want President Carter to avert the disaster that would have occurred with a military invasion. I think the statement that President Aristide has just issued should calm everyone and help bring some rationality to the debate. President Aristide declared this afternoon that he will be back within 24 days. After he is restored to power, as we have said publicly on a number of occasions, we will take part in any effort to help reconstruct Haiti, certainly using the Canadian Armed Forces.

I will not give any details on what we will actually be doing because we will be part of an international reconnaissance team. In fact a Canadian colonel will be leading as chief of staff that team in the days immediately following President Aristide's return and stability being established there to determine what requirements will be necessary of a UN peacekeeping engagement. Canada will be happy to take part in helping with the reconstruction of Haiti wearing blue berets.

I want to talk for a few minutes, since we have not got much time and have divided our time on this side, about the changing nature of peacekeeping in the world. We are seeing that the peacekeeping that was enunciated by former Prime Minister Pearson and the peacekeeping tradition that was established in the post Second World War era has drastically changed over the last number of years. We are facing situations around the world which are vastly more complex. They require a multiplicity of responses. In some cases, as we have seen in Bosnia and Croatia, the circumstances are incredibly dangerous.

In the past five years international operations have involved three or four different types of peacekeeping arrangements: humanitarian work in Ethiopia, Somalia and Bosnia. Let us not forget that our troops have been in Bosnia as a humanitarian effort under the auspices of the United Nations to bring relief and supplies. I think our men and women have done a remarkable job in the last two years in bringing that kind of humanitarian relief to Bosnia. They are still there as we debate this issue today.

We have been involved in demining and reconstruction in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Kuwait, Iraq and Haiti. We have been involved in nation building. We have been involved in embargo enforcement such as in the Persian gulf, the Adriatic and the waters off Haiti, and we have been involved in confidence building through arms control and verification.

• (1710)

When we talk about peacekeeping we do not just talk about the strict conflict resolution and patrolling the line as we did in Cyprus for many, many years in a very civilized fashion. We use the word peacekeeping in a much wider context. For Canada to take part in the world governance through the United Nations requires a multifaceted capability on the part of our armed forces to try to discharge the missions that come forward.

One of the points I want to raise today is that there is an ongoing commitment of the armed forces. We have about 3,400 people actually deployed, not counting what we perhaps send to Haiti and which we can discuss in the next few weeks. With a whole group of people waiting to go, a whole group of people just coming back, and those who are being deployed at the moment, we are getting somewhat stretched. We have about 10,000 peacekeepers involved in this kind of rotation. One of the concerns the government has at the moment is how much of our resources should we continue to devote to these peacekeeping missions.

In particular I want to talk about the commitment concerning Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia.

[*Translation*]

I will outline our contribution to the United Nations force deployed in the former Yugoslavia, which is our main commitment at present. The mandate of the UNPROFOR expires on September 30 this year, and will likely be extended.

Canada's commitment towards the force also ends on September 30, and it has not yet been decided whether to extend it.

[*English*]

In other words, we have not made the decision in fact to let the members of the House know. We do have about 1,500 to 1,600 personnel ready to go to Croatia and Bosnia starting in the early part of October, which is only about 10 or 15 days away. These are the Royal Canadian Regiment that will be going to Croatia and the Royal Canadian Dragoons that will be going to Bosnia. They have both been training in the last little while at CFB Petawawa.

This training is worth noting as more and more, because of the engagements that we are taking on, we are having to deploy reservists. This summer I spoke at a function in St. Thomas, Ontario, one of the constituency functions of my colleague, the member for Elgin. I was really quite touched by the fact that the members of the Elgin Regiment, a reserve regiment, will be offering nine people for this next engagement as part of the Royal Canadian Regiment to go to Bosnia and Croatia.

We may well ask why is he saying that they are ready to go? What is this debate all about? We want to know before we actually send our people that the members of the House of Commons are comfortable with a continuation of this arrangement. The purpose of the debate is to get the views of the men and women in the House who have been talking with their constituents over the summer to see if we should continue this engagement, how long, should we pull back a battalion or should we cut it in half? We have 750 people in Croatia and 750 people in Bosnia. The balance is near Split as a supply unit. We want to know whether or not we should continue that operation for the next engagement. As I said earlier, the engagement ends September 30.

While no decision has been taken, the government is very cognizant of the depletion of our resources. We are cognizant of the fact that the armed forces budget is under pressure. We are trying to find other, more effective, cheaper ways of discharging our duties in terms of peacekeeping. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, this government remains totally and absolutely committed to the concept of peacekeeping, of Canada playing a role as a bridge between other nations, whether it be at the sharp end, as we see it in Bosnia and Croatia, or whether we see it in terms of reconstruction as we have seen it in Rwanda and as we may see it in Haiti. The Canadian Armed Forces has the most enviable reputation. When the Prime Minister was in Bosnia this summer the Prime Minister of Bosnia said we have outstanding troops and he wanted us to stay and be part of the effort to help bring peace to the area.

• (1715)

We had the Serbian leader, General Karadzic, who said the same when we were faced with the problem of how we would relieve our forces in Srebrenica.

We have the best armed forces in the world. They have suffered as a result of some of the deployments. We have lost 10 people in the former Yugoslavia. We have about 50 wounded but those men and women are prepared to continue to discharge any obligations that the government will seek to discharge and those obligations will be determined by consultation with members of the House of Commons and that is why we are very interested in having the views of the members today.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the minister's comments and I too travelled to the former Yugoslavia and found there that our troops indeed are doing a magnificent job under extremely difficult circumstances and we should all be very proud.

As the minister mentioned, peacekeeping is not the only issue that the Canadian Armed Forces has to deal with and because the resources are very thin and we are downsizing the Canadian Armed Forces we have to look at the possibility of internal conflicts here on our shores in Canada.

You might say that Canada never has to worry about things like that but even in my own riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt this summer we had a forest fire in that region and had to call out the Canadian troops and we had people from Calgary come in and do a job there. That was a very small contingent and just a small example.

We do not have to go back too far. We had a situation in Oka where we had great demands put on the situation there as well.

How can the minister or the ministry deal with ensuring that we keep our role in the world as a peacekeeper but also ensure that we have enough resources to ensure we have the people here to do the job as well?

Mr. Collenette: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question. I thought I did address it although I am not used to having to speak in 10–minute periods. Perhaps I did not have the time to enunciate it.

More and more we discharge our obligations whether it be peacekeeping or whether in aid to the civil power, domestic crises such as the ones we saw this year. We helped in the search for a young Saskatchewan girl. We helped with the forest fires in B.C. We helped last winter with the floods in Quebec. We are going to have to turn more and more to reservists, those men and

women who train part time, on the weekends, the unsung heroes of the Canadian military tradition.

It costs money and to continue to do this we have to reorder our priorities, reshape our budgetary priorities.

I want to assure the hon. member that we will not be so stretched that we will not be able to discharge those very emergencies of which he speaks. That is why I have raised the subject of our future continued engagement in Bosnia and Croatia. We are getting not to the breaking point but to the stretching point. If we are to continue the multiplicity of peacekeeping engagements, and they have been coming fast and furious, we are now talking about the possibilities of Haiti and we have been in Rwanda, which was unforeseen certainly when I became minister, obviously we are going to have to redirect more and more of our budget to this. This could mean that we will have to take it from other very deserving components of the military budget.

I want to assure the member that when we have disasters such as the ones of which he spoke a little earlier we will be there. We will not let the Canadian people down.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I guess what I am concerned about is that there are so many areas that are going to erupt and I do not see us developing any criteria as to what our guidelines are going to be in the future.

• (1720)

We are getting more and more letters telling us about the quality of our equipment. More and more letters are coming back home saying our equipment is not adequate. Could the hon. minister respond to that, please?

Mr. Collenette: Madam Speaker, we would not send people outside of the country to do this work if the equipment were not good. I can assure you and all Canadians the equipment is good.

However, we do have some needs to replace various components of armed forces equipment. Those questions will be addressed in the context of the defence review. I know one of the points that the hon. member made for which he should be commended is he is trying to put our peacekeeping engagements in some kind of conceptual framework in terms of the priorities.

I do not particularly agree with the conclusions that he drew with respect to Rwanda and Haiti, but the fact is the defence review and the foreign policy review will I hope help set those criteria so that we will be able to answer the hon. member and the UN when it comes knocking on our door for future commitments.

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Madam Speaker, it is frustrating to hear some of the debate going around the House and have inadequate time to respond today. I was most disturbed by the comments made by the Reform Party with regard to Rwanda and Haiti. For a party that is supposed to represent the interests of the Canadian people it is no wonder it is plunging in the polls today.

If the Reform Party had looked carefully it would understand from polls that have been done recently moral and ethical considerations are considered by Canadians the way that they would judge priorities in the world. They put Rwanda and Haiti at the top of the list. At the bottom of the list they put self–interest. I am quite appalled that the Reform Party bases its foreign policy on self–interest.

Canada's support to the United Nations and our commitment to peacekeeping remain strong. Our reputation worldwide for balanced and fair diplomacy, humanitarian and determined confidence building initiatives such as peacekeeping and our commitment to global peace and development all give Canada influence much beyond what our economy and population size would suggest is possible.

Canada must not squander the opportunities our reputation presents both for our own good and the good of the world. Canada does not earn this reputation through playing the role of the belligerent, unfortunately necessary as this role might seem to be from time to time. It is peacekeeping, the role so strongly associated with Canada, that earns us our enviable reputation and thus influence in the world.

However important peacekeeping is to Canada's foreign policy and defence policy, it is costly. We must continue in our role as peacekeepers but constantly look at less costly alternatives such as early warning systems, conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Granted, important initiatives are already being taken in this area by Canada and others around the world, thereby warding off the crises the public never hears about.

The government will continue to follow up good ideas and recommendations with diplomatic initiatives. An example of Canada's initiatives in this area of policy is our decision to send Bernard Dussault to consult in and around Rwanda not only to find appropriate and timely solutions to the crisis situation in Rwanda but also to address the political difficulties in Burundi, Zaire and the refugee problems in other countries in the region.

In the development of our strategy for Haiti Canada has been fully conscious of the need for a long term strategy to not only return democracy to Haiti through peacekeeping but to build and strengthen the institutions needed to support and sustain it in the long run.

I would wish that all members in this House had been able to accompany me to visit President Aristide in Washington last week to see the very warm reception that he gave to our Minister of Foreign Affairs and his effusive thanks for the leadership role that Canada has taken on the issue of Haiti and his return to Haiti to head a democratically elected government there which he represents.

Our role fits into a broad historic approach that Canada has taken to peacekeeping and emphasizes the contribution to be made to that category of international peace operations that the Secretary General of the United Nations has characterized as peace building.

• (1725)

Once President Jean–Bertrand Aristide is returned to power in Haiti, under the terms of Governors Island agreement and UN resolution 940, Canada will participate in the United Nations mission in Haiti, UNMIH, by providing up to 600 military and 100 police personnel. Canada will assume a particular responsibility in police training and supervision.

Altogether UNMIH will assume the task of maintaining a secure environment which will provide the necessary foundation upon which to begin efforts aimed at establishing a durable and lasting democratic system in Haiti.

These are daunting objectives that will require a long term commitment. It is important to remember that we will remain in Haiti for the long haul. Establishing the foundations of a civil society in a country whose population has been numbed by years of desperate poverty, brutal violence and repression is an enormous challenge.

We have to build from the bottom up by providing assistance with basic education and literacy training, agriculture and health care and by creating employment opportunities that will put in motion the wheels of a healthy economy. The success of these initiatives is only possible when the political environment is secure and stable.

Our aid program has and will continue to reinforce these objectives through the provision of assistance to the development of civil society and good governance, including the respect for human rights in Haiti.

Our contribution to Rwanda has also been significant, initiated well before the conflict escalated in April. Canada provided the chief military observer to the first UN mission on the Uganda–Rwanda border. We fully supported the Arusha peace agreement providing for power sharing and integration of the armed forces.

The force commander for the UN mission assigned to oversee the implementation of this agreement was our Canadian hero Major General Romeo Dallaire. Through a coherent strategy formulated by the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Canadian International Development Agency, Canada has also made a significant contribution to the peacekeeping and humanitarian relief effort in Rwanda through the provision of medical experts, engineers and the ongoing airborne delivery of essential supplies. Assistance from multilateral and non–governmental aid organizations working on the ground has been invaluable.

In taking these initiatives to establish lasting peace and stability in Rwanda Canada is clearly focused on the task. Rwanda must have an acceptable, broad based government in power. It badly needs a functioning infrastructure, basic services such as water and electricity. The thousands of displaced refugees must return to their homes as soon a possible. These are all objectives of our peacekeeping mission in Rwanda.

Given the difficult circumstances peacekeepers have played an indisputably critical role under the steady and courageous leadership of Major General Romeo Dallaire and now Major General Tousignant. Peacekeeping must be broadened by committed political activities that do more than keep the warring factions apart. We must be proactive to build the institutional pillars of a peaceful and secure society and to assist Rwandan citizens to experience their fullest human capacities.

In our debate today we have to address the important issues of our extended peacekeeping role throughout the world in light of limited resources for peacekeeping. I am attempting to convey that despite our limited capacity to continue to respond to every crisis in the world Canada can continue to have an effective voice through concerted efforts to not only prevent conflict from erupting but in maintaining our commitment to fragile states once the peacekeeping phase is over. Peace building and conflict prevention are much less costly than war and crisis responses.

I cannot finish these remarks without a particular acknowledgement of the basic component of our peacekeeping effort, our peacekeepers, our Canadian Blue Berets. Canada would not have the enviable reputation for peacekeeping it has were it not for the professionalism, skill and discipline of our peacekeepers. Canada cannot take part in peacekeeping without our soldiers having the best training and adequate equipment and material support meeting the best standards for the protection of our soldiers and assuring that they have all the necessary tools to succeed in the task.

We must be grateful, as I am, for the women and men who volunteer to serve Canada as part of our important peacekeeping missions; grateful to them and their families for their sacrifice in helping to bring about global peace and security, to bring dignity and freedom to innocent men, women and children, the victims of conflict.

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper. The question and comment period of the secretary of state will have to take

place at 6.30 p.m. when we resume after Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): moved that Bill C–215, an act to amend the Criminal Code (aiding suicide), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, in the spring of 1991 a strong and healthy young woman from Sidney, British Columbia, Sue Rodriguez, received the devastating news from her doctor that she had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease.

The following year in October 1992 Sue Rodriguez, whose condition had deteriorated rapidly in the interim, posed the following question to a committee of this House, a committee at which I was present: "I want to ask you gentlemen if I cannot give consent to my own death, then whose body is this? Who owns my life?"

With these eloquent words Sue Rodriguez embarked upon a journey that was followed by an entire country that led her to the Supreme Court of Canada in her quest for a change in the criminal law, unchanged since 1892, to allow death with dignity, to legalize physician assisted suicide.

Sue's objective is one shared by hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have personally witnessed or experienced the suffering, pain and indignity of the final stages of terminal illness or an incurable disease. Her struggle is supported by over 75 per cent of the Canadian population in public opinion surveys.

While ultimately the Supreme Court of Canada narrowly turned down Sue's appeal in a five to four decision, for many of us it was the powerful words of dissenting Judge Peter Cory that resonated, that were most persuasive: "State prohibitions that would force a dreadful, painful death on a rational but incapacitated, terminally ill patient are an affront to human dignity".

With this decision of the Supreme Court of Canada almost a year ago today, on September 30, 1993, elected members of the House can no longer avoid taking a stand on this complex and profoundly important question. In the spring of 1993 a motion by my former colleague, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, to undertake a study of this issue, merely to examine the issue from all perspectives, was overwhelmingly defeated with those opposed, arguing that the House should wait until the court had ruled.

The highest court in the land has now ruled. Indeed, if there was any unanimity among those judges and the judges of the B.C. Court of Appeal below, it was that it is now up to the House, to the elected representatives of the people of Canada, to take a stand on this issue.

In the week following the death of Sue Rodriguez in February 1994 the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice both promised that there would be a free vote in the House. I very much hope that free vote will take place early in the new year, certainly at the very latest by June 1995.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to point out that several members have already carried out consultations and held meetings with their constituents. By the way, the hon. member for Ahuntsic was just appointed the official Bloc Quebecois spokesperson on this matter and I take this opportunity to pay tribute to his personal involvement and his leadership on this important issue. He consulted his constituents, carried out several other consultations and is committed, I know, to scrutinizing this issue of tremendous importance.

• (1735)

[*English*]

The leader of the Reform Party, the member for Calgary Southwest, has already taken a position on the issue. Despite his own personal views the member for Calgary Southwest has stated that he and four of his colleagues from Calgary will be voting for physician assisted suicide, even though they personally oppose it. I will quote the member from Calgary Southwest: "If a government bill were presented to Parliament tomorrow permitting physician assisted suicide under the conditions specified, the participating members of Parliament would vote for it in accordance with the expression of their constituents".

Those were the words on April 22 of the leader of the Reform Party speaking for himself and on behalf of four of his colleagues from Calgary. He conducted a survey in his own constituency. He found that 82 per cent of his constituents support doctor assisted suicide, 16 per cent were opposed and 2 per cent were undecided.

I understand that many of his colleagues from the Reform Party have similarly conducted surveys. The results are similar in their constituencies as well. I trust they will be taking the same position.

There has been considerable opposition in some quarters to this private member's bill. There are those who believe for personal religious reasons, for example, that it is unethical or immoral for anyone other than their God to end life. The Catholic Church has stated in its declaration on euthanasia: "Suffering during the last moments of life has a special place in God's saving plan".

No one is asking those who share that religious view to take any actions whatsoever that fly in the face of that religious belief, whether they be a medical practitioner or whether they be an individual who is contemplating the end of their own life.

I would argue that a law which imposes that personal religious philosophy on an entire nation is one which is both cruel and inhuman. I would argue that surely the time has come in this country to break the silence, to end the hypocrisy in this area. We know that every day from coast to coast in Canada doctors are illegally, without safeguards, helping people to end their lives at their request.

Here is an example. Dr. Ted Boadway, a doctor of the Ontario Medical Association, said at a recent Canadian Medical Association convention: "Doctors are doing it entirely underground and entirely unrecognized in great fear and anxiety".

Surely the time has come to bring the law into line with medical reality and with humanity.

Another very important study was a study that was published recently by a British Columbia social worker, Mr. Russel Ogden. Mr. Ogden conducted a study of the deaths of a number of people who died of AIDS and HIV disease.

In that study he demonstrated that between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of all people in British Columbia—at the very least—who were dying of AIDS died of suicide. In some cases the attempts were terribly botched. This caused profound pain and agony, not only to the individuals but to their friends, families and loved ones.

The Senate committee is studying this issue and will be reporting in the middle of December. I salute the leadership of Senator Joan Neiman on this issue. In its brief to the Senate committee, the Persons with AIDS Society of British Columbia said:

> People with HIV disease who are choosing assisted death as a medical option are being forced, as a result of current legislation, to seek back street euthanasia. The access to medications for assisted death is limited to those who have underground connections. Those who have no such access have had to resort to violent methods of euthanasia, such as heroine overdoses, razor blades, guns and plastic bags for suffocation.

No one should have to die that way.

● (1740)

A former nurse wrote to me recently: "The medical profession needs to be in the front line of openly helping people make these decisions and ensuring that it is safely done with as much dignity as possible so that people are not forced into the back alleys to secure drugs or denied the comfort of family and friends when they decide their time has come".

There are a number of possible models for new legislation. I am not suggesting that my bill is by any means the final word. It is not. It is certainly open to improvement, to amendment and to strengthening. I welcome the opportunity for that legislative process hopefully early in the new year.

I would commend to members of the House an article in the July 14, 1994 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* by some of the most distinguished doctors in America who set out a very carefully crafted proposal with appropriate safeguards for a new law in this area as one of the potential models.

I also want to take this opportunity to respond to a concern that some people have raised with respect to the issue of palliative care, of hospice care because there are those who say if only people would have proper palliative care there would be no need for physician assisted suicide or euthanasia. I want to be very clear. I believe very strongly and very deeply that there should be far more resources for palliative care in Canada. I pay tribute to the work that these dedicated health care professionals in the field of palliative care and hospice care are doing. We need more education in pain management. We need far more support for palliative care in the country.

However, at the end of the day, as even palliative care doctors themselves will tell you, there is some suffering, there is some indignity and there is some pain that no amount of palliative care can effectively respond to. Even the Canadian Palliative Care Association has recognized that some 16 per cent of patients cannot have all their symptoms controlled. It suggests that in some circumstances, from its brief to Senate: "The patient can be drugged to a degree which does not permit meaningful interaction with the family". There are some people who do not wish to live or die in those circumstances.

As well, Dr. Scott Wallace in his brief to the Senate committee has pointed out that the process of dying can involve some of the most miserable and distressing sensations known to man such as jaundice with intolerable itching, insomnia, hallucinations, constant unrelievable hiccups, the inability to swallow, paralysis of muscle groups requiring the insertion of multiple tubes, intense nausea and vomiting, incontinence of faeces and urine, just to name a few. Not all of these can be controlled or regulated by even the finest palliative care. The wracking pain of bone cancer cannot in all cases be responded to by palliative care.

Yes we must do far more in the realm of palliative care but at the end of the day I would argue in those hopefully very rare circumstances in which palliative care is not appropriate and with the necessary safeguards the option must surely remain to an individual to put an end to that suffering, that pain and that indignity.

One of the tragic ironies is that in many cases people who are terminally ill would be able to live longer if they knew that at the point at which they wished to end their suffering they would be able to call upon the assistance of a doctor to do so. Tragically there are people whose lives are ending earlier and who are taking their own lives earlier because they are afraid they may suffer needless despair.

I believe that the most powerful arguments for changes in the law to permit physician assisted suicide and euthanasia, to permit death with dignity, come from people who have themselves experienced the terrible suffering and death in their own families or who are suffering themselves.

In the time remaining to me I want to share just a few of those perspectives. I have received over 1,000 letters from every province and territory in Canada, profoundly moving letters from people who have lost loved ones, who have seen the suffering, who have seen the anguish and who are themselves suffering and are begging this Parliament to change the law.

• (1745)

The letters include one from Dennis Kaye, who is living himself with ALS and is the author of the book *Laugh, I thought I'd Die: My Life With ALS*. He said:

> The will to live cannot be measured, metered, or for that matter, legislated by others, least of all by those whose frailties have never been tested. So when the bystanders fall silent and you move to cast your vote, base your decision on the testimony of those most directly affected. I implore you, resist the temptation to make this debate into something it is not. It is not about Henry Morgentaler or blood stained fetuses, it is not about Adolf Hitler or the extermination of society's most vulnerable. Neither is it about palliative expertise, medical ethics or murder. Most importantly, it is not about euthanasia. It is about suicide, the taking of one's own life and whether an individual, imprisoned only by physical limitation, can legally request and receive preparatory assistance in their final endeavour. In the end, suicide may not be an option you or I would exercise, but it must be an option. If I am to live, let it be for something more than a statutory requirement. May rational heads prevail.

[*Translation*]

Let me quote this letter from Mr. Pierre Lussier, son of Doris Lussier, a highly respected comedian and author in Quebec. Here is just a brief excerpt. I will circulate the letter later. "Some politicians, who are barbaric because they do not know any better, would have me believe that the terrifying cry of excruciating pain you gave, while unconscious, on your death bed, when we where away from your room, at the other end of the hallway, was the expression of a clinical state of well–being. Spare me! No, your pain was cruel and unfair."

[*English*]

Erwin Krickhahn who died recently wrote:

> Every time someone who is terminally ill or severely disabled commits suicide behind a shroud of secrecy, they are preserving hypocrisy. The terminally ill person who comes after them must then undergo the same gauntlet of loneliness, desperation, guilt and fear, precisely because nothing has changed.

He went on to indicate he would like to be remembered for having made a contribution to the right to die movement in Canada by speaking out in favour of honesty in dying.

Finally, there is a letter from a gentleman in Winlaw, British Columbia, who wrote of the death of his father:

> My father died as a human vegetable. When his life was threatened they put him on life support and when he kept ripping out the tubes, they put him in a restraining jacket. He stopped eating and finally died.

No one should have to die that way. I will be circulating to members of this House these and other letters I have received. I beg them to read them and to reflect upon them.

In closing let me pay tribute to the many groups and individuals who have dedicated their energy and their commitment to this struggle: the Right To Die Society and John Hofsess, Dying With Dignity, Marilyn Séguin, other societies like Goodbye, the Seaton Royal Commission, people like Rochelle Pittman and the others to whom I have referred today.

Most of all, I want to take the opportunity of this debate to thank and pay tribute to my late friend, Sue Rodriguez, for the courage, the dignity, the strength and the eloquence with which she devoted her final days to the struggle for death with dignity. In her final public words Sue Rodriguez said: "I hope that my efforts will not have been in vain and that the Minister of Justice will introduce legislation into Parliament soon so that terminally ill people will have another option available, thereby permitting physician assisted suicide for the terminally ill".

I deeply hope Parliament will respond positively to this very powerful plea and that it will respond very soon indeed.

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario): Madam Speaker, it gives me a great sense of privilege today to be able to speak on this very important and very controversial proposal put forward by the member for Burnaby—Kingsway.

As a new member of Parliament with a fresh mandate, and as a member of Parliament for one of the most populous ridings in the country, it is interesting that this Parliament is prepared to consider the issue of euthanasia, given the fact it had considered the issue not two years ago and had dispensed with it.

This is an important issue which strikes to the heart of the idea of what we believe the state should be doing in the lives of ordinary individuals. Euthanasia very clearly, categorically and unequivocally rather than allowing people to die naturally makes them die and that is a travesty. I believe that is a wrong.

• (1750)

Death on demand has no place for consideration in Parliament. If Parliament wants to consider this issue then it can do so through a royal commission since Parliament has already considered this matter.

Despite the sincerity and emotion for which this issue has been put forward by the member proposing the bill I do not believe we should put on the state the right, indeed the obligation to put people to death. That leaves blood on the hands of the state.

It is almost Orwellian if taken to its logical conclusion as we have seen for example in Holland. A commission there discovered quite recently that 1,030 people were put to death involuntarily. These people did not make a request to die. They did not ask to die and the state put them to sleep.

We also face a problem which was revealed in the very long and exhaustive deliberations this very same House undertook some months ago about the impact of definitions. We all know too well from the various debates on the abortion issue what happens when terminology and definitions are left in the hands of the judiciary. In many respects definitions, ideas and terminology are the playthings, if I could put it that way, of those who interpret definitions.

Let me give some examples: death being imminent, therapeutically useless, informed consent, incurably ill, security of the person. All these issues, all these ideas and all these statements may have some impact in trying to find what is just and equitable. However it may also mean we are on the slippery slope of something far more pernicious than the intention of the bill. Euthanasia is the state actively participating in the death of individuals.

The hon. member discussed the importance of palliative care. I know many people who are involved in this area. I think all of us in the House have been deeply moved by the commitment those people attach to that very noble end. Death by natural causes is presumably what we are looking for. My impression of the issue is not based simply on the recognition of what they do, but let us talk to some people in the field.

[*Translation*]

Dr. John Scott, who heads one of the largest palliative care centres in Canada, namely the Elisabeth–Bruyère Centre here in Ottawa, spoke eloquently of life's fragility and the need to offer compassionate palliative care. He said:

> There is an urgent need to look into the unrelieved suffering recorded in Canada through a palliative care strategy including a major awareness campaign, research and bedside services. Death–related fear and pain can and must be alleviated in Canada.
>
> When we witness suffering, we also hear complaints. When death is at our door, we raise our hands in horror and sometimes we even call for death, but we must resist the temptation to kill. We must not remain insensitive to the will to live trying to make itself heard above all the moaning. Neither the physician nor the legislator must be so presumptuous as to respond to the complaints by silencing forever the complainer.
>
> Canada must choose between the trend seen in the United Kingdom and the path chosen by the Netherlands—which I just explained. The United Kingdom was one of the first countries to open hospices and offer palliative care; it is also recognized throughout the world for its humanitarian care and symptom relief. The Netherlands did not succeed in developing hospice care programs and is therefore known for the poor quality of its palliative care and symptom relief. In desperation, they turned to euthanasia as a function and easy solution to relieve suffering."

• (1755)

[*English*]

We will hear much about the fact that many people support the right of a terminally ill patient to die, but I ask the House: What if that right becomes an obligation? I ask the House more emphatically: What if the potential for corruption is there by impatient heirs who want to see that person dead? Handicapped individuals, people in wheelchairs, people who are not genetically perfect according to some, people suffering from Alzheimer's.

This is more than a tempest in a teapot. We are opening more than a Pandora's box. We are indeed deciding as a state who should live and who should die. The member from Ontario riding believes that is wrong. I will vote against any legislation which comes before the House which promotes that kind of insidious proposal.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak given to me by the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway. I, of course, respect his position but, as a member of Parliament elected in the 1990s, I have an obligation to represent the future and not the past.

[*English*]

I represent all Canadians. I represent them until they die naturally.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic): Madam Speaker, as the Bloc Quebecois and official opposition critic on this issue, never have I felt the weight of my responsibility as a legislator as I do now with this bill on aiding suicide. The ten minutes allocated to discuss this issue are totally insufficient.

Last April, I held a discussion on this bill with my constituents. This public forum allowed us to discuss the issue from the wider perspective of euthanasia. Several questions were raised regarding the definition of terms such as "palliative care", "living will", "aggressive therapy versus cessation of treatment" and "assisted suicide".

The answers to these questions were found to be difficult, if not unsatisfactory. Some participants defended the right of a person to die in dignity, while others challenged the right to choose to die. All essentially feared a lack of control over their destiny when death becomes imminent.

First, what is euthanasia? Allow me to give a definition among many others. Euthanasia now refers to the responsibility of a health professional or a close family member as it relates to the death of a sick or handicapped person. In that context, and according to the *Encyclopédie Universalis*, it includes the commission or the omission of an act which deliberately provokes the death of a patient in order to put an end to a life of suffering.

Given the progress in medical sciences, we, legislators, cannot avoid dealing with this new social reality. The point is not to make suicide commonplace, since respect for life is one of the fundamental values of our society. However, science is increasingly changing our lives as it intervenes with new treatments, drugs and technologies, when we are born and towards the end of our lives.

Furthermore, this House is about to examine the issue of genetic engineering and cloning, the Parliament of Canada had set several debates on the issue of abortion, and a royal commission of inquiry has looked into reproduction technologies.

We also have a responsibility to protect the right of any person to die with dignity. In our society which is based on the rule of law, the right of patients to make their own decisions like anyone else is also a fundamental value. We must also look at the difference between the right of patients to choose the moment of their death and the right to refuse aggressive treatment, something everyone is afraid of.

We must look at all sides of this issue. We must discuss it from a moral, medical and legal perspective. That being said, the bill should not be used either to make helping someone to die commonplace. I am referring here to the potential for abuse by certain physicians or members of the family.

We should also define the meaning of informed consent. How can one intervene in the case of a person who is legally incompetent? This is a difficult issue, but it cannot be ignored.

• (1800)

The cases of Sue Rodriguez and Nancy B. have helped to publicize a situation that is being experienced daily in our society. With respect to aggressive treatment, under common law, an adult who is competent has the right to refuse medical treatment or demand that it be interrupted, irrespective of the ability of the medical profession to provide the treatment, I might add. We are not talking about suicide in this case.

In its judgment handed down in January 1992, in the case of Nancy B., the Quebec Superior Court decided that an adult patient who was legally competent, suffering from an incurable disease and bedridden for life, had the right to ask her physician to take her off the respirator that kept her alive. This case is also about the criminal responsibility of the physician.

After referring to sections 216, 217, 45 and 219 of the Criminal Code, the judge concluded that the physician could not be accused of extreme negligence if he unplugged the respirator at the request of the patient and let the disease take its course. He also made it clear that the physician would not be helping the patient to commit suicide and would not be committing murder, since the death of Nancy B. would be the result of her disease.

So what do we do about people who are no longer able to give their consent but who previously expressed their wishes in what is commonly referred to as a living will? This is a document in which a person requests in advance that if that person should be diagnosed with an incurable disease that would be fatal, no treatment to prolong life will be given. So far, this document has no legal standing.

Would it not be appropriate to recognize the legal value of living wills and to make them more binding, precisely so as to prevent treatment to prolong life?

With respect to assisted suicide, section 241 of the Criminal Code states that every one who counsels a person to commit suicide or aids a person to commit suicide is guilty of an indictable offence, although suicide itself is not a criminal act. It was this section 241 that Mrs. Rodriguez contested in 1992 under section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mrs. Rodriguez argued that her right to life, liberty and her security of the person, which in her view included the right to control the time and manner of her death, were denied her by section 241.

The court ruled in a majority of 5 to 4 that although section 241(*b*) deprived Mrs. Rodriguez of her right under the Charter, this deprivation was justified under the principles of fundamental justice.

Mr. Justice Sopinka, writing for the majority, stated that to allow assisted suicide would undermine the principle of the sacred nature of life and suggest that the state sanctioned suicide. He also added that the fear of possible abuses and the difficulty of formulating guarantees to prevent abuses oblige us to ban assisted suicide. But should we just stand by and force the terminally ill to go through the courts or quietly take matters into their own hands?

I will conclude these comments of a legal nature with a reference to the dissenting opinion of Chief Justice Antonio Lamer in the Sue Rodriguez case. Even though the judge said he feared that decriminalization of assisted suicide might increase the risk that individual with a physical handicap could be manipulated by others, he also said that neither such conjectures

nor the argument that this might be the thin end of the wedge, could justify imposing restrictions on individuals who are not vulnerable and who willingly wish to take their own lives.

Of course we fear abuse, but is it reasonable, at this time, especially if a piece of legislation limits the scope and the modes of intervention of practitioners?

Some professionals oppose palliative care and request to die. Still, they all recognize the limitations of pain killing techniques for some patients terminally ill. All agree that for 1 to 5 per cent of terminally ill patients, extreme cases, pain cannot be adequately controlled. Others put that number much higher.

I would like to quote *La Presse* from this morning which quoted Dr. Rapin:

> At the present time, only 40 per cent of the pain suffered by patients during their hospital stay is adequately controlled. Yet, with the recent developments in medicine and health sciences, we could go to 90–95 per cent.

There is no agreement on the numbers.

Is it true that only 5 per cent of patients who need it have access to palliative care?

• (1805)

Is it reasonable that patients whose pain cannot be controlled are kept asleep artificially? Because, in extreme cases, that is exactly what palliative care means: induced sleep.

I would like to quote the journal *Palliative Care* which said:

[*English*]

"The prevalence of this situation is controversial and has been invariably estimated at between 5 and 52 per cent. In one study, 52 per cent of terminally ill patients develop otherwise unendurable symptoms as dyspnoea, pain, delirium and vomiting requiring deep sedation for adequate relief".

[*Translation*]

A philosopher once said that between duration and consciousness, one must choose the latter.

You are signalling me that I am running out of time, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Lalonde: You chose consciousness.

Mr. Daviault: According to the specialists I met yesterday in Montreal, at the 10th International Conference on Palliative Care, artificial sleep is closer to euthanasia than to treatment cessation.

It is virtually impossible to suppress pain during the last days in the presence of terminal agitation. I want to congratulate the member for Burnaby—Kingsway for his courage in presenting this bill to the House of Commons. I will add that I would also like a special House committee to review the report of the Senate committee on euthanasia and assisted suicide. This is a very substantive document.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Daviault: Madam Speaker, is there unanimous consent to let me go on?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent to let the member continue for one minute?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Daviault: Yet, since it is a private member's bill, it is not binding on the government and does not allow for a full–fledged debate on euthanasia, either active or passive. We must have such a debate in order to shed the best possible light on this social issue not only for us law–makers, but also for the population at large.

I take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate the Senate committee headed by Mrs. Neiman for its work. Its report will undoubtedly be useful to elected representatives in their review. In this context, I hope that the government will hold a broader debate on the issue of euthanasia, with the participation of all the parties represented in this House.

To conclude, I would like to say that during my visit to the palliative care unit of the Notre–Dame–de–la–Merci Hospital, which you know, Madam Speaker, I met several health care professionals. I was deeply moved by the work they do. I hope that our debate on this issue will be characterized by the same compassion and respect these people show for the terminally ill.

[*English*]

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I rise today to comment on Bill C–215, an act to amend the Criminal Code (aiding suicide), which has been introduced in the House by the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway.

Let me preface my remarks by indicating that I commend the hon. member for his efforts in trying to deal with what he perceives as a weakness in the current provisions of the Criminal Code that deal with assisting suicide.

I also want to extend to the hon. member my sympathies upon the loss of a very good friend, Sue Rodriguez. Ms. Rodriguez was a courageous person who worked diligently during an extremely difficult period in her life to bring into public focus the issue surrounding euthanasia, in particular physician assisted suicide.

It is clear that this is a matter of particular concern to our colleague. As members may be aware, this is not the first time he has attempted to bring this issue before the members of the House for discussion and debate.

It is evident as well that there is a growing public interest in issues surrounding the end of life. We must bear in mind, however, that there are many perspectives from which to examine these issues be they medical, legal, social or ethical.

In addition, we must remember that these issues are not confined solely to an analysis of physician assisted suicide. They can include a variety of questions which deal with such subjects as palliative care, cessation or withdrawal of treatment and the nature of the patient's consent.

• (1810)

These and other related questions will be examined by members of the special Senate Committee on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide which was appointed on February 23, 1994.

Before I turn to specific provisions contained in Bill C–215, I would like to speak of the work that has been undertaken by this Senate committee. Very briefly, the terms of reference of that special committee provide that it examine and report upon the legal, social and ethical issues relating to euthanasia and assisted suicide with a view to presenting its final report to the Senate no later than December 15, 1994.

Let me move along to the bill itself and give a brief analysis of the particular provisions contained in the bill proposed by the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway. I think this will help to explain what a comprehensive study of this issue must encompass.

Bill C–215 provides that no qualified medical practitioner commits an offence of counselling, aiding or abetting suicide or any other criminal code offence where the practitioner aids a terminally ill person to commit suicide at the request of and with the voluntary consent of that person and with the approval of at least one other practitioner.

While some may think at first blush that this provides concise and sufficient guidelines, I am rather of the view that more work is needed to give Canadians the appropriate legal framework for this kind of decision. Since assisted suicide would remain an indictable offence with a maximum of 14 years imprisonment, the circumstances in which the protection would operate must be clear.

I would suggest that as the term terminally ill is not defined and there is no generally accepted definition, this could very well be problematic.

A further concern arises from another aspect of the proposal before us for consideration in this House this evening. This is set out in Bill C–215. As set out a patient must provide voluntary consent without spelling out what constitutes voluntary consent. One potential difficulty is that there is no requirement that the patient must be competent to consent. I would suggest by way of example that persons suffering from depression may not be competent and still may provide voluntary consent. There are also no provisions in the bill regarding the situation of the incompetent patient.

In oral argument in the Rodriguez case the Supreme Court of Canada asked how the case of the incompetent patient would be dealt with if competent patients were permitted to request assisted suicide.

I should point out to hon. members as well that the bill does not deal specifically with children. They are included through the general language of the bill but there are no provisions on substituted consent in the bill. Are children who may be able to give valid consent to be permitted to request assisted suicide? If substituted consent is to be provided who may validly give that consent? Are both parents to agree or one parent to give that consent?

We are aware that family and friends of patients are sometimes prevailed upon to assist the patient in dying. As written, Bill C–215 would provide no protection for even the most sympathetic cases of this kind. It would provide protection only to those in the status of physician.

I am not suggesting that this is or is not the manner in which this House may wish to proceed to deal with the issue. It is important to ensure that when we deal with these issues we are cognizant of and discuss all situations where the need to address the question of assisted suicide may arise.

• (1815)

It is simple to state that these issues are viewed in varied ways by persons examining them from different perspectives. Lawyers are more likely to address them as acts which must be addressed in terms of current legal definitions and boundaries, whereas physicians are more likely to view these issues as elements of a continuing process of treatment for their patients. In my view, it is important that these issues be examined from all relevant perspectives.

I commend the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway for the steps he has taken to see that parliamentarians turn their minds to these questions and these issues, however he recognizes that the proposals contained in Bill C–215 do not address all the questions and concerns which must be addressed in the examination of what, in the broader sense, we refer to as euthanasia.

As I mentioned earlier, the Department of Justice has undertaken a comprehensive study in this area which includes an examination of the intricate legal issues surrounding euthanasia, assisted suicide, palliative care, and cessation of treatment, in order to determine whether any amendments to the Criminal Code are needed.

It would be my recommendation to the members of this House that it would be inappropriate to deal with the amendments proposed in Bill C–215. Rather, it would be more appropriate to gather as much information as possible about the difficult underlying issues and await the completion of the Senate hearings to allow the members of the other house the opportunity to examine the subject in a comprehensive manner.

We have been assured by the Minister of Justice that all parliamentarians will be given the opportunity to consider these issues in a meaningful way. I am confident that in due course we will be presented with the opportunity to do so.

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova): Madam Speaker, life begins at the moment of conception and continues until natural death. Respect for the sanctity of life and the dignity of human suffering, together with the recognition of the moral, ethical and spiritual values is well founded in both natural law and Canadian law.

The Criminal Code of Canada forbids aiding, counselling, or assisting suicide. This law does not merely exist to regulate our behaviour. Rather it articulates and symbolizes our values and beliefs as a nation.

In recognition of all the heroic individuals who silently suffer the physical pain and endure the emotional torments of this life from day unto day until natural death, I demand that the existing laws of the Criminal Code respecting assisted suicide be strictly enforced to ensure that our nation's values and moral conscience with respect to life not be fettered, for not to do so will create a greater injustice to mankind than any human pain or suffering could possibly inflict.

Initiatives like the introduction of this private member's bill for assisted suicide or euthanasia, find some support in our culture because of the value that is given to individual freedom and personal autonomy. However, this perspective cannot justify the taking of human life. Historically the protection of human life has long been the fundamental value of our society. The killing of another person, even with that person's consent, is a very public matter. To accept killing as a private matter of individual choice is to diminish respect for human life, dehumanize society, and it is unconscionable.

Writing for the majority in the Supreme Court of Canada Rodriguez case, Mr. Justice Sopinka noted that respect for life is a fundamental principle on which there is substantial consensus in Canadian society. The prohibition against assisted suicide reflects this consensus and is designed to protect the vulnerable who might be persuaded to commit suicide.

To allow physician assisted suicide, Mr. Justice Sopinka observed, would erode the belief in the sanctity of human life and suggest that the state condones suicide. Furthermore, concerns about abuse and the difficulty in establishing safeguards to prevent abuse make it necessary in this country to prohibit assisted suicide.

• (1820)

What we are talking about here is giving a doctor the right to kill. In the 6th century B.C. the Greek philosopher, Hippocrates, wrote an oath to which physicians have been bound since. It says in part: "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked nor suggest such counsel". Interestingly enough these words are immediately followed by "and in a like manner, I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion".

In modern times this oath has been rewritten as the Declaration of Geneva which says in part: "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life—even under threat, I will not use my knowledge contrary to the laws of nature".

These oaths have existed for 2,500 years. The laws of nature must be upheld and the values of our society must be protected. I conclude with my opening statement. Life begins at the moment of conception and continues until natural death.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak for a moment to the particular issue.

Most members know by now what is the policy of the Reform Party when it comes to moral issues. We do our utmost to seek a consensus of our constituents in order to determine how to place our vote. I personally have made an effort at that. I am unable to really come to a consensus, as it seems to be very close to 50:50. It may very well be that when the time comes to vote on such legislation that I will vote my personal belief and my wishes.

Therefore it is important that my constituents know what are those wishes and I would like to express them at this moment. My personal wishes and belief would be totally against this type of legislation. I would oppose it. That belief would be based, probably more than anything, on my upbringing. I have an evangelical background of good, decent parents who taught me from the very beginning that the most precious thing that you can receive from your creator is your life, and that the giver of life is the only one who should have the authority to take it. That believe has stuck with me over the years. I have to say today that I have come to believe that more than ever.

In my years of education I have dealt with a lot of young people. I have seen young people depressed and become very concerned and worried about their attitudes because suicides were taking place far more often than we desired to see as a society. It was on the increase.

Over the last quite a few years it has become a dreadful thing in the eyes of our society: due to family breakdowns, due to family disasters, due to deep depressions for whatever reason and possibly even illnesses. At the time this became known as a problem which we ought to deal with, societies all over asked

churches, schools, social services and other institutions to work together to try to prevent suicide and to do all we could to prevent it.

We engaged in that for years and years. We had special programs, special speakers, special activities and special things in place to try to identify young people in trouble. When one loses one of those young people and is the administrator of that school one has to ask oneself: "Where did we go wrong? What brought that all on?"

• (1825)

Then, in the midst of all these things, you receive a call from your brother and sister–in–law and they are broken up because their 19–year old son, my nephew, had decided to destroy his life that very night. We all sit back and say: "Why? What was the reason?" In that particular case we could not identify any reason whatsoever. It very well might have been that my 19–year old nephew discovered through a doctor on his own that he had an illness and maybe this illness was terminal. We do not know.

However, we do not believe for a moment, and I do not believe for a moment, in all cases of suicide that it was a dignified way to die. Dignity is the most misused word when we talk about ending life in that manner.

They say you should not talk until you have been in the shoes of those who have lost loved ones. I watched my Dad suffer for a long time and especially a sister who died at the age of 54 after two long, hard, struggling years with terminal cancer. I watched her go from 140 pounds, healthy, black hair, a beautiful girl, to old, grey, 58 pounds and in deep pain. I heard my sister many times say: "Oh, Lord, let me die. I can't stand it". With certain medication the pain would be reduced and then she would say to us all with a smile: "Don't pay any attention to me when I get that way. At that time I sure felt like it. It was pretty tough, but have faith in me because it really isn't any worse than labour pains".

Where is the lack of dignity? That was the most dignified woman I have ever met in my life, even if she was my sister, and I am proud to say it. Right to the very moment when she closed her eyes and left she had something to offer. Even through her suffering there was a benefit to those of us who loved her the most.

That story is true as well as those who say: "I can't stand it. Why don't they do something?" Do not get my wrong. In the case of my father and my sister, they both said: "Please do not put me on anything that is going to keep me alive longer than I normally would be naturally". We would ask the doctors not to do so. The doctors would very patiently say: "We must do our best to make them comfortable and we can guarantee you that we will bring about lots of relief. They will not suffer from pain but we must warn you that it could possibly hasten the death and that it could make them incoherent at times". That was certainly the case but I never saw for a moment that either one of them died without dignity. I really think that should never be used.

As politicians we sit and make this kind of decision. I really get nervous about it when 295 people are going to decide about this sort of thing. It bothers me very much because what you are doing is changing the terminology of suicide to something else. It no longer is suicide if it is assisted. Somebody helping you does not make it suicide. Suicide has always been, in my belief, taking your own life. If that is done with any assistance whatsoever I would not want to mention what kind of term might replace that.

If we are the people who are going to make this kind of decision, we should be careful about imposing it on our medical people. I have by good sources been told that the medical association, from the voting level, strongly indicate no support for this position.

• (1830)

Instead of being doctor assisted suicide, if such a legislation is passed, it probably should be called politician assisted suicide and maybe the politicians would be the ones to have to administer it.

I believe that we have to be totally accountable for the decisions that we make in here and I do not believe for a moment that I would want to engage in some kind of venture that would make me accountable for something that we could very possibly regret, terribly regret, down the road if it turns into the kinds of experiences that my colleague across the way mentioned in the Holland experience. Some terrible tragedies happened there.

It is my belief and it is a quote that I have heard several times that when people ask to die or to be killed we should throw them a lifeline, not a noose.

In my closing remarks, I would ask that when this particular proposal comes forward you search your souls to the deepest and may your conscience be your guide.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

PEACEKEEPING

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Madam Speaker, as we resume consideration of this motion, I would like to remind the hon. members of this House that it reads as follows: "That this House take note of Canada's current and future international peacekeeping commitments in the world,

with particular reference to the former Yugoslavia, Haiti and Rwanda", the current sites of Canadian involvement.

When discussing international commitments, we talk about the country, all of Canada, naturally, but we also talk a lot about the people involved. These include of course the people from the countries where missions are carried out, but for us Canadians and Quebecers, this term refers mostly to our armed forces members sent out on these missions.

In my own riding, we have 17 military who are now back from the former Yugoslavia. It was not all roses for them over there, but they contributed to the peacekeeping effort and I wish to thank them for that. Another 30 soldiers will embark upon training, come January 1995, to prepare for a peacekeeping mission somewhere in the world. These soldiers are reserves, which means that they were not trained specifically for that role originally. I find it important that we take into account the human factors affecting these individuals as we debate this motion.

Canada has a proud tradition of international commitments. I shall spare you the long list of missions. Let it suffice to mention Kashmir, New Guinea, Yemen, the Sinai, Cyprus and, more recently, the former Yugoslavia. We can also expect to be kept very busy in the future, as global changes cause local conflict hot spots to multiply because of unresolved inequities in our societies, our planet, the entire universe, inequities that often result in hostilities erupting between citizens of the same country who are striving to resolve their problems.

I think that the one thing everyone agrees on is the need to have a corps specialized in these kinds of operations. We have learned a lot from trial and error and various experiences over the years. We have the duty now to make sure that our operations are increasingly structured, relevant and striking. Let us try and learn from experience in those places where our forces are currently deployed. I think that we realize from the outset that the situations in the former Yugoslavia, Haiti and Rwanda are very different from one another and will require very special preparation of our soldiers. It is a very big challenge.

• (1835)

Barely six months ago, earlier this year, we had a debate here on the appropriateness of the intervention in the former Yugoslavia. I think that what I said then is still timely: "The issue of the security of our troops cannot be dissociated from the transparency and relevance of the mission with which they are entrusted". If that sentence is applied to Yugoslavia today, we can say that last January we helped to clarify the mission.

But in the field today it is difficult to see what has been gained and what has been lost. The information in the press is very discouraging. The situation drags on and air strikes are threatened to relieve Sarajevo again. We feel that we are watching an old war movie, but it is the sad reality today. The Serbs are still threatening to attack the Bosnian Muslims. Also, the embargo on arms for the Muslims may be lifted.

As almost all of us said in January, the operation in Yugoslavia must go on in order to avoid even worse catastrophes. But on the other hand, when the government decides on extending the presence of troops there, we must ensure that they are not bogged down and make the battle drag on even longer. Ways of intervening must be found that will make it possible to get out of that situation as soon as possible and they are not necessarily very obvious.

The other example that we have before us and in which the transparency and relevance of the mission entrusted to them, of which I spoke before, is less obvious is Haiti. We saw it in question period and we saw it in the type of agreement between Washington and the puppet government in Haiti. We are faced with a situation where we want Canada to participate in an international force, but we do not really know what will come of this agreement because some basic principles are not being respected in the present situation.

An elected president is involuntarily exiled and an agreement is signed with a government that never had any legitimacy. It is said that a compromise is better than nothing, but this compromise must be examined very carefully by Canadian authorities to make sure that we do not favour an unacceptable situation.

If the American forces now landing in Haiti are but mere spectators, and if the unacceptable regime of terror in that country continues to prevail, we will only have helped the negative and unacceptable side of that government. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, Canada has always done its best to respect Mr. Aristide's mandate in Haiti. I believe we can still ensure that our interventions help protect the legitimacy of the genuine institutions in that country.

The problem is that the agreement reached by the Americans and Haiti's puppet government looks like a piece of Swiss cheese. The putschists are not required to leave and we do not know when Mr. Aristide can go back to his country, nor if the army chief in place will step aside. The positive aspect of the agreement is that a bloodbath was avoided, while the negative one is that we do not know for sure if democracy will come out a winner.

We must avoid giving credibility to the puppet government. If we allow it to linger on, this could be perceived as a giving it credibility. It is in that context that we must look at Canada's role in Haiti.

• (1840)

If we send police officers there, they may do their job with the best of intentions, but if they have no real power, we will have contributed to the deterioration of an already bad situation and we will have killed all hope for Haitian people. Ultimately, we must make sure that these people, who hope for a return of democracy, get a clear message that their hopes can come true and that they can count on the concrete support of the international community.

So, I think that we must ask ourselves if the conditions of Canada's support and participation are adhered to. When we will send the police officers, we must not make the same mistake or the same compromise that the Americans have made. We must ensure that Father Aristide, the president of Haitians, will agree with the sending of these police officers in Haiti, because otherwise, we will endorse the making of agreements with a puppet government without the approval of the elected president of Haiti. That would really put us in an absurd situation. It is as if someone could come to Canada and make an agreement with a non–elected person and say that it could apply to Canada as a whole. I think that we would not tolerate that sort of thing for very long.

There is at least something comforting about that. You can recall, I believe, the commitment that the minister of Foreign Affairs has made in response to a question from the leader of the Opposition. He said that nothing would be done without Father Aristide's approval. I hope that the minister's commitment will be kept and I think that it is important that it be kept so that the situation can be improved and solved appropriately.

The third example of an intervention at the present time is Rwanda and Burundi. Canada has been present in those countries since 1960, when they became independent, and our mission there is very different. In that respect, we must refer mainly to what I would call the legacy of General Dallaire and be able to draw major lessons from it. The human catastrophe that happened there was something the world had not seen since the two world wars. A wave of insanity caused the death of hundreds of human beings and what I call General Dallaire's testament has shown us how much we still have to learn about the ways to intervene in such crises.

In this regard Canada, with its experience, should take the initiative and contribute to improve considerably our different means of intervention, our ability to intervene rapidly and adequately in various situations, in order to prevent crises from becoming totally uncontrollable and intolerable.

There are some lessons to be learned from the three peacekeeping missions in which Canada is presently involved. We could learn about what we could or should do as well as what we should avoid doing.

I believe that the first thing that must be avoided is to get bogged down in a situation. In Yugoslavia, there are times when one must ask if we are not helping to keep the conflict alive rather than bringing it to an end. I think it is important to ask the right questions and to make sure that our interventions do not drag on, in order to bring the conflict to an end as soon as possible.

The second thing that should be avoided is to tolerate unacceptable situations. I talked earlier about Haiti. If our intervention in that country serves only to recognize a puppet government, we will in no way have helped the cause of the Haitian people and they will become even more desperate about their future.

To me, the most important lesson to learn is that we must give a clear mandate to our intervention groups.

• (1845)

General Dallaire said it quite clearly and I think it applied in Yugoslavia, it applies in Rwanda and it will apply in Haiti. If the mandate is not clear, if we do not give them definite orders, the armed forces being sent to those countries risk dispersing themselves and marking time instead of properly executing their tasks and reporting accurately on the results of the operation.

Another lesson is we must trust the professionalism of our troops. We have seen a few sad incidents involving Canadians, but why did they happen? Those missions are certainly not easy. There might be human hardship but we cannot tolerate in any way our soldiers getting into circumstances that would tarnish Canada's or Quebec's image or commit acts contrary to human rights or humanitarian standards in general.

To that respect, I think we should make a special effort to ensure that our troops know exactly what they are getting into and that they are prepared accordingly. We must make sure the soldiers being sent abroad are faultless in that regard. I have seen the possibility of right–wing extremists infiltrating our ranks. That danger is always present and we absolutely must succeed in preventing it. We must remove such troublesome elements, and it is important that it be done quickly.

One other lesson we must learn, and on that I am referring to a Senate Committee report entitled "Meeting New Challenges: Canada's Response to a New Generation of Peacekeeping". That report contains various recommendations on peacekeeping interventions, one of which says the following: "The Subcommittee recommends that the Department of National Defence undertake a comprehensive inquiry into the possibility of creating reserve units based on logistics, transportation, communications, and engineering functions, which could be used in peacekeeping, as distinct from wartime actions".

I think this is probably a very good way to use the various reserve groups we have across Canada. It would be a way to deal both with the cost problem and to develop a force that would be more and more involved in peacekeeping missions and perhaps less and less in combat missions. This is probably one of those compromise solutions that would be extremely useful in making a contribution towards bringing peace to the world around us.

We have resources in our various regions. There are military facilities that can be used. These young people in the military reserve have far less experience than professional soldiers, but by giving them the proper training, which would include some historical background if they are sent on a mission to an islamic country, to Africa, in a situation with which they are not familiar, so that they know what to expect. Whenever we send soldiers on these missions, we must make sure they have received this kind of training.

I think the Senate's recommendations for making greater use of our reserves is very meaningful, and I have every confidence in the quality of these troops. Since I was elected, I have had occasions to meet them in my riding and in Eastern Quebec generally, especially the Fusiliers de Saint–Laurent. I was impressed with the strength of character and discipline of these soldiers. I said to myself that if these soldiers were sent on these missions, they should first be given additional training to ensure they can fulfil the mandate they are given. They have the potential. It just has to be developed and refined.

I would also like to draw your attention to another recommendation by the Senate which I think is very relevant to the situation, and it concerns obtaining clear and detailed statements of the cost of our participation in peacekeeping operations and of the amounts recovered from the UN or other agencies in connection with such activities. The statements could be tabled with the annual Estimates, to help Parliament exercise its right to examine matters of national security.

• (1850)

The proposed motion deals only with existing facts. It mentions our interventions in Rwanda, in the former Yugoslavia and in Haiti, but it also considers the future, although we are not given any figure on the cost of such interventions. These financial considerations have a bearing on the resources allocated to defence. One may very well consider that the defence budget is too high, but if we can say that 5, 10 or 15 per cent go to peacekeeping missions, then it gives a different view of things. I believe that Parliament should be informed, as recommended, of the real cost of such activities so we could learn were the money goes. Does it go to training? Is it used mostly to pay for transportation? This would allow us to find out where we are going.

To conclude, I refer you again to the speech I made in January because it is still very much valid today. I will simply repeat that the people of my riding would support the Canadian government's participation in international missions if they were convinced that such interventions are needed, that our troops are adequately prepared and that our diplomatic efforts are effective, because the diplomatic front is also very important.

I will conclude on the situation which, I believe, is the most urgent, the situation in Haiti. The government must take action. Making choices is not easy. We all have a role to play in this situation. However, we must never make official or strengthen a non–elected government which forcibly seized power. This principle bears repeating. We would not tolerate such a situation at home and I believe that we should not tolerate it anywhere else. We may accept a compromise which allowed armed forces to intervene in that country, but this should not be seen as an opportunity to perpetuate the situation. We must see to it that deadlines are not disregarded once again.

Let us remember that last year President Aristide was supposed to go back, but did not. The same thing could happen this year. Should this occur a second time, the international community will lose all credibility. In this respect, it is important for Canada to play a role with Haiti and the Americans in order to reach a long–lasting solution enabling that country—one of the first ones in Central or Southern America to become independent—to regain its joie de vivre.In the next few months, we will be judged on how well we succeed in doing that. I believe that the government must make sure that it respects the agreements reached between the UN and Canada on one hand and President Aristide on the other.

[*English*]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member on our peacekeeping role around the world. He did say that we should avoid getting stuck in some particular situations. We should ensure we are not in a situation that is dragged out. He talked also about making sure that our mandate is clear and perhaps we are not always meeting that mandate.

As far as I am aware war and peacekeeping is a difficult and dirty business at times. It is risky business and the lives of Canadians are quite often at risk. I am sure that I speak for many Canadians and our hearts go out to these Canadians who are putting their own lives at risk for the benefit and hopeful improvement in some areas of the world that we have not even thought of until the conflict has arisen.

While the hon. member talked at length about the whys and wherefores of peacekeeping he did not say quite specifically what his opinion is.

• (1855)

Is he suggesting that we be in Rwanda and be in Yugoslavia and be in Haiti? Or is he saying that because we might get stuck in there or perhaps it is going to drag out for a long time, these things are kind of a nuisance and therefore we should not get involved at all?

Is he saying that we should be in or is he giving us a long list of reasons why we should just mind our own business and stay home?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, I think I should go back to some of the arguments I raised earlier that may have been misunderstood. I think that Canada's record shows that we made a major contribution to international peacekeeping missions and that we should maintain and protect the enviable reputation we acquired in this area.

That said, we must also learn from the past, particularly from the last few years' experiences in Rwanda, Yugoslavia and Haiti. I think that every time the international community feels that action must be taken, we must say yes as long as it is done in acceptable circumstances. So the mandate should be as clear as possible, the forces we send should be trained to fulfil this mandate, and we should see to it while we are there that the goals set are achieved so that we can help end the war and restore order.

In response to the hon. member's question, it is quite clear that the problem in Rwanda was not that we were not there. I am not saying that Canada is necessarily more guilty than the rest of the international community. But we did not react quickly enough to the situation. As far as the former Yugoslavia is concerned, I think it is a matter of understanding history. The problem is very hard to understand. There are many players, and it has been going on for a very long time. So there are lessons to be learned from this.

In Haiti, it is more a question of respecting principles and using diplomatic means as much as possible. To the hon. member, I say yes, we must get involved when needed, but in a way that we can guarantee the efficiency of our participation as well as provide protection for our troops.

We must look to the future. In future international missions, will ad hoc interventions be absolutely necessary to settle specific conflicts? Are we not at a stage where we need to provide the UN with an intervention group that would be responsible for dealing with such situations throughout the world? Canada could offer to train members of this international corps. Past deeds speak to the future. Canada's contribution has always been appropriate and much appreciated throughout the world. I think we should continue in this direction and ensure that nothing happens to tempt us to withdraw from such operations. We must continue to ensure that the principles underlying our peacekeeping missions are upheld.

[*English*]

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak once again on the future of Canadian peacekeeping and in particular our role in Bosnia–Hercegovina and Croatia.

While I do have strong personal ties to Croatia I believe that the safety of our Canadian peacekeepers is fundamental to the decision on whether they should remain in Croatia and Bosnia–Hercegovina.

Since the deployment of peacekeeping troops to Croatia and Bosnia–Hercegovina there has been a visible decrease in hostilities in the two countries. However, I would hesitate to call the mission in either of the countries a success by any means. UN peacekeeping forces have failed to fulfil the mandate set out in UN resolutions 743 and 769.

• (1900)

To date, displaced persons in Croatia and Bosnia–Hercegovina have not been able to return to their homes. In Croatia alone there are 250,000 displaced persons and over 300,000 Bosnian refugees. Some, like a man named Zvonko from Petrinja, have been looking at their homes for three years but have been unable to return.

In June I had an opportunity to travel to Croatia with my colleagues from Scarborough—Rouge River and Regina—Qu'Appelle. We visited three refugee camps in Osijek, Split and Karlovac where we spoke to many refugees and displaced persons.

Their message was clear. They wished that UN peacekeepers could help them return to their homes. To date, approximately one–third of Croatia remains occupied. There have been no efforts on the part of UNPROFOR to reintegrate those areas into Croatia or to return displaced persons to their homes. Instead, UNPROFOR has established itself as a buffer between Croatia and the occupied areas of Croatia where it is simply maintaining the status quo. That is not its mandate.

If peacekeepers are to remain in Croatia, or for that matter in Bosnia–Hercegovina, they must begin working toward fulfilling their mandate. I have spoken to several officials in the Croatian government regarding their views on this matter.

The Croatian government is grateful for the participation of Canadian peacekeepers in the UNPROFOR mission. They believe that a peaceful settlement to the situation in Croatia can only be achieved with the assistance of the United Nations peacekeepers and, in particular, Canadian peacekeepers. However, if countries like our own begin to pull their peacekeepers out of Croatia, I fear and I have been told that the situation will quickly deteriorate.

While the Croatian government would like UNPROFOR to remain in Croatia, the Croatian foreign minister, Dr. Mate Granic, has stipulated that several conditions should be met.

First, UNPROFOR must assume control of Croatian borders as was spelled out in UN resolution 769 of August 7, 1992.

Second, steps must be taken to demilitarize UNPA zones in the occupied territories of Croatia.

Third, sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro must be enforced to prevent the influx of arms and other supplies to the occupied areas of Croatia.

Fourth, a concrete effort must be made to reintegrate the UNPA zones in Croatia and to return displaced persons and refugees to their homes.

During my visit to Croatia I heard several stories from Croatian residents which made me proud of our Canadian peacekeepers. For instance, the chief fire marshal for the area around Sibenik recalled how helpful Canadian peacekeepers were during severe forest fires in the area and how in their spare time they assisted a local community by ploughing a very uneven dirt road.

I strongly believe that Canadian peacekeepers can play a very important role in Croatia only if UNPROFOR can begin to fulfil its mandate. If it cannot, then we must question whether we can financially afford to keep our peacekeepers there.

I would urge the government to allow Canadian peacekeepers to remain in Croatia. However my desire to see troops remain in Croatia does not mean that I would not support a reduction in the number of peacekeepers stationed there.

With respect to Bosnia–Hercegovina, this weekend we heard news accounts of more ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Serbs, renewed shelling in Sarajevo and of the hostage taking of French peacekeepers.

• (1905)

While the situation in Bosnia–Hercegovina is much more dangerous than in Croatia, I am confident that our men and women are making a valuable contribution to the mission.

There is an uneasy peace to keep in Bosnia–Hercegovina. We are needed there. However, if the safety of Canadian peacekeepers becomes an issue, those peacekeepers must be pulled out. In particular, if the arms embargo is lifted, we must assure that the safety of our peacekeepers is first and foremost.

With respect to the situation in Haiti, the decision to relocate Canadian peacekeepers from Croatia and Bosnia–Hercegovina to Haiti is a difficult one. Although I believe there is a role for Canadians to play in Haiti, I do not believe that we should participate in an invasion of any kind. Until that issue is resolved I feel that we should hesitate sending any Canadian troops to Haiti.

In closing, I believe the decision on participation in peacekeeping missions should take into consideration the following questions: Can we afford to participate? Can the lives of our peacekeepers be adequately protected? Can we really make a difference to the situation at hand? If we answer yes to all of those questions then we must participate.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing in our debate the problems that arise from living in an era of transition. It is one great historical period. The old order is apparent but the patterns of the new order are still to emerge.

One of the difficulties in dealing with this issue of peacekeeping is that we are using precedents that were well developed and tested in another era, the era of the cold war. Peacekeeping, as the former Prime Minister then foreign minister Lester Pearson developed it, was a weapon for the cold war era for non–cold war conflicts or at least situations in which the superpowers were not directly engaged.

It was a way of allowing combatants to retreat from a political–military situation where they had exhausted themselves without intolerable loss of face. Therefore the concept of unarmed troops standing as a living barrier between the combatants, who wished to withdraw anyway, was meaningful and capable if exercised to the full. Of course it was.

The Canadian record, and one must add those people who so often served with us, the Poles and the Indians, was based on this particular experience. They essentially involve the peacekeeping chapter six of the United Nations charter although it was not usually referred to under those terms.

The other form of peacekeeping, which is more strictly now called peacemaking, was rarely tried during the cold war because the two superpowers had developed a species of balance of power between themselves. They never went into direct combat except through mistake, error or misunderstanding.

The perfect example of that is the Korean conflict in 1950. It was not called peacemaking then but it was a direct invocation of chapter seven of the charter and the very much larger legal powers that were developed then for that purpose.

If we look at the case studies that have occurred in the last few years and which have been referred to during the debate today, we will find confusion regarding the two aspects of, let us call it, the peacekeeping mission of the United Nations. We will find the confusions are present. In the Yugoslav situation it is clear that when Mr. Mulroney responded to the request to intervene there, he was going into a situation in which there was no political consensus. In fact the European powers, as we would now recognize, missed an opportunity for establishing a consensus to post–communist success in Yugoslavia and the independence for the new states. He was going into a situation which I think he thought was peacekeeping in the classic sense but very clearly involved peacemaking, the putting of Canadian forces into a situation of armed conflict. I think we can say that only the superb training and good judgment of our military commanders

has enabled us to pull out of that situation without a major tragedy occurring.

• (1910)

In the new role in Yugoslavia that seems to be emerging what is now proposed seems to be essentially peacekeeping in the classic sense but that is a later stage in the conflict.

In Somalia on the other hand the conception was from the beginning that it was peacemaking. We sent a crack airborne regiment—many countries have them—into a situation where they were expected to be peacemakers. The tragedy that resulted there I think resulted from failure in the intelligence aspects of governments initially devising their role. That goes back I think to an examination of how and why the predecessor government to the present one decided this.

I have listened with great interest because all of us are with goodwill and we are committed to this Canadian mission in support of the United Nations, our larger peaceful mission in history. I have listened with great sympathy to much in the debate but again I think it is based on misconceptions and a misunderstanding of the art of the possible of what can be done and what cannot be done. That is a military logistical decision among very many other things.

I heard reference in the debate on Haiti to the desirability of using the OAS instead of the procedures now used. I do not believe an OAS role involving military intervention in a direct peacemaking sense was ever possible in that situation. It may be later on. If you remember the last time the OAS was engaged as a regional security agency under chapter VIII of the charter, it was in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. The OAS admittedly acted several hours after the military decisions were taken, but the ratification was complete and virtually unanimous. Very clearly the regional security agency operated although the military enforcement power was delegated to somebody else. However the OAS role was never meaningful.

Similarly one would say in the Rwanda situation an OAU, the other relevant security agency, military role was never again in a peacemaking sense relevant or possible.

Our government situation in those two conflicts which are now with us was making the decision on how to act with what was militarily possible in the situation. We have a very small army which under pressures from I think many parties in this House may be subject to further reductions in military expenditures. We have limited forces. We cannot be everywhere in the world. We also face the fact that political conflicts in the post cold war era are not as simple as they were in the cold war era where everything was black and white. The monarchy and hierarchy, one was good and one was bad, but these conflicts are very mixed and very hard to assess in terms of giving blame here and allocating responsibilities there.

Therefore, our government is faced with military forces that are really not equipped, unless we want to send airborne regimes in again, to a peacemaking role in the direct military sense. It is only realistic therefore to say, given the limitations on power and the limitation of our resources, we will in the Canadian tradition do our best. That is to say, we will provide humanitarian assistance. We will send in that logistical support after military operations are completed. But we do not have the manpower and we do not have the present organization to do it. Should we in the future? That is the subject of the debate.

• (1915)

It will involve an increase rather than a decrease in expenditure on the armed forces. It will involve a larger role for the armed forces, more education because these disputes are 50 per cent political and 50 per cent military. Frankly we cannot afford to send soldiers again as was done in Somalia. We cannot send them into a situation where they do not speak the language, they do not understand the religion, the culture or the people they are dealing with, where they are all at sea, a tragedy waiting to happen. In a certain sense it is a Canadian tragedy.

The debate realistically should concentrate on accepting the fact that if we want expanded military operations, for heaven's sake if we want to send the marines in with guns blazing, we have to develop a marine force and we do not have it. I do not think Canadians want that.

The more limited military role still requires a larger military commitment, more expenditure, a more selective process to engagement in peacekeeping missions abroad. It requires the ability to understand that the soldiers have to be better trained, better paid, a class of specialists. There I think we have a continuation of the Pearson role in the spirit of the end of the century.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments from the hon. member opposite. I recognize too his expertise in international constitutional law and international events generally.

Last week members of the foreign affairs review committee spent some time at the United Nations. Down there they refer to the CNN factor, where it seems that the UN concentrates its efforts on where the television cameras give the most coverage. Then other people suggested, and this was just people talking, that the U.S. at this time needs something to shore up a dispirited U.S. foreign policy and a dispirited U.S. commitment to the UN because of the Somalia experience.

Does the hon. member have an opinion as to why the Americans are champing at the bit so bad to get into Haiti right now?

Mr. McWhinney: I thank the hon. member for the very thoughtful question. Clearly there are aspects of American domestic policy at work. One is the obvious factor of the flood of immigrants or refugees from Haiti in the present period of political disorder. It would be wrong though to say that this is the basis of American foreign policy.

The United States, for better or for worse, has always assumed a special responsibility for the American hemisphere. It is one of the reasons many of us urged for years that Canada join the Organization of American States, because we are being privately told by many Latin American states: "We like the Americans, but their embrace is overwhelming. You will provide a voice of reason and balance when they decide to take action".

But Haiti is part of us, too. We are part of the hemisphere, we are in the OAS. Haiti is a French speaking country. There are 60,000 Haitian Canadians there and frankly I do not think we can ignore what is happening. If we do go in, this is where the hon. member's reference to the CNN factor is so important because there is a tendency to live with today's tragedy and then move on to the next one. The attention span is small.

The good thing about our commitment in Yugoslavia is that we had reservations almost from the beginning, certainly the generals did, of whether it was a wise mission. Once committed however we have said we will not abandon it just because it is unpopular or the public whim is against it.

If we go into Haiti we are going to be there for some time and I think it is an honourable commitment to maintain. We are all part of this hemisphere and we will have to accept responsibilities for hemispheric conditions. The hon. member's party, when asking about the OAS, did look to a future larger involvement of Latin American states as well as ourselves.

• (1920)

Mr. Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that comment. Perhaps he could help the foreign affairs committee. As members are aware one of the things we are charged with is to try to establish whether we should have regional priorities in our foreign policy. That involves all things, including peacekeeping, trade emphasis, and other things as well.

Is it a valid consideration to limit our future peacekeeping roles to a hemispheric idea or is that too simplistic? The member mentioned earlier that we do not have a common language, roots, religion or historical frame of reference with Somalia that perhaps we do have with Haiti. Is it reasonable in tight budgetary times to limit it to those areas that we have? That would cut out a good part of Africa. Does the member think that would be a logical way to divvy up very limited resources?

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a further valuable question. The problem in Somalia was that the only people who really understood the local political conditions were the Italians. It was an Italian colony and the Italians have managed to maintain good relations with their post–independence colonies. They understood the situation.

It is clear the non–Italian powers were all at sea. I would also say that the UN command which was headed by an American admiral was even more at sea than others. Somalia is an example of somewhere we should not have gone into. We should have been selective. We have to be selective. We cannot be in a dozen countries at once with our present resources. So far we are not in any inter–American areas except Haiti, so it is logical to give a certain priority to that.

The United Nations says that the regional route should normally be exhausted before taking the larger international route. That is a sound principle. Do not forget that for better or for worse by virtue of the free trade agreement and the trilateral free trade agreement with Mexico, our economic fate and increasingly our political fate is linked with the Americas. Therefore I would not envisage our doing things solely in Latin America or the Caribbean.

We do have links to the English speaking Commonwealth countries including Commonwealth countries in Africa and we are respected there. We do have links to the francophone civil law countries in Africa. I just viewed Somalia as a bad example. The wrong force was sent by political leaders who did not really understand the situation and did not know how to appraise the advice they were getting.

It is a tragedy. However I welcome the Haiti operation. With the limited resources we have and the situation we now have it is the correct decision to do what we have done. We could not have done more. I do not think we should have done less.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I will start off this evening by making a comment regarding the remarks of the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. One thing which is very important is that we debate matters in the House. I wonder about the process we are going through this evening. It is obvious to me that decisions have been made prior to having this emergency debate.

It sounds like a fait accompli that we are going to keep our troops in the former Yugoslavia. It is written right in the minister's text that we are sending 700 Canadians to Haiti: 100 RCMP and 600 members of the Canadian Armed Forces. My whole point on that before I get into my comments is that when you people were on this side of the room it was quite obvious that you raised holy old hell when the Conservatives pulled things like this. I think you should sit back and reflect on that for a few minutes and maybe for the next couple of years.

• (1925)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I do not think the member was in the House yesterday when members were constantly saying "you" across the floor. The reason remarks are addressed to the Chair, and I think the member probably knows this, is to try to defuse tension.

I would ask the member to address his remarks to the Chair, referring to members of the other party in the third person, please.

Mr. Hart: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will do that.

The inscription on the back of the United Nations medal people receive reads: In the service of peace. That is a worthy role for Canadians to pursue. I would like people to keep that in mind, in the service of peace.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has put together a motion that this House take note of Canada's current and future international peacekeeping commitments in the world with particular reference to the former Yugoslavia, Haiti and Rwanda.

As a Reformer and as a member of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's Defence Policy, I strongly believe we must get our direction from the people of Canada. With the special joint committee on defence and the special joint committee on foreign affairs I hope this goal will be achieved through the consultation process.

The joint committee on defence will present its recommendations to the House and to Canadians at the end of October and it is long overdue. Canada's defence is based on the old cold war policy. Little of it has changed as far as defence policy is concerned within the last 30 years. It is long overdue because much has changed. There is the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union and of course the post cold war period we are into now.

What makes this defence committee report so important? The committee has spent months hearing testimony by Canadians from all walks of life. Hundreds of testimonies have been heard and there have been many presentations.

By rushing into this peacekeeping debate the government is sending a very clear message to the taxpayers of Canada. It is saying: "We are not really listening to you". My perception is that what we are doing this evening is just smoke and mirrors.

The committee travelled to the former Yugoslavia where we saw first hand exactly what our peacekeepers have to face. In the midst of bullets and land mines of the order of 2,000 Canadian men and women have performed above and beyond the call of duty, and our peacekeepers have had to do it the hard way.

Earlier today we heard mention of the equipment problems in the Canadian Armed Forces. There are some real equipment problems in the Canadian Armed Forces which have to be addressed. Imagine having to change helmets at the airport while one group of Canadians is going home to Canada and a new group is arriving. There are not even enough blue helmets to make sure everyone has their own. It is the same with flak jackets as well.

Another area is our armoured personnel carriers. These are so old and outdated. They are made of magnesium aluminum and can be penetrated easily by bullets and certainly by land mines which are a constant threat in areas like Croatia.

Canadians have put their lives on the line in the cause of peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia. They have done it because they believe so much in what they are doing.

I will take a few moments to talk about my recent trip to the former Yugoslavia at the end of May. I travelled with the defence committee reviewing Canada's defence policy. When I first arrived I thought about all the news reports and things from around the country and Canadians saying that we should get out of there right away. I thought we should probably just pack our bags and go. But I spent some time talking to the dedicated people and hard workers. I mention particularly the PPCLI from Calgary and also the Lord Strathcona Horse Canadian Battalion One and Canadian Battalion Two who were our hosts during that trip. Those people were dedicated to the job they had to do. We should all as Canadians congratulate those young men and women on the fine work they are doing in a far away foreign land.

• (1930)

I will never forget the young fellow I met from Kelowna, British Columbia, Captain Derek McAuley. He was in charge of a group of Canadians who were at the back of Eachy hospital in Bosnia. Captain McAuley when they first came upon the back of Eachy hospital, which is a mental hospital, when the Canadians first found this hospital there were no doctors, nurses or people helping these mental patients because they had all fled in fear of their lives. They fled and left the mental patients to fend for themselves. There was no food, little medicine and they were on their own.

When the Canadians found them they went in and buried the dead. They cleaned up the hospital. They fed the hungry. They made sure that the adequate medical prescriptions were filled for those people.

Canada carried out its function there, a humanitarian role. They did an incredible job. Today the medical staff is back at that hospital. The Canadians are still there because they still get threats from the belligerent forces threatening that the soldiers

need the food, medicine and bedding and anything else they can get more than the mental patients.

I had the opportunity to ask Captain McAuley if he felt the job that he was doing there was worthwhile. He said: "Absolutely, yes. We are doing something that has to be done. We are here in the service of our country and the people here, the civilians, do appreciate the work we are doing".

I would like to move along and talk about what happens next. During the period of time that we were there visiting there was relative calm. There was peace, ceasefires and agreements. It seemed like there was hope for peace.

Now the situation has changed again. I remember one soldier telling me all they are doing right now is stocking up for the winter because they are going to grow their food during the spring and summer and then they will be right back into it once things cool off again. That seems to be the case in that situation.

Keeping in mind what I said earlier, the service for peace is an honourable role to play, are we really in the service of peace in the former Yugoslavia at this point?

If the embargo is lifted I would have to say that Canadians must come out of the former Yugoslavia as soon as possible. There is no way that the former Yugoslavia, if that embargo is lifted, needs more weapons, more land mines. It does not need any more tanks or implements of death in that particular area.

That is why Canadians must come out if that happens. I think we seriously have to look at the situation now. Are we accomplishing what we were sent to do? I think Canadians across the country, I know in my riding, are getting a little tired of this particular conflict. They are getting warn out because there does not seem to be an end to it.

We have to establish criteria. The belligerent forces in a country like this, if they want Canada to be there, must show signs of wanting a negotiated settlement and being at the peace table and doing it on a daily basis until peace is found.

Just this morning the Minister of Foreign Affairs suggested pulling peacekeepers out of Bosnia so that Canada could send troops to Haiti. What does this tell us? It tells us that we have some very serious limitations. It tells us that there are not enough troops to go around. It tells us that we are having difficulties meeting our current peacekeeping commitments. It tells us that we have to be careful about our future commitments.

Do we have the resources? The Department of National Defence suggests that Canada will commit some 3,300 troops in various countries including Croatia, Bosnia, the Golan Heights. We have troops in the Adriatic, Somalia, Cyprus, Cambodia, the West Sahara, the Sinai Peninsula, Mozambique, the Middle East and Kuwait.

• (1935)

Demand is being placed on our French speaking troops for peacekeeping in Rwanda. Haiti is also in the works. I guess it is a fait accompli.

Can we meet this demand? It is essential that Canadians are aware of what is involved in the peacekeeping equation. I am afraid it comes down to dollars and cents and manpower. Defence budget cutbacks, we all know that we have gone through that and there could be more. It means we have to spend our money wisely and if peacekeeping is going to be a major emphasis we have to spend it very carefully as well. The size of the Canadian Armed Forces is being significantly reduced. As I have already pointed out, we only have so many troops to send on peacekeeping missions. We will be faced with critical decisions.

Do we have enough soldiers, enough money to participate in peacekeeping efforts? Is this mission impossible? I believe that if we manage both wisely—and I stress wisely—we can still maintain this vital role.

Canadians have established an enviable reputation throughout the world as peacekeepers—26 missions. Since 1956 we have participated in every one of them. The very demand which has been placed on Canada to participate in peacekeeping efforts is proof itself.

We have had the responsibility as a G–7 nation to contribute our fair share. Mr. Jim Leamy of Victoria who made a presentation to the defence committee in Victoria said: "Canada must, if it is to keep its position as a strong middle power, be prepared to maintain a credible defence establishment". If we are going to have any say at the conference tables of the dangerous new world, either politically or economically, we will have to have paid the price of our seat.

I would re–emphasize that there are limitations. Considering the size of our great nation—we have only a small population of 27 million people—our defence budget ranks 15th in the world; Nepal's is 14th.

The land element, the army as it used to be called, has some 20,000 personnel, of that about 8,000 are combat ready. One–third of those people are in the theatre of operations now. One–third have probably recently returned from missions and one–third are in training.

Simple arithmetic says either we do not have enough troops for foreign missions or we are putting too much pressure on those troops by rotating them far too often.

Also, what happens in the event of an emergency in this country? Many people will say that not much happens in Canada so we do not have to worry about that too often. In my own riding this summer we called in the troops to fight a fire and we also not too long ago had to send troops out to participate at Oka. That was a tremendous. Could we do that today if such a situation arose again?

Canada must establish criteria and guidelines for its involvement. We must ask ourselves some fundamental questions. Is it in the interest of Canada? What is the purpose of the operation? Do the countries involved want peacekeepers? Will we be peacekeeping or peacemaking? Do we have the equipment and the expertise to fulfil the mission?

We are all aware that the size of the regular Canadian Armed Forces is being reduced to 66,700. This is of course because of cutbacks. Now that the budget has been reduced the government is asking the Canadian Armed Forces to do much more in this unstable world with much less.

One way to compensate for this would be to reduce our top heavy defence department. I think it has been pointed out several times that we have far too many generals and not enough foot soldiers in our present system. The Minister of National Defence has admitted that there is going to be more reliance on the reserve personnel in the Canadian Armed Forces. That is fine. That is honourable. Remember when we say reserve forces we are talking about the guy at the corner who pumps gas or the girl at the grocery store who is checking food.

• (1940)

These are not regular soldiers. We have to make sure that they have the proper training. The Auditor General has pointed out some deficiencies in his 1992 report and these things have to be answered. We cannot simply throw out a statement saying the reserves will do it. That is easy enough to do. There have to be clearly defined ways that we ensure they are brought up to speed on the roles of the regular forces personnel. Before we put our reserves in the potentially dangerous peacekeeping situations we need to provide them with the additional training they need. We will also have to deal with a number of other issues probably in the House regarding legislation with reserve issues which will be a topic for another debate another day.

Our defence policy or foreign affairs policy cannot be dictated by the media. We have heard it a couple of times here tonight, the CNN factor, and it is a reality. We must have clearly defined criteria for which peacekeeping operations we can participate in and which ones we cannot.

Decisions must be based on Canada's best interests. We have been a world leader as peacekeepers because we trained for war. We are respected around the world and the world is changing. Instability is increasing and we will be called upon more in the future. However, let us ensure that if we are in a foreign land where the people of that country do not want us there for peace then we must leave.

I started with the words found on the back of the peacekeeping medal and I will end with those words: "In the service of peace".

Mr. Milliken: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think you will find there is consent in the House to extend the hour of sitting, notwithstanding the order in respect of today, from 8.30 p.m. until 9 p.m. with the late show to continue at 9 p.m. as it would have at 8.30 p.m. We are adding an extra 30 minutes to today's debate to accommodate speakers who wish to participate.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief comment in reaction to my colleague's comment across the floor. I want to ask him a question.

I was with the member on that trip and I think his comments reflect accurately the feeling that those members of the special joint committee studying defence policy had as we visited the former Yugoslavia, including Zagreb, the headquarters of the United Nations protection force, our troops based in Visoko and Sarajevo and our troops in Croatia.

There were a number of things that struck me. Perhaps the strongest feeling was—again reflected by my colleague from Okanagan—that the Canadians who were there were very young, very dedicated and very professional, but to a man and a woman, those to whom we spoke, certainly in my case and I think I can attest for my colleagues, they all believed they were there for a purpose. They all believed in what they were doing. While there was some concern that some were on their third tour of duty, they believed they should be there and believed that they were responding to what Canadians saw to be in their national interest.

I am talking about May. As it is now September I can only assume that those feelings may still be there. I hope they still are there, but I would have to be realistic and say to myself that there is a lot of anxiety as those young Canadian men and women in uniform listen to this debate or hear about this debate to see the direction of their Parliament.

• (1945)

I hope you will indulge me, Mr. Speaker. As a Newfoundlander, I have to report something that was very poignant to me and the other two Newfoundland members of Parliament on the committee. Including the First Battalion of the PPCLI in Croatia, the Lord Strathcona Horse and the 600 sailors serving on the *Preserver* and the *Halifax* at sea, very close to 25 per cent of them came from Newfoundland.

You might find that out of proportion with the 2.2 per cent that we represent of the population of Canada, but as a Newfoundlander, I stand here this evening to tell members that I felt very proud to be among them and to see what they are doing.

I hope my question will be instructive. I was delighted to hear my hon. colleague mention the need for some criteria to guide our peacekeeping efforts. The criteria would have to be broad enough to be applied in a general sense but we may need a subset of criteria, depending on whether it is a peacekeeping operation in its traditional sense as indeed it is in Croatia, whether it is a peace, humanitarian type of effort as it is in Bosnia or whether it is the kind of operation that we may consider in Haiti or Somalia—they all seem to be different these days.

The scope and range is increasing. I wonder if he would accept that there should be a general criteria. Depending on what kind of a peace operation, maybe there should be a subset of criteria. In the general criteria there are a set of conditions that we would like to see. If they are not met within a certain time frame, then we will withdraw, providing we have a codicil for exceptional circumstances. I certainly would support that and I would like to see that.

I would ask the hon. member to lend his comments to this aspect of the debate. I believe it is key to the issue.

Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's comments. Over the past few months, we have worked closely together on the defence review.

The hon. member is referring to the fact that because Canada has performed so well in peacekeeping operations we should take a leadership role and look at the possibility of being the first ones in, while on the other side, set a timeframe to set it up and be out of there.

I would support something to that effect because I do not think Canadians will accept another Cyprus where we find ourselves there for 30 years. We have the capability to set it up to show other countries how to do it and possibly get out of there as soon as possible once those goals are achieved.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to join in the debate tonight on this very important subject.

I am concerned that it will be seen as smoke and mirrors or a useless debate. I certainly do not see it that way or I would not be here. I guess I wonder why anyone would participate in something that they view as that. That was probably a comment caused by indigestion and not by careful thought.

This is a debate that is very important to all Canadians. After careful reflection, all members on all sides of the House have something important to offer.

It is clear to me that Canadians overwhelmingly support and show great pride in our record as a peacekeeping nation. It was mentioned earlier today that this tradition goes back to Lester B. Pearson and to the leadership role that he demonstrated at the time of the Suez crisis in the creation of the UNEF force. The international community recognized that leadership by awarding him the Nobel peace prize, the only time that honour has been accorded so far to a Canadian.

My city of London has been much involved in peacekeeping over the years being until just recently the home of the Royal Canadian Regiment. It is a subject that has some particular relevance to me and my constituents, as it does to all Canadians, but in a special way because there was considerable involvement by that regiment.

• (1950)

No country is our equal or matches our record in the vital activity of peacekeeping. We are proud of that record and we ought to be proud of it. But as has been said by some of my colleagues, this is a changing world. We live in a time of transition. The cold war is over. Fortunately we are no longer wedged as the ham in the sandwich, if you will, between the two antagonistic superpowers with nuclear weapons pointed at each other, the U.S.A. and the former U.S.S.R.

However, the fact that the cold war is over does not mean we do not live in a dangerous world. It is very dangerous but in a different way. We face many more regional conflicts and internecine conflicts, namely civil wars in various countries.

The question is very relevant and I think our comments are very relevant. Should Canada continue to be involved in peacekeeping? My answer, the answer of the government and the answer I believe of most Canadians, is most categorically yes, we should continue to be involved.

The question needs to be posed; can we be involved in every conflict where our presence is requested? As things unfold it is obvious that we cannot be involved in every single conflict. We are going to have to be selective. I share the sentiments I have heard from members from all sides of the House. Budgetary realities are budgetary realities. Our resources are stretched and we are simply going to need some criteria and be selective.

I have heard some members opposite say they want some kind of an airtight guarantee. That to me is somewhat naive. It goes beyond a set of criteria. Exactly how much money will we expend? Exactly how many days will we be in that conflict? Is the interest of Canada involved? These are curious questions. Canada has always known, and I hope always will know, that if there is an opportunity to contribute to peace, particularly in this hemisphere, then the answer is yes, Canada's interests are very much involved. No country has a greater stake in world peace.

We know it is a humanitarian effort in Rwanda. Canadian flights have carried food, medicine, badly needed drinking water. We have led the way in that regard. Canadians have supported this effort. The proof is the millions of dollars

donated by Canadians privately. There can be no better demonstration in these tough times that people from all parts of the country support a government initiative than their willingness to put their own hard earned money behind it.

However, we do hear from time time what I would call the inevitable victim argument. Are we not wasting our time in Rwanda? Can we make a difference there? Are these people not going to starve anyway? That is actually heard, fortunately from very few Canadians, but I have heard it and was somewhat nauseated by the statement. I reject that notion out of hand. It is an excuse to do nothing. It is an excuse to ignore the pain of other people who need Canada's help. Fortunately there are very few people with that narrow, selfish point of view. I am glad to say I have not heard it enunciated in the House tonight. Nor do I hope we ever will in the future.

The Yugoslavian situation is much more dangerous than the Rwandan one for our armed forces. We have made a difference there but the question is, can we continue to make a difference? Is there a true desire for peace? If the answer to that is yes, then we ought to continue our presence. But if the decision is no, we are not making a a difference, it is a hopeless situation if such a one exists or there is not progress for peace, then perhaps the government will have to look at making another decision.

I come now to Haiti. Again we have heard from members opposite. I was shocked and disappointed to hear from the Leader of the Opposition comments which seemed to me to be very ill thought out. He used the phrase that Canada ought to intervene and intervene forcefully. I hope that forcefully was a slip of the tongue. I do not think it was one of his better oratorical efforts. He was so interested in attacking the Minister of Foreign Affairs that logic escaped him. Canada ought not to involve itself forcefully if you take that word literally.

• (1955)

I was very pleased with the way the Minister of Foreign Affairs dealt with this matter and his expert handling of a difficult situation in Haiti. As a Canadian and as a member of Parliament I am doubly proud that he made it very clear that Canada would not participate in an invasion of Haiti. Canada is not in the invasion business, we are in the peacekeeping business. If that is what the Leader of the Opposition meant by forcefully he had better think again or he had better choose his words more carefully.

The Leader of the Opposition was a minister in a government which was all too quick, when the President of the United States called, to snap to attention, salute, say yes sir, and merely follow along with the American course.

That is not the tradition of the Liberal Party. It is not the intention of this government. It is not the intention of this Prime Minister to do anything other than to chart an independent Canadian course, putting forward what is in our best interests in deciding what our contribution will be, regardless of any phone calls from the President of the United States.

Members may have had the opportunity to see retired General Lewis MacKenzie in the media recently cautioning that if we are going to go into Haiti that it could likely be a very long term commitment and he drew the analogy to Cyprus. That is probably quite accurate.

I believe the government is going to weigh carefully what will be our involvement in Haiti. My own belief is that we should go in. We said we will. Canada is a country of its word and we have a constructive role to play. Likely it will be a the long term commitment and that will be factor in the size of the contribution we will make.

In closing, I would like to indicate that I had the opportunity a few months ago to speak at an international conference where 110 countries were represented. They very much wanted to know what Canada's review of our defence situation and our peacekeeping effort would be in future. I tried to indicate the concerns I have heard from all members tonight as well as indicate those concerns at that conference. I indicated to the members that obviously Canada rejects the fist of war but we have always extended the hand of peace.

This world needs Canada to continue as a peacekeeper. We have a vital role to play. We have to be more selective and carefully examine all requests for contributions to peacekeeping efforts. We can never define to the nth degree every single aspect of that commitment. If we want that beforehand we might as well pull out of all peacekeeping operations now. That is just simply naive. That does not mean we ought not to establish criteria as clearly as we can.

We have a role to play. I am confident we will continue to fulfil that role and do all we can to promote peace in the world because that is the Canadian way.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member opposite what is the moral difference between applauding the United States invasion and saying we will be there to pick up the pieces, thereby never ever tarnishing our hands in conflict.

I do not understand the difference. Are we to pat the Americans on the back and tell them to go in, slaughter the works, do what is necessary and encourage them to do so, and after they have finished we will be happy to move in with a thousand peacekeepers of some sort and mop up the remnants.

I would like to know if there is a difference. I do not understand what it is. It is like hiring someone to do your dirty work and then saying you would like to come in afterward and sweep the lawn when the place has been thoroughly thrashed.

I do not understand the moral difference. It seems to me that if you are encouraging someone to do something you may as well have done it yourself. I do not know if there is a difference.

• (2000)

Mr. O'Brien: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting question. I think my colleague is engaged in a little bit of hyperbole. I would remind him that fortunately the invasion did not take place.

Yes, my understanding is that Canada was backing a multinational invasion if necessary as a course of last resort to remove a brutal junta that was killing people to try to stop death and destruction unfortunately with the last resort which sometimes is available, military force.

To me there is a world of a difference and I think we only have to reflect on our tradition as a nation since World War II. There is an enormous difference between actively going in and involving yourself in the taking of life and honing your skills, your expertise and training your people to be those who go in to try to build peace, to try to prevent wherever possible such a conflict from taking place.

To me, there is an enormous difference that the last 50 years demonstrates very clearly.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I have just a brief question regarding the whole concept of Canada being involved in peacekeeping. I think that is a role that we perform very well. Now we are into a new type of world. There is more instability now than we have seen in quite some time in history.

Does the hon. member have any ideas or concepts of doing something differently? For instance, the UN has suggested that maybe countries should look at preventive deployment of troops before it gets out of control. What are the member's comments on that?

The Deputy Speaker: What are the member's comments on that? The hon. member for London—Middlesex.

Mr. O'Brien: Mr. Speaker, I would be interested in your comments some time on that as well because it is an interesting question.

My view is that Canada has indeed been a leading nation in the United Nations from day one. If there is a sensible initiative that is under serious consideration in the United Nations I am sure Canada is going to fully participate in that.

If in any way we can help to prevent conflicts at the invitation of a nation to come in to try to do that, then that is probably an idea well worth exploring. It is far cheaper to do that than try to go in later.

With all due respect to my colleague, I do not think as I have heard from some members in his party opposite that we can define to the nth degree exactly every fact and every dollar it will take. We just cannot define it that clearly before we go into a mission or we might as well forget it now.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to ask you a question. Is it possible to continue this debate without any members of the opposition parties here to continue?

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is a new member and may not realize that members are not to comment on the absence of a member in the House. I think that would include all members of a party in the House because they may be doing proper business. The feeling is from a long tradition. That goes out to the people watching on television. It is not that members are not bothering to be here.

I would ask other members to please keep in mind that one is not to comment on the presence or absence of a member of the House of Commons.

Mr. Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, I did not ask about a specific member. I asked about the party. Is that the same?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time is being used, I might remind him, in this exchange. I think I answered that in my comment before.

Mr. Assadourian: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to take a moment to recognize some members of the Montreal community from Quebec who are present in the gallery. They were together with us a few minutes ago.

Today's issue is very important. It is a new form of government for us, the Liberal Party, and for the government. This is the third debate we have had on issues like this one. The first one was Bosnia and then we had a discussion about the cruise missile. This is the third one. Everyone in the country appreciates the fact that we have a new beginning and a new way of governing the country.

• (2005)

There is a phase one and a phase two aspect of the issue with Haiti. Phase one is peacemaking. Phase two is peacekeeping. Since the 1950s Canadians were involved in peacekeeping. I would assume that is the reason why we did not get involved in the peacemaking process of this, although we are going to be involved in phase two of this operation.

I know this agreement may not be 100 per cent perfect. Of course we say that in hindsight after what happened. Let us go back three or four days to Saturday or Sunday night to see which

one of these members of Parliament—especially in the opposition—was prepared to stand up and complain about the deal that was struck between the U.S. former president and the Haiti government.

It is very important to keep that perspective in mind. If we do not do that then we do not appreciate the fact that this situation saved so many people from being slaughtered in Haiti.

Earlier today I was listening with curiosity to comments made by a Reform Party member. He said that last week when he was in Washington he asked American congressmen, senators and state department officials if they approved of the Canadian position.

I was surprised when he asked the Americans that question and not his constituents. That is what counts. We have to ask Canadian citizens what their appreciation is of this situation. We do not have to act on what the Americans tell us to do.

Everybody has complained for the last 20 or 30 years—maybe more—that we follow American foreign policy. When the Americans sneeze we catch a cold. We catch cold no matter what the case may be.

In this case we took our own stand, a unique stand. We said no where we had to say no. We said yes where we had to say yes in phase two. We were still blamed for not keeping the Americans happy. I do not think it is our job to keep our American cousins happy.

They may be good friends to us, but it is our job to run our own foreign policy. If they are not happy with it, we cannot really help it because we have to run our own department. We have to run our ship.

Delaying this agreement for 25 days gives the opportunity for this regime to wrap up things, so to speak. It also gives the president–in–waiting in Washington time to organize himself so he can go back to his country and get control of the situation.

One thing I really liked in this deal. The fact is that the Americans are buying back the arms from the civilians carrying guns. There is a name that I cannot remember. When they go back on phase two, our soldiers and the RCMP will not have to face the un–uniformed civilian population. We will not have any clashes with them.

It is the participation of 24 countries as far as I remember. It is not only American participation. Some of the 24 countries that are going to participate in this invasion are in Europe. They are coming in gradually. There are South American countries, Caribbean countries and European countries. They cannot say it is only the U.S. It was mentioned earlier that the invasion is being led by the U.S. government.

We are going to be there for the second phase. It is the most difficult phase because democracy means election. If we cannot do the election right, if we cannot prepare the country for the election, we have failed.

I do not think we should fail. We cannot afford to fail. For the sake of keeping our hemisphere safe and democratic we have to go all the way with phase two, doing whatever we can to make sure democracy prevails and Aristide returns to his country.

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, during his remarks the member opposite mentioned that we had been able to debate Canada's participation in Bosnia. We have debated various other aspects of defence.

I would point out that we did not have the opportunity to discuss the commitment of troops to Rwanda. Today the Minister of Foreign Affairs committed some 700 Canadians to Haiti, or he proposed to do so. He did this without any discussion with this House as to whether that was appropriate or not. I am not saying that we would have disagreed but we did not have a chance. I suggest that the present government when it was in opposition was quite unhappy with the commitment of Canadian troops to Bosnia without discussion. I believe they would have said something about that.

• (2010)

It is one thing to talk about a government doing business in a different way. It is quite different to watch how it does business in a different way.

Mr. Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, in Rwanda in two weeks' time one million people died. Bodies were floating in the rivers. Do you expect us to come here and ask Parliament in that situation with people dying every day by the hundreds of thousands what to do?

I do not think it is fair to expect that we would do so in a situation like that. There are 200,000 people dying every day, more or less. In 10 days one million people died. We did the best we could. We were there at the very beginning. There was nobody there except Canadian soldiers. One of them was here today.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the hon. member. Certainly I would like to list my number four in terms of the item which was: Be sure that Canadians support our actions. That was one of the serious criteria that we must follow.

As far as consulting with the OAS and the state department, it was a matter of asking: Have we played the leadership role in getting the OAS involved? That tokenism that is involved with the U.S. proposed invasion is nothing more than that.

I do not see what is wrong with setting the criteria and I would like to know the member's response. Why can we not set criteria? The Canadian people are not prepared to give us a blind

trust, just saying: "Politicians, go out there and go everywhere, spend whatever, don't have a plan, don't know what it is going to cost, don't know how long you are going to be there".

I think the Canadian people are asking those questions. That is what I am hearing. Are you not hearing that?

The Deputy Speaker: I assume the hon. member is asking the hon. member who just spoke.

Mr. Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, I think the course we have taken to be involved in phase two speaks for itself. That is our tradition, that is our way of doing things, that is the Canadian way of doing things.

We do not want to get involved in a war in each and every corner of this planet. We want to be involved in peacekeeping, not peacemaking. We are there to keep the peace, if there is a peace after this invasion is over. That is all we are doing. That is our way of doing it, middle of the road, and we will continue to do it. We did it for the past 40 or 50 years and we will do it in the next 50 years.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter this debate tonight. Although I may at the end of my remarks question some of the timing of this emergency debate, I do at least appreciate the opportunity to enter into it.

I rise first of all to read some excerpts from a letter written to me by a very special person with a compelling interest in Canada's peacekeeping functions. The author of this letter is special because is the father of a young man who was recently killed by a land mine in the former Yugoslavia. That young man was a constituent of mine. The pain suffered by his father jumped out of the pages as I read them.

I attended the funeral of this brave soldier last summer. It was a sorrowful, sobering time that was especially poignant for me because of my membership on the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The policies that committee writes will affect more young men and women like Mark Isfeld for many years, perhaps decades to come.

It is therefore fitting that parliamentarians scrutinize our involvement in this latest hornets' nest of political unrest, Haiti, before we enter that battlefield for a so–called peace.

Mark's dad had some hard questions for the government, questions that will never receive satisfactory answers for him, I am sure. But he asks: "Who is in control here? Is it a politician or a bureaucrat? Is it a commander situated far from any particular trouble spot? Is it someone from another country within the United Nations? Is it people like Mark who will carry out the tasks regardless of the danger?"

Indeed, these are excellent questions because they point to a fundamental weakness in the Canadian peacekeeping function, and that is the loss of control over our own armed forces.

• (2015)

Once Canada commits to involvement as part of an international force political decisions begin to intrude on purely military or Canadian interests and we begin to consider issues like our standing in the UN or saving face or chalking up international Brownie points.

Are our people safe enough? Is their training and equipment adequate for the task at hand? When and where should peacekeepers move within war torn countries? What should their duties be? With a multinational force these purely military decisions are made at least in part by people who are not Canadian and who have other interests in mind than the Canadian interest. That is why these questions are really questions about Canadian sovereignty and ultimately Canadian lives.

Let me give examples of what I mean. Soldiers in the former Yugoslavia are using 31–year old personnel carriers with telecommunication equipment that frequently breaks down. It can only be repaired in Canada. Better armour for the vehicles is just now arriving, three years too late and a few months too late Mark Isfeld. We hear that the old engines of the carriers may not be able to move the personnel carriers with the added weight of the new armour. That is ironic.

Here is another example. Unbelievably there are not enough binoculars to go around so the soldiers must look through the rifle sights to watch for dangerous activity. Can you imagine that? It would almost be funny if it were not so serious. Of course even a friend who saw someone pointing a rifle at them might fire in self–defence or what they thought was self–defence. Our troops are forced to invite hostile fire just because they do not have a pair of binoculars.

Why are Canadians sent into battle situations equipped in this way? To maintain our international prestige as peacekeepers? To fulfil a political commitment to get someone re–elected back home? If so, political decisions have overtaken military considerations and these decisions have been costly and my own constituent paid the ultimate price.

It should be clear to all of us that Canadian sovereignty will diminish as our involvements in multinational peacekeeping efforts increase. The more we mire ourselves in international conflict, the more we surrender control over the Canadian interest to other interest, no matter what they may be, the more expendable our troops will become. The more casualties we will experience the more difficult it will be to pull out of war torn countries even if our efforts are not successful. No one cares about Canadian troops like Canadian commanders.

Mr. Isfeld rightly concluded in his letters: "No, my friends, I believe that the control lies with us, citizens of Canada and the world". We can still decide how deep our involvements will be

but demands upon our peacekeepers will increase as struggles within states intensify.

Are we going to keep jumping from situation to situation on an ad hoc basis without any criteria, without any policy? If we continue to shrink from developing any policy for fear of offending a special interest group or another nation we will never have any rationale that will provide a basis to say no to some of the involvements. We will continue to get sucked into the vortex of global demands, all to the detriment of Canadian interests and Canadian values and, more important, the safety and effectiveness of our own soldiers overseas.

The subject before us tonight at least in part is Haiti. The cause of peace in Haiti is undeniably a noble one. The prospect of bringing some measure of political health and economic stability to that tormented land tempts us to throw our resources into the fray without a backward glance. I am especially concerned about Haiti because the potential for a lengthy, worsening disaster there may outweigh any potential for good. Haiti seems to lack that one characteristic that underlies all working democracies, self–restraint. There is no real commitment to peaceful political action by anybody, by either side. Any leader must retain that power not by the will of the people but by the number of his guns and the willingness of his henchmen to repress political enemies with brutal force.

Is there a possibility of developing peace there or must we sit there year after year like we sit in Bosnia, keeping a fictitious peace that neither side actually wants?

I am not convinced that the deal pulled together by Mr. Carter and Mr. Clinton will bring lasting peace. The government they are bringing in may not be a whole lot better than the one that is being deposed. A member of my own constituency who has lived there since 1942, until recently, mentioned to me that during the last set of so–called democratic elections in Haiti government supporters burned alive a number of victims, including one Protestant pastor who was one of 13 presidential candidates without anyone voicing any objection.

• (2020)

My constituent claims also that during this time many of the people of Haiti who offer the only hope of running Haiti's economy, those who have some education and expertise, Haitians themselves, will be very reluctant to return to Haiti if a poor type of so–called democracy is instituted there.

From his letter, they understand that Aristide's threatening language on his shortwave broadcast to Haiti has caused many of them to leave already. Aristide is also schooled in Marxist liberation theology.

That is a doctrine that advocates bloodshed in order to redistribute wealth and power within a country. In effect, I fear that the U.S. led forces may be unwittingly supporting a form of government that will probably have the worst of both worlds, a quasi–democratic, propped up government that would leave the unfortunate Haitians with more years of uncertainty and violence and will force peacekeeping activities, as Mr. MacKenzie said for many years to come.

I am appalled at the American vacillation in Haiti. The Americans waited and waited. When they finally went in because of the horrifying human rights abuses supposedly to restore justice and good government somehow they left the old government still in power.

These henchmen need not surrender weapons and the government will be allowed to stay in Haiti even after they step down. Mr. Clinton will remove these American troops just after Mr. Aristide returns to power.

What we are really doing is cooking up a fine recipe for a potential civil war. It is no wonder that Mr. Aristide refuses to comment on the deal worked out by Mr. Carter. He knows he will be walking into a potential powder keg. The people who are in power there now have already demonstrated their cruelty.

Once the Americans are gone they will push for power again in not, I assure members, a democratic way. We read in today's *Globe and Mail* that: "This is just what General Cedras wanted. Cedras will not budge. He will remain and is likely to lead a new political force in Haiti".

As if this were not enough. Now that American troops have arrived their soldiers for some reason must sit back and watch government police beat and kill innocent citizens. This is truly a travesty. We thought America went into Haiti to correct human rights abuses but I have been profoundly disappointed by the inability or inaction of the American government forces.

The point of all that is that because of the impotence of the American forces and the continuing presence of General Cedras, the safety of our own forces who will be attending in Haiti is very much in question.

Once the Americans are gone from Haiti, our people could be viewed as the enemies by General Cedras and his people. Canadians and other UN forces could be viewed as political liabilities by the former government and become targets of vicious attacks.

Our Prime Minister should inform Mr. Clinton and the coalition forces that if instability in the country continues, we will consider our own forces unprotected and we will not participate in any further efforts in Haiti.

Yes, on the broader term, as demand for our help grows there is a growing need as we have been talking about tonight to define our peacekeeping functions, to set limits before Canadians are sent into these life threatening situations and do not do it afterwards.

Allow me to suggest some practical guidelines that would allow us to limit our involvements. The first limit is the goal of the venture which would include a measurable way of deciding when our goals have been achieved. When these goals are

realized, we would have to withdraw from the theatre. It is as simple as that.

The goal should not necessarily be only to restore a Canadian style democracy. In some countries real democracy is impossible at this time because there is no tradition of non–violent political action and there is no commitment to populous government by any of the factions that are warring for power.

Our goals at least in the peacekeeping aspect of foreign policy should not be solely to impose our perception of good government in a country since our forum may differ radically from the centuries of practice there.

Our goals should be non–ideological, to help and protect suffering civilians, to negotiate conditions under which human rights may be improved.

• (2025)

Our goals should be less political and instead concentrate on basic human needs and infrastructure to establish peaceful, humane and safe conditions within the disputed territories and to promote dialogue between the enemies, not to fight their battles or to impose the form of democracy where the substance of democracy does not already exist.

The second limit is command. Who will control our troops? It must not, I believe, be the UN, the United States or some other country. We must be guaranteed complete command over our own forces because no one cares about Canadian interest and Canadian soldiers like other Canadians.

The next limit must be the cost. How much are we willing to commit beforehand to the effort, assuming that our troops will be well supplied and well trained? Once we have set aside an amount it will help us to specify the fourth limit, the size of our peacekeeping contingent.

The fifth essential limit is the duration of the commitment. We need to specify a maximum time that our peacekeepers will stay in a given situation, a time when they must withdraw if there has been no real progress toward peace.

The sixth limit is the duties our troops will undertake in co–ordination with other international participants. I should mention that in the foreign affairs trip to the UN last week, the UN representatives suggested that we could concentrate on specialty units, our communications ability, our engineers, the things that Canadians do well and are known for.

Regardless, whether it is regular troops or specialty units, as peacekeepers we must remain neutral or our ability to act as effective peacekeepers in whatever situation will quickly dissolve and our worldwide reputation as effective peacekeepers will be eroded. That is why I have much less support for the so–called peacemaking aspect that has been discussed here tonight where the United Nation forces effectively move into a country and do battle with its government.

The seventh limit is with regard to risk; the intensity levels of the conflict to which our troops should be exposed. I believe that we should, as a matter of course, commit our troops only to situations of low intensity warfare. In a high intensity situation there is at best marginal hope for any kind of peace. Therefore, if a war situation increases from a low intensity to a danger level, a high intensity, our troops should be withdrawn or at least in a position to withdraw especially when those men and women may need to deal with changing equipment requirements and so on.

How could these limits be formalized? That question has been raised across the way several times tonight. What would be an avenue by which they could be made public, explored and discussed before the government made the decision? The answer is simple. We could develop a process for formalizing our peacekeeping commitments by allowing Parliament to decide these questions.

For several decades Canada has taken on informal commitments as a peacekeeper and it has done an admirable job. I can think of no greater international task for a government than to assist in the cause of peace. We have in part defined ourselves as Canadians by our peacekeeping efforts but the time has come I believe to be overt about it. The time has come to formalize our role in the world and to formalize the approval process by which Canada becomes involved in peacekeeping efforts.

Canada needs to identify itself in a formal way as global peacekeepers through the introduction and passage of a peacekeeping bill, an act that would limit this government and successive governments to specific prior peacekeeping commitments after full parliamentary debate and approval rather than a speech or two on a Wednesday night. It is a disservice to this House, to our allies abroad, to the Canadian people and above all to the brave men and women who daily risk their lives on the firing lines not to protect them by prescribing limits through a peacekeeping bill.

Let us take an example. If we would have prescribed limits on our involvement in the former Yugoslavia we would have known exactly how many troops to deploy. That number has been shifting now for three years. I have people in my own riding from one CER, from CFB Chilliwack, who have gone for six month stints over to Rwanda and then home for one month. They are so over committed that the government seems to have no idea where they are heading. These people have not been home in almost 18 months. We would have been able to budget for it, had we known ahead of time. In reality, costs especially in the former Yugoslavia have ballooned astronomically without any real accomplishments. It seems as if we are back to square one

again today. We may be simply forestalling the inevitable final conflict and the victory for one side or the other.

• (2030)

If we had this peacekeeping bill we would have been able to prescribe a time limit for our efforts. I suggest we would have been out of Bosnia by now if we had a peacekeeping bill to guide us. Most Canadians agree. Back in January of this year a poll showed that nearly six in ten Canadians wanted Canada out of Bosnia. Now the percentage must be even higher since we are struggling along day after day in a worsening situation without any prospect of peace in sight. We ought to be pulling out of Bosnia. We ought to pass a peacekeeping bill before we become involved in other conflicts around the world.

Yet in March of this year another poll showed that almost 60 per cent of Canadians wanted Canada to increase its involvement in peacekeeping generally. The opinions are the same in various regions of Canada. This shows there is a broad support for Canada's role as a peacekeeper, but there is less support for situations where Canada gets enmeshed in an irreversible situation.

Allow me then to repeat the possible contents of this peacekeeping bill that tries to reconcile these two things: the wish on the one hand of the Canadian people to be involved in peacekeeping efforts around the world, and on the other hand not wanting Canadian troops to be committed in these irreversible situations. There are eight main limits.

The first would be to set out the goals of the mission. When these goals were realized we would have to withdraw from the theatre.

The second would be to specify that all Canadian troops must fall under Canadian commanders.

The third would specify the cost of the action. When Canada has expended its funds it would have to withdraw or seek approval again from Parliament.

The fourth limit would be the size of the Canadian contingent.

The fifth would set out the duration of the effort.

The sixth would specify the duties of our troops within the broader international force.

The seventh is the risk of the exposure of our peacekeepers.

The eighth and final limit is perhaps the most important one. Any peacekeeping involvement over a certain size and duration would require approval of the House by a resolution of Parliament before the commitment was made. This would ensure proper discussion. It would ensure that we know where we are going. It would mean that our commitment would be clear to our allies and clear to the folks back home, clear to our troops. It would be clear that Parliament and all members had been able to contribute to decisions about Canada's peacekeeping efforts.

What should the government do now about Haiti?

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry. The member's time has expired. I should have indicated earlier that his time was expiring.

Colleagues, there are three members who wish to speak in this debate. As it happens, there are two Liberals and one Reformer. I wonder if everyone might agree so that everyone who wants to can speak to have 10–minute speeches with no questions for any of the speakers. Is that agreeable to all members?

I think it would be implied that the member who just spoke will not have a question and answer period as well. Is that agreeable?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased tonight to address in this House the issue of peacekeeping and the role of Canadian peacekeepers.

As a member of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs responsible for developing a new foreign policy, I am glad to see that most interventions only confirm the numerous comments and briefs received by our committee.

Throughout our hearings, and especially in Quebec City, we were told again and again, I must repeat, that Canada cannot and should not get involved in any armed conflict or even be part of each and every peacekeeping mission across the world.

Canada's role must be redefined according to our resources and our capacities and should only concern peacekeeping. But even though this peacekeeping role cannot be fulfilled blindly, participation criteria should be made clear and applied strictly.

• (2035)

We must also make sure that this peacekeeping includes a training phase. Why? Because Canada must also learn to limit the duration of these peacekeeping missions. In order to do so, Canada will have to show leadership in the training area by helping inexperienced countries, either through symposiums or national training programs.

That is why I commend our minister of Foreign Affairs for his view of the role Canada should play in the current Haitian crisis.

Canada took no part, not even symbolically, in the multilateral landing in Haiti. Yes, not even symbolically, and this was very

important; this to me means a lot and represents a very big step in a new direction, that is a Canadian commitment to peacekeeping in the world.

Canada will participate in Haiti in the preliminary planning of the UN mission. This planning is not only important but crucial and shows that Canada does not want to commit itself blindly, without knowing the consequences.

What is more, and this is something new and important, as early as mid–October, Canada will train a contingent of up to 100 Haitian police officers in Regina. Here is a clear sign that this government is changing course and I am sure that it will find the needed support among Canadian people.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important debate. Like the member for Red Deer and the member for Fraser Valley East who spoke here earlier this evening, I too have been participating in the foreign affairs review. As members of that committee, we have seen how interested Canadians from all walks of life are in the changes that have taken place in the world and the participation we as Canadians are making in it.

The member for Vancouver Quadra spoke eloquently about the end of the cold war and what the effect of that has meant. What it has meant for Canadians is not that we have had a peace dividend as a result of the end of the cold war, but that there has been a creation of a state of instability. There are more local and regional wars going on around the world today than at any other time in the 20th century.

The reason for that was explained to us when we were in New York at the security council and I think it is evident to all. At the time of the cold war there was a need for the superpowers to ensure that local conflicts did not arise. Now whole continents like Africa are subject to enormous strains, stresses and conflicts, without any need for a superpower to ensure that peace is kept there. This can move to other areas. We have seen it in Cambodia; we have seen it elsewhere. We see it in the former Yugoslavia.

Canada has an interest in this problem. The member for Red Deer seemed to think these problems of pestilence and famine and refugees were a long way away from us and were not our problem. The problem is that in today's world, in an integrated world, everyone is our neighbour. And when our neighbour's house is on fire we had better be part of the fire equipment trying to put it out or we are going to get burned and consumed by those flames, whether they come to us in the form of disease, in the form of refugees or in the form of the violence which is occurring in other parts of the world.

When we look at the type of violence occurring in various parts of the world we see a new form of war. A very eloquent spokesperson at the United Nations told us that these were no longer wars between fighting militias, that most of the casualties are civilians. The Bosnian snipers are not sitting sniping at one another. They are sniping at women and children trying to get water from a well, trying to conduct their normal lives.

Does the House know there are something like 110 million mines presently sown around the world, with another 2.5 million being sown every year? There is no capacity to remove those. The amount of agricultural land that is being removed and unavailable to people is creating a social problem down the road which is going to affect us all.

Canada not only has its own interests involved, we have a moral obligation in these circumstances. We also have expertise and values that make us desirable. All of us today were proud today to recognize Major–General Dallaire in the gallery. It is clear that his type of professionalism and expertise is the type of role Canadians can play on this extraordinarily complicated stage of world affairs into which we are entering.

• (2040)

When we were in New York with our committee we heard from the United Nations' authorities about the need for Canadian peacekeepers because of our values, because we are not American, because we are not a great power. We bring a certain expertise and a certain value of being conciliators to our role. They need at the United Nations particular types of troops. They need communications personnel. They need medical personnel. They need police. The role of the RCMP in the former Yugoslavia is incredible.

I attended a lecture recently given by Michael Ignatieff who some members may have seen with his television program on the problems in that area. He spoke eloquently about the extraordinary role that the RCMP played bringing order to a community and enabling people to be able to live together.

This is a Canadian story. This is why it makes sense to be where our government has chosen to be. Our government is to be commended for being in Rwanda. Our government is to be commended for being in Haiti. Why? It is because the United Nations asked us to be there. We responded to a United Nations call.

There is a new reality in this world. We are partners in the United Nations. We are partners in peacekeeping in those parts of the world with our United Nations' partners. Part of the reality is that there is a reform of the United Nations' institutions presently taking place that will correspond to the new type of peacekeeping of which Canada can be a leader. There is a reform of those institutions. There will be a reform of the Security Council. There will be a reform of the way in which the United Nations delivers these peacekeeping operations.

If Canada participates fully she can be a leader in offering a way in which that reform will take place. It will be of benefit to us as Canadians and to the world as a whole. It will include providing intelligence at the UN. It will include UN monitoring. Some of the reforms are there. Other reforms are to come. We

are a participant in it because we participate in peacekeeping activities and are a leader in those activities.

We also will be a leader in what I would call the new areas that we must examine. There are the traditional peacekeeping activities that we have heard a great deal about in the House today but I want to urge the House to consider some of the evidence that we heard in New York about the need for humanitarian interventions that, if exercised at the right time, not militarily, still have an effect.

We heard the story of Dubrovnik where UNICEF went in. They were not men with machine guns but UNICEF members who went in to save children. They went in with publicity. The effect of that was to stop the bombardment of Dubrovnik in 28 days.

There is no reason why Canadians with their expertise in participating in peacekeeping activities, why these reserves that we have heard about with the tremendous experience that they have in their civilian life, cannot be brought to bear in a way to create novel, new ways to participate in peacekeeping without the old militaristic way of doing it. Can we not bring in a sense of Canadian values that will enable others to resolve their problems peacefully.

It is something that we can be leaders in urging the United Nations to adopt. I am sure that other members, including members from all parties in the House who have been actively participating in the committee's activities will be anxious to pursue and examine those opportunities.

[*Translation*]

In concluding, I would like to mention something that I think is rather strange about tonight's debate and it is the lack of a national dimension in our speeches.

I was deeply touched by the Leader of the Opposition when he said that Canada's work for peace is one of the finest things it does—I believe that I am quoting him correctly. That is true. But, as a Canadian, as a person born in Quebec and very proud of our armed forces, for instance the Royal 22nd Regiment, I ask myself a question.

• (2045)

When we take pride in these organizations, when we see what we could achieve with a united army, the Royal 22e Regiment from Quebec City and the Princess Patricia's from Calgary, when we see what we can do as a united country, we wonder what role an independent Quebec and what role a divided Canada would have in peacekeeping.

I think that what we have here is an example of the way Canada can change the world. We can change the world if we remain united, if we participate with the strength of a united economy and a united people. We cannot achieve that if we are divided into smaller parts; the world would be poorer and we would be poorer as well.

[*English*]

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to finish off a long day today for everybody to speak on Canada's role in peacekeeping.

We are all very fortunate to be a member of this great country that has had an exemplary reputation in its role of peacekeeping and peacemaking throughout this century. It is a part of our international identity and one that has enabled us to have enormous gains both economically as well as diplomatically. It has allowed us to exert a power in this world beyond the size of our country.

All around the world Canadians have been working long and hard often risking their lives to bring peace to areas wracked by civil strife, conflict and human suffering. We are fortunate in this country to be in a very special situation. Few countries in the world share the international reputation that we have in Canada as being honest brokers.

Few countries in the world have the vast connections, enormous peacekeeping and human rights experience without the aggressive colonial history. We are also looked upon as being straight shooters and honest in our dealings.

It is this special and unique situation that has enabled us to be a world leader in foreign affairs. In fact I believe that we as a country can change the face and the way in which countries interact with each other in the 21st century. It will be a need, mark my words, that will be placed on our shoulders. It will challenge us and it will be a need that we cannot ignore because few countries in the world with the exception of some European countries have the ability to do this.

It will enable us to have a proactive foreign policy instead of a reactive one. No country in the world has a proactive foreign policy. They are all reactive, the United States included. This costs more because as conflicts occur, they boil up and get out of control. It costs us a lot less to get into these situations earlier than later.

I will come back to this later, but let us first look at our need for peacekeeping and peacemaking in the world. It is patently evident that the number of conflicts that exist in the world are going to escalate in the post cold war era. Rather than getting a peace dividend we have an era of greater uncertainty than we have had in recent memory. No longer are the antagonists and protagonists so easily defined. Also, security must be redefined.

I would submit that as well as militarily security must involve the environment, economic, political and social. But when a nation's security is being threatened as I have defined it either through military intervention or otherwise, we get the mass migrations of people as we saw as a consequence in Rwanda. With the absence of human needs and resources conflicts are bound to erupt and escalate.

Diminishing resources, civil strife, political and social disintegration, poverty and mass migration such as we have seen, all these combine to create environments that produce conflicts which call for greater demands on our international assistance role. It is international assistance that we will be asked to give and it will increase in the future. But we as a country must decide beforehand what conflicts we are going to get involved in and which ones we will not.

We have already dealt with this and speakers in my caucus have eloquently spoken to this, so I will not deal with it. Suffice it to say we must develop a criteria as to which ones we will get involved in and which ones we will not.

By being selective we will be able to fulfil our obligations in peacemaking and peacekeeping in an effective fashion as opposed to trying to be all things to all people and be unsuccessful in doing so.

• (2050)

This is a double edged sword, for it will produce a crisis of conscience in the Canadian people as the number of conflicts that we are forced to engage in will increase, Nigeria, Cuba, Kashmir, South Korea. They are all potentially going to blow up in the future. Be forewarned that it is going to be very difficult for the Canadian people to turn their backs when they see the carnage which is going to potentially occur on the television set.

In order to avoid these crises of conscience, in order to save money we must avoid the problem. Herein lies the solution. I would submit that we must decrease the number of conflicts by getting involved in them earlier. That is where our special role as a country comes in.

In my capacity as a physician I believe it is a lot easier to involve preventive medicine than to treat a disease when it happens. I think we ought to apply this idea in our foreign policy.

This is where Canada's role comes in, where our expertise and our special relationship in the world can be used as an honest broker to diffuse these situations before they happen. Canada must involve existing multinational organizations such as the UN, the OAS and the OAU. We must strive for diplomatic solutions and put pressure through multinational organizations and through diplomatic efforts to arrive at diplomatic solutions to ease these conflicts. We must also decide beforehand on what graded levels of intervention we are going to have.

I also believe that a regional solution is better because the people in the area understand the social and cultural dynamics of their region. In addition, I believe it is also in their interest and responsibility to share in the security of their region. Canada cannot nor should it foot the bill for conflicts all over the world. That is why we have regional organizations and that is why they must share the costs of these endeavours to avert disasters and catastrophes before they happen.

Where peacekeepers are necessary I believe the first role of Canada should be to convince regional organizations to put forth their troops and equipment in the field in lieu of Canadian troops. Canada and other non–regional organizations can then provide technical assistance where necessary.

Another aspect I would like to deal with, and it is of a personal nature I must admit, is in view of the Cairo conference on population development. Populations are expanding geometrically on this planet and with this increase in population comes the increase in human activity and utilization of finite resources which in turn causes competition for resources. This in turn will cause political, economical and social instability and ultimately civil strife and mass migrations from areas that have to areas that have not. This would in turn produce a demand on our country for our peacekeeping needs and also for developmental assistance.

I would implore this government to look at giving a larger section of our dwindling foreign aid package in favour of family planning endeavours and education which are critical to address this problem, for only by engaging in this, along with our foreign aid and trade policies, will we be able to ensure that basic human necessities of people are met and that civil strife and conflicts are averted.

This is not about morals. It is about caring. We as a country consider ourselves to be a kind and compassionate society. I am not asking us to look into the future five years, but let us look fifty and one hundred years into the future. It took from the beginning of time to 1950 to create a population of 2.5 billion. It took a mere 37 years to double that to 5.7 billion. By the year 2030 we will have 11 billion people on this planet.

This growth is unsustainable and will produce conflicts in those regions. That is why we are obligated to address this problem right now.

The Deputy Speaker: It was an excellent debate. May I have your permission to call it nine o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to reidentify the question that I asked in the House on Monday past. The question I believe was perhaps misunderstood or perhaps the minister of immigration just did not know how to answer it and I would like to represent it.

My question was when will the minister stop holding out as one of the last lone defenders of a policy that a vast majority of Canadians, even his own officials, see as being out of touch.

The response I got was that it would be very unfortunate if we were simply to draw wild conclusions from every single document coming from any department.

Perhaps I should put the question a little plainer. It is about drawing conclusions. The issue I have at hand is a Mr. Salinas Mendoza, an individual who has been in this country since 1988. He has had 12 criminal convictions. He was deported. The reason he was deported is that a young lady who was sexually molested had agreed with crown counsel and immigration to have the charges stayed on the condition that he be deported and, lo and behold, he was escorted out of our country and two or three months later he was back in our country. The young lady virtually ran into him in a grocery story.

The question is obvious. Is it really a wild conclusion that this individual should be back? He actually identified himself at the Douglas border crossing in Vancouver and he was told to apply for his refugee status at another hearing.

By the way, I am into the fifth or sixth hearing with this fellow and I have to ask the question is it just a wild conclusion that this individual should not be back?

I want to ask as well in conjunction with that if it is a wild conclusion that the young lady who was sexually molested has virtually no help from government funding and so on to help her with her feelings. After six hearings and there are three more coming up, what has happened is that taxpayers' money has been found to provide for a refugee hearing officer, two refugee board members, an interpreter for this fellow, an individual from legal aid. We also found a way at his request to find an individual from the United Nations to observe.

Is it a wild conclusion that this illegal immigrant criminal is treated better than the young lady? Is it a wild conclusion that I find myself under investigation by the privacy commissioner at the request of this illegal alien, this criminal, who has 12 charges and one outstanding rape charge?

Is it a wild conclusion to think that my rights are probably a little less than those of this individual? You have a member of Parliament duly elected by Canadian citizens who is actually the one under investigation. It sounds a little reversed. I am wondering if that is a wild conclusion.

Finally, is it a wild conclusion to assume that in one week in July this individual is considered by an immigration adjudicator to be a danger to the public? An appeal is made and seven days later another immigration adjudicator lets him out on the street. Is it a wild conclusion to think that one hand in that department does not know what the other hand is doing?

My question remains what on earth is going on in this department and is the answer that I am drawing wild conclusions from the minister of immigration?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I stand here to ensure that the minister of immigration is neither lone nor lonely.

The minister has already stated very clearly in the House his department has just concluded an unprecedented eight–month consultation process during which he has heard the views of Canadians from all walks of life from all across the country.

During these consultations he has been advised to limit family class immigration and also to increase it. Some people want him to reduce the number of refugees admitted and others want him to expand it. A broad section of the people in the country have come forward with their views and now it is the responsibility of the minister to study these recommendations and to devise a long term immigration strategy that will serve the needs of all Canadians.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): The guy is on the streets.

Ms. Clancy: I was kind enough not to interrupt the hon. member. Perhaps he could do me the same courtesy.

This will continue to meet our longstanding objectives of reuniting families, bringing economic benefits to Canada and providing protection to those who need it.

While these consultations have been taking place all government departments have been required to review the operation of their programs in order to determine their cost effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency.

During the review of these programs in citizenship and immigration officials have considered recommendations which reflect those heard during the consultations. However, it is important to remember that these are parallel and not competing activities. They do not cancel one another out. They are both necessary and valid sources of advice and information upon which the minister will make his decisions on the long term strategy.

Furthermore, they are not the only things which the minister must take into account. He must also factor in Canada's international obligations and the positions of the provinces.

Decisions on the future immigration strategy have not yet been taken but this House can rest assured they will be taken by a minister who will act in the best interests of all Canadians, not on the basis of occasional opinion polls.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Time has expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 9.02 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 22, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

CANADA GRAIN ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-51, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act and respecting certain regulations made pursuant to that act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

Hon. Herb Gray (for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-272, an act to amend the Criminal Code (gun control).

He said: Mr. Speaker, today it is my pleasure to introduce a private member's bill to amend some of the more contentious clauses in the Criminal Code pertaining to gun control.

This bill decriminalizes offences against regulations respecting storage, display, handling and transportation of firearms. It simplifies the FAC renewal process and allows previous law-abiding gun owners to acquire an FAC without going through the course and test.

It allows gun owners to bequeath grandfathered restricted guns. It clarifies the legal obligation of this government to provide compensation for confiscated firearms. It makes all future and existing regulations subject to review by the House of Commons.

• (1005)

Canadians are demanding crime control, not gun control. It is time for the government to get tough on criminals, not create more red tape for legitimate gun owners.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

PETITIONS

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions this morning. The first one is from petitioners in and around metropolitan Toronto and concerns the Young Offenders Act.

It calls on Parliament to provide for heavier penalties for those convicted of violent crime and to provide more funds to police departments. I want to remind these petitioners that Bill C-37 is currently before the House of Commons and will address some of those concerns.

ABORTION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from 52 people in my riding of Scarborough West.

They call on Parliament to immediately extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my third petition is from quite a number of the good citizens of Belleville, Ontario.

They have asked me to present a petition calling on Parliament not to amend the Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or to use the undefined phrase sexual orientation in any legislation.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I present a petition of 74 people from the areas of Osoyoos, Oliver, Okanagan Falls, Penticton of my riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt.

The petitioners say that the majority of Canadians believe the privileges that society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships.

Therefore the petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way that would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition this morning on behalf of the Catholic Women's League from Kapuskasing.

Its members would like Parliament to review and revise our laws concerning young offenders by empowering the courts to prosecute and punish the young law breakers who are terrorizing our society by releasing their names and lowering the age limit to allow prosecution to meet the severity of the crime.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to present every petition from my constituents that conforms with Standing Order 36 regardless of my personal views.

I therefore present a petition requesting that this Parliament maintain the status quo regarding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act to avoid any semblance of societal approval for same sex relationships.

The petition, which erroneously states that Canada has a human rights code, is identical to many petitions that have been presented in this Parliament over the past several months. I suspect they are part of an organized campaign to deny a significant group of Canadians equal rights.

I do not believe that we as parliamentarians have the authority to extend or deny any person's right on the basis of petitioners' personal convictions or beliefs. We have the important responsibility of ensuring that all Canadians have the same rights. Without this none of us has any true guarantees.

SCHOOL BUSES

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by numerous residents of the city of Kingston and the surrounding area.

These residents are concerned about injuries occurring to young children in school buses. They call upon Parliament to enact legislation that will require that all buses used to transport children be equipped with individual seat belts, one for each child, in accordance with normal practice in vehicles.

• (1010)

MINING

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from more than 300 workers at Heath steel mines and Brunswick mines in New Brunswick.

These petitioners want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that Canada's investment climate is forcing its mineral industry to look for new opportunities elsewhere. The Canadian Mineral Industry Federation has prepared a 10 point program of action to be addressed by both the mineral industry and the Government of Canada to keep mining in Canada.

It urges Parliament to take action to increase employment in the mining sector, promote exploration, rebuild Canada's mineral reserves, sustain mining and keep mining in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I believe a member of the Official Opposition wishes to present a bill on behalf of another member. Since we forgot to recognize the member earlier, I will ask for unanimous consent to give him an opportunity to present this bill now.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

INTEREST ACT

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–273, an Act to amend the Interest Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to introduce a private members' bill whose purpose is to reduce the fees or penalties for renegotiating a mortgage for a period of less than five years. There was considerable debate on the subject in 1983, just after the recession in the early eighties. I therefore table this bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 62 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 62—**Mr. de Savoye:**

In the Department of Health estimates, has the government provided for an amount of money for Canada's anti–drug strategy and, if so, (*a*) what is that amount; (*b*) what proportion of that amount is allocated to alcoholism problems; and (*c*) what proportion of that amount is allocated to problems involving drugs other than alcohol and tobacco?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): (a) $21.5 million. (b) and (c) Health Canada's role in canada's drug strategy, CDS lies in the areas of prevention and control. For many years prevention activities have been directed toward alcohol whereas in the past 10 to 15 years studies show Canadians to be poly drug users. Consequently, Health Canada's prevention programming aims to address the factors associated with drug taking behaviour in general without differentiating by drug such as alcohol, benzodiazepene, cannabis, cocaine et cetera. In addition, programming tends to be target group specific where different combinations of drugs use affects women, seniors, youth and natives differently.

Below is a detailed breakdown of Health Canada programs funded by CDS.

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH CANADA INITIATIVES FUNDED UNDER PHASE II OF CDS	$000
CDS Public Awareness and Information Campaign	Social marketing activities and substance abuse progamming will be developed for out-of-the-mainstream youth, seniors, women, Natives (both on and off reserve) and first and repeat D.W.I. offenders.	4,281
Education and Training Unit	Consultation meetings with working committees, consultants, service providers and youth were aimed at identifying projects/roles for addressing the needs of out-of-the-mainstream youth. These results will eventually lead to the implementation of Life Skills for youth (i.e. National Training).	180
Alcohol and Other Drugs Unit (AODU)	The AODU participates in collaborative program strategies, policy development, research activities and national workshops.	949
Community Support Program of CDS	The Program is focused on providing funding to projects aimed at reaching those Canadians who are particularly vulnerable to the harm by substance abuse.	6,000
On Reserve Component	The initiative is aimed at designing and implementing culturally and linguistically specific health promotion, prevention, and educational activities for on-reserve First Nation and Inuit youth.	1,500
Off Reserve Component	This initiative aimed at designing, and implementation of culturally specific health promotion, prevention, and education activities related to solvent abuse for off-reserve Aboriginal youth.	1,000
Drug Abuse among Health Professionals	Along with provincial licensing authorities, this initiative will improve the detection of professionals abusing drugs and to provide increased advice and support toward their rehabilitation.	300
Drug Identification and Analysis	This initiative provides laboratory and technical services to law enforcement agencies within Canada, primarily through drug analysis and support to clandestine laboratory investigation.	600
Control of Anabolic Steroids	This initiative attempts to control the production of the precursors (essential chemicals in the production of drugs). By establishing laws and reclassifying anabolic steroids under the Food and Drugs Act.	200
National Health and Research and Development Program (NHRDP)	The NHRDP'S mandate is to introduce a program of targeted research bearing on the reduction of harm caused by alcohol and other drugs.	1,800
Targeted Research	Literature reviews were conducted on the designated "at-risk" populations including key findings relating to these groups and their consumption of alcohol and other drugs.	1,000
Drug Diversion Prevention	This initiative undertakes a sustained and effective drug regulation control program by expanding awareness and compliance initiatives associated with professional practice, and enhancing activities to prevent the diversion of narcotic and controlled drugs to illicit markets.	100
Enforcement and Control - New Legislation	To fully implement the provisions of the U.N. Convention of Psychotropic Substances to which Canada is signatory.	700
Enforcement and Control - Methods of Analysis	To develop standards and methods for identification of psychoactive substances including new disigner drugs.	300
Canada's Drug Strategy Secretariat	CDSS provides coordination, communication and evaluation function within and across the federal CDS partners as well as others.	1,000
Anti-Drug Profiteering Units	Involved in the destruction of drugs and assets seized under the Narcotic Control Act and the Food and Drugs Act (Parts III and IV).	170

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION OF HEALTH CANADA INITIATIVES FUNDED UNDER PHASE II OF CDS	$000
Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse	A national NGO which houses a national clearinghouse on substance abuse, a policy and research unit and provides leadership and a national focus for government (FPT), community and labour organizations.	1,420
	TOTAL YEARLY FUNDING ($000):	21,500

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered.

Mr. Milliken: I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed from September 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Mr. Silye: Are we voting on the whole bill or just on the amendment?

The Deputy Speaker: On the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 82*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Chatters
Cummins
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Frazer
Gouk
Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel
Hanger
Hanrahan
Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hayes
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoeppner
Jennings
Johnston
Kerpan
Manning
Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison
Penson
Ramsay
Ringma
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Silye
Solberg
Speaker
Stinson
Strahl
Thompson
White (Fraser Valley West)
White (North Vancouver)
Williams—46

NAYS

Members

Adams
Allmand
Althouse
Anawak
Anderson
Arseneault
Assad
Assadourian
Asselin
Augustine
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand
Bakopanos
Barnes
Bellehumeur
Bellemare
Berger
Bergeron
Bernier (Beauce)
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bertrand
Bethel
Bevilacqua
Blondin–Andrew
Bodnar
Bonin
Bouchard
Boudria
Brien
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett
Bryden
Bélair
Bélisle
Caccia
Calder
Cannis
Canuel
Caron
Catterall
Cauchon
Chamberlain
Chan
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)
Clancy
Cohen
Collenette

Collins	Comuzzi
Copps	Cowling
Crawford	Crête
Culbert	Dalphond-Guiral
Daviault	de Savoye
Deshaies	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Discepola	Dromisky
Dubé	Duceppe
Duhamel	Dumas
Dupuy	English
Fewchuk	Fillion
Finestone	Finlay
Flis	Fry
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gallaway
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jacob	Jordan
Kilger (Stormont-Dundas)	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Lastewka
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Lincoln
Loubier	MacDonald
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Maheu	Malhi
Manley	Marchand
Marchi	Marleau
Massé	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McTeague
McWhinney	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Ménard	Nault
Nunez	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Parrish
Patry	Payne
Peric	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pillitteri	Pomerleau
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Riis
Robichaud	Robinson
Rocheleau	Rock
Rompkey	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Skoke	Solomon
Speller	St-Laurent
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Szabo
Terrana	Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Venne
Verran	Walker
Wappel	Wayne
Whelan	Wood
Young	Zed—194

PAIRED MEMBERS

Debien	Gagnon (Québec)
Harper (Churchill)	MacAulay
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Paré
Plamondon	Ringuette-Maltais

• (1100)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment lost. The next question is on the main motion.

[*Translation*]

Some hon. members: Debate.

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak in the debate on second reading of Bill C-44, which proposes amendments to the Immigration Act, the Citizenship Act and the Customs Act.

Before getting into the details of this bill, I would like to offer a few observations and comments that should make us think about the impact of the decisions we will be asked to make ask a result of Bill C-44.

In part I of Canada's immigration policy document, when referring to the broad objectives, paragraphs *(i)* and *(j)* clearly state the needs, and I quote:

> (*i*) to maintain and protect the health, safety and good order of Canadian society; and
>
> (*j*) to promote international order and justice by denying the use of Canadian territory to persons who are likely to engage in criminal activity.

Obviously, the party I represent fully agrees with this position. These are principles and objectives that we support because they reflect a broad consensus in a society that is based on the rule of law.

There are also a number of concerns directly related to Bill C-44 which remain essential to an understanding of the issues.

During the consultations on immigration conducted recently by the minister, someone said that intolerance was the biggest growth industry in Canada. Intolerance produces hysteria, racism and fear, so that reality becomes clouded by one's perception of reality. That is why the public has been led to believe for some time that criminal immigrants are countless in our society. It will soon come to think that crime is a characteristic of immigrants.

• (1105)

So, we must firmly oppose the spreading of deformed and false information about immigration that prevents a trust relationship from being created between the welcoming society and immigrants.

Last year, an in-house study by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration reminded us that there are no links between the ethnic origin and a propensity to crime. Unlike what some popular trend would lead us to believe, Mr. Derek Thomas, a senior researcher with the department, confirms that people born in other countries and now living in Canada are under-represented in our prisons.

While 20.2 per cent of the Canadian population is comprised of newcomers, these same people only represent 11.9 per cent of prisoners or those on probation, that is half of that. Again,

unlike some popular clichés, visible minorities were not over–represented in criminal statistics.

Because of the many questions that are being asked by the public and the concerns that it is showing, it is worth reminding that the crime rate in this country has been reduced by 5 per cent in 1993. According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics: "For the second consecutive year, the crime rate reported by police services has dropped in 1993. The 5 per cent reduction has been the most important on a year–to–year basis since criminal statistics were first collected in 1962". These are the facts.

That confirms what I was saying earlier about reality and perceptions. While the public thinks that the overall crime rate has increased, that is not the reality. The same goes for the link that the public is trying to establish between immigration and crime. I do not intend in any way to trivialize criminal activities, because they really do exist in our society and everywhere in Canada.

I know that the public is concerned for its safety. Surveys are showing that. However, let us get things straight. This House has the duty to rely on facts and act accordingly. One also has to wonder about and to denounce the source of these errors and perceptions of the public. This House should not be a reflection of papers like *Allô Police* or media sensationalism which overexpose individual cases and give the impression that they are now the norm in Canada.

It is unbelievable that after trying to blame young people for every ill under the sun, we are now targeting immigrants. Should we not ask ourselves whether social and economic conditions have more to do with crime than immigration? The difficulties that immigrant families and young people in particular have to face—lack of money, lack of jobs, lack of training—have probably more to do with crime than immigration as such.

• (1110)

I now want to go back to the wording of Bill C–44 introduced by the government on June 17 of this year. Its object is to tighten the provisions of the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act to reduce the legal recourse of immigrants and refugee claimants found guilty of crimes in Canada.

First, I would like to stress that government has indeed the right and the duty to protect its citizens against crime. In that sense the Official Opposition is not against trying to make sure that dangerous criminals do not prolong their stay or settle in Quebec or Canada. We support the underlying principles of Bill C–44, but we seriously question the nature of some of the proposed measures.

The first question we have is about the rationale for such a bill. Do we have specific reasons to seek to tighten the legislation because of criminal activity, especially among immigrants and refugees? How can we explain the increased opposition to criminal immigrants in the public opinion in English Canada? Could it be that a wave of disinformation has influenced English Canadians, giving rise to fear and almost xenophobic attitudes?

Mr. Speaker, beyond these apprehensions, there are specific provisions in Bill C–44 that we are concerned about. The most important of these provisions is the explicit intent to eliminate the right to appeal for immigrants and refugees charged with an offence punishable by a minimum ten–year jail sentence. This seems to be contrary to the fundamental principles a so–called "just" society should be based on. We all remember who promoted this concept. What we are demanding today is a society as just as when it first became a buzzword. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms must apply to everyone when it comes to fair and equitable proceedings.

There is another element of this bill which causes us some concern; it has to do with sentencing. Bill C–44 only takes into account the maximum sentence for a given crime instead of the particular sentence handed down by the judge. Indeed, even though under the Criminal Code a particular crime is punishable by a ten–year jail sentence, the courts use the sentencing principles to determine the penalty.

For example, break and enter in a private home is punishable by life; offences such as being an accessory to counterfeiting credit cards could justify the deportation of the accused to his country of origin.

As you know, the sentences handed down are generally far less severe than the maximum permitted. In some cases, instead of a fine or a jail term, the sentence may even be suspended or the accused put on probation. As a consequence, an individual who receives a light sentence could still be forced to leave the country.

This provision could contravene the Geneva convention. The handbook of the High Commissioner for Refugees stipulates and I quote: "In evaluating the nature of the crime presumed to have been committed, all the relevant factors—including any mitigating circumstances—must be taken into account".

• (1115)

Bill C–44 should take these comments into consideration.

Another aspect not covered in Bill C–44 is the distinction between a political crime and a crime under common law. We find it disturbing that someone would be removed from Canada for, say, political reasons, without regard for the risks awaiting him in his country of origin. This sort of rule clearly lacks

flexibility and humanity. Should we not weigh the risks involved against the acts committed?

Other important questions come to mind. What will happen to permanent residents who have been living in Canada for several years? In some cases, they came to this country as children. Now adults, they work here, have families here and barely remember their country of origin. They no longer have friends or family there. This is the reality. These people are in fact Quebecers or Canadians. Is returning them to their country of origin a good solution, the right solution?

Other aspects of this bill also deserve our attention. The bill the minister has tabled proposes to grant immigration officers the authority to seize and open all parcels and documents suspected of being used for fraudulent purposes. Is this not contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms? I think it is. Under our legal system the accused is presumed innocent. This right must apply to everyone.

The provisions for the seizure of mail reverse the burden of proof. On what basis would a seizure be carried out and how would the nature of the parcels be determined? These questions are weighty ones.

The Bill also provides that certain decisions formerly taken by the Immigration and Refugee Board, the IRB, will henceforth be taken by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and his officials. On the one hand, the minister is being given new authority to appeal decisions made by adjudicators, and on the other hand the board is being denied the right to review cases for humanitarian reasons. Is this a case of the administrative process being politicized? Is it an attack on the independence of the IRB? Would it not be better to try to improve the operation of the board? I think it would.

There are other aspects of this bill I could question. We will have the opportunity to discuss it further in the standing committee dealing with the issue. A study released by Citizenship and Immigration Canada this summer showed that the whereabouts of 1,888 foreign criminals slated for deportation remained unknown. Is there no way of locating these individuals and trying to prevent this kind of thing from happening in the future without putting up yet more entry barriers, and thus risk finding ourselves in embarrassing situations like the ones described earlier?

Do missing foreign criminals constitute a specific problem? In other words, are there more of these criminals than Canadian or Quebec ones? How many Canadians and Quebecers is the police unsuccessfully trying to locate at present? Are their numbers substantially lower than those of immigrants who are sought by police?

To better inform and reassure the public, the elected government, this Liberal government, should release all the information relating to the issue of foreign criminals.

• (1120)

Immigrants and refugee claimants would not be subjected to this witch hunt then. I wish to make it clear that the Bloc Quebecois is aware of the problem created by foreign criminals currently in Canada. We also know that criminal activity causes turmoil and fright in local communities.

We will support the government in its efforts to find a fair and lasting solution to this problem. We entirely agree with immigrants and refugee claimants not being allowed to use our immigration legislation or the reputation of Canada or Quebec to flee their country of origin, where they have committed serious crimes. We are in complete agreement with that.

However, we shall not let ourselves be distracted by unfounded remarks which, as we pointed out, may not reflect the reality. It seems that the Canadian government is presently taking a more radical stance to appeal to a certain constituency. Just think of the young offenders legislation passed this past session. Think also of the stronger and stronger reservations expressed by the Liberal caucus about gun control or concerning Motion M–157 put forward by the Liberal member for Scarborough—Rouge River to reduce immigration levels in times of economic recession.

While on the subject, I might add that Bill C–44 like many other government initiatives does not reflect the Quebec reality. Public opinion in Quebec reacts quite differently from our Canadian neighbours with respect to how crime and immigration should be tied together.

As pointed out quite rightly in the *Globe and Mail*, last week, the people of Quebec did not let a few sordid cases reported recently in Canada, and which we deplore, influence their attitude or behaviour toward immigration. Perhaps this is another characteristic of Quebec's distinctiveness, is it not? Immigrants are a fundamental addition to the Canadian and Quebec society and they contribute undeniably to its collective wealth. Legislation to deny the right of entry and asylum to criminals should not put us in an awkward position.

There are sometimes discrepancies between the goals set and the measures put forward to achieve them. Bill C–44 as tabled in second reading seems to be so afflicted. In light of the questions and comments raised by the members of this House, we express the wish that the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration improve this legislation and, in so doing, restore the trust of the Canadian and Quebec public in their institutions.

[*English*]

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker,I certainly thank the member for his presentation. I believe it lacks in some areas given the fact that, as the member must realize, the accord Quebec has with the federal government regarding immigration is substantially different from the rest of the country.

I do not know if he is aware of that. He might be to some degree. He mentioned in his presentation that the attitude in Quebec and that of Quebecers is different with reference to immigration than it is in the rest of Canada. Does the member realize that with the Quebec–Canada accord only 16 per cent of the total immigration flow is into the province of Quebec? That may be very inaccurate. From what I understand, substantial numbers leave from year to year. Therefore the figure could be closer to 8 per cent or 10 per cent of all immigration into the province of Quebec.

• (1125)

I believe that is a very realistic number going into one region of the country and I believe that the rest of the country should adopt a similar percentage.

Does the member realize that the attitude of Quebecers may be different because of the fewer problems relating to immigration due to lower immigration levels? Would the member agree with that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Calgary Northeast for his comments. As I said in my speech, there was a steady decline in Canada's crime rate in 1992–93.

I am aware that Quebec's immigration law is different from that in the rest of Canada but it is not so different. As I was saying, I think we must be careful. We, as members of Parliament, have a duty and a responsibility not to rely only on what is written in the newspapers, on some journalists' tendency to sensationalize this issue. The fact remains that there has been a 5 per cent reduction in the crime rate.

It is true that today, some journalists may be tempted to make more of a case than the facts warrant. When a vicious crime is committed in a small town or community, there may be a tendency to exaggerate because it is a highly emotional time. But I think that, as members of Parliament, we must stay above the fray. We must be compassionate but when we make decisions on behalf of all Canadian people, I think me must first look at the facts. As I was saying, the facts show a decline in the crime rate.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I wish to seek unanimous consent to put the following motion:

That notwithstanding any order of this House any recorded division to be taken on Motion M–150 on September 22, 1994 be deferred until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, September 27, 1994.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I feel particularly concerned about the immigration bill introduced by the government. I must say that in my riding of Québec–Est there is the case of a Mr. Chouaiby, who arrived in Canada from Morocco in 1988. In 1989, he committed a robbery during which he seriously injured a security guard and, in 1990, he strangled a 19–year old woman.

• (1130)

He was sentenced to prison where he spent three years. In 1993, he got out and was allowed to remain in Canada by the Immigration and Refugee Board. They accepted him. They allowed him to stay in Canada for another six years, seven years in fact, until the year 2000, on the grounds that he could be rehabilitated.

However, I found their decision totally unacceptable because the mother of the woman who was strangled met him on the street after he moved back to the same neighbourhood. She saw him again several times. What a shock it must have been to see her daughter's killer in her own neighbourhood. She had to move. The troubled mother then lost her job because of the severe psychological shock she experienced. She then had to move. She does not work any more and she is still afraid of running into this man again in her neighbourhood.

I approached the minister of immigration to find out whether it is possible to deport this young man who is still violent, who is even considered by psychologists and psychiatrists to be very violent. The Immigration Act as it now stands and even if it were amended by this bill—although we may be in favour of this bill in principle—contains many shortcomings. Here is one of them: the bill does not deal with such cases, which are quite common in Canada. I think there are about 150 similar cases in Canada.

We are unable to expel this young man from Canada, at least until the year 2000, unless he commits another murder or another serious crime. That is ridiculous. It is as though Canadian citizens and especially the victim's mother were taken hostage by a violent immigrant who may be about to commit another act of violence. It is totally absurd. Totally unacceptable. This person should have been deported the day after he got out of jail. That is an example of the appalling mismanagement at the Canadian department of immigration. In fact, this case could have been invoked as a reason to tighten this act.

Of course, we, in the Bloc Quebecois, totally agree with the principle of this bill but it contains huge holes, unfortunately.

The minister should review his bill and tighten it so that it can tackle the real problems. That is the comment I wanted to make.

Mr. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Québec–Est for his remarks at this point. I think that cases like the one he just described for us occur frequently.

You know, the question of refugees is in federal jurisdiction. We in Quebec have always been open to foreigners. Now, of course, cases can arise, as I just said. Now, even though there are isolated cases, the law must still be applied. The law must be improved, but we must not make a case of it when an immigrant is accused. The law must be clear, but we must not make special cases. I think it is dangerous to make special cases. That is why we will support the bill on second reading; however, we will present amendments to improve it on third reading.

[*English*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to take part in this debate on Bill C–44.

[*Translation*]

I think that the member for Québec–Est may be talking through his hat.

[*English*]

There has already been some healthy debate in this House and elsewhere on the important topics of immigration, the enforcement of immigration issues, and the removal of a small but dangerous criminal element that has managed to infiltrate our system.

• (1135)

I use the word dangerous advisedly here. It works two ways. Certainly a few of those serious criminals who have managed to slip through the screening net are dangerous to our fellow citizens, but they are also dangerous to the health of our entire refugee and immigration policy.

For years our policies have been the envy of the world. Our citizens have had justifiable pride in a system that has both helped our country grow and has served as a bright beacon of hope on the horizon of a world beset by suffering.

Lately there have been tales of abuse of the immigration and refugee process. It is not widespread but it is enough to cause concern and concern can be healthy. When we are concerned about abuse and crime it is natural that the entire system comes under scrutiny. I am sure it is healthy for any process to get a periodic re–evaluation.

The danger we face now is that the repeated tales of wrongdoing, stories in the newspapers about criminals using red tape or quirky regulations to avoid departure, television stories about senseless crime involving people who perhaps should have been deported long ago are taking their toll on human faith and on charity. We are beginning to doubt the validity of the entire system. We cannot allow this to happen. A criminal few should not shake our faith in a system that has been decent and good and an example to the world. That is why this legislation is so important. I would hope that the hon. member for Québec–Est might see that and might possibly see his way clear to supporting it.

Just the other day in one of the newspapers I saw a map of the world reproduced. The headline on the map was "Tracking the tide of human suffering". Almost every corner of the globe was covered, from the slaughterhouses of the Balkans to the killing fields of Africa with horror stopovers in between.

We are seeing borders erased, vast legions of humanity on the move and migrations of people on a scale never before witnessed in human history. Here we are in one of the safest, healthiest and wealthiest nations in the world letting doubts and uncertainty cloud policies that have helped make us healthy, wealthy and safe and that have brought new hope and relieved the suffering of millions. I might add those policies have allowed all of us, or nearly all of us who sit in this House to be here, either ourselves, our parents, our grandparents, whomever.

We have in our hands the ability to restore faith in a process that has helped shape our destiny as a nation. The amendments enclosed in these few pages will help us get rid of the hiding places for criminals. I am not talking about criminal hideouts, something you might find in the movies. I am talking about the loopholes and anomalies of the law.

Changes to these points of law coupled with other parts to the multi–pronged strategy to curtail abuse of our immigration laws as outlined by the minister earlier will do a great deal to restore faith in a system which needs some bolstering. Let me point to a few of those loopholes and anomalies as I see them.

This legislation eliminates the possibility of one person having a number of refugee claims at the same time. It allows us to take serious criminals out of the refugee process. It also means we will not have to go behind penitentiary walls for hearings for convicted murderers who claim to be refugees.

Until these amendments came forward there was nothing officials could do to stop the citizenship process when a person was subject to an immigration inquiry and of course we cannot deport a citizen. With these changes the citizenship process stops cold until any immigration proceedings are concluded.

There is nothing here that should cause any alarm for real refugees and most of the immigrants Canada has been receiving over the years. Critics who say these amendments hurt real refugees and upright immigrants should think again. They should think of the tremendous waste of time and energy tracking down scofflaws. No, these changes do not hurt the

innocent but they will bring an increased sense of justice and integrity to the immigration and refugee system.

The amendments take away a few legal hidey–holes that have camouflaged a small criminal minority and they put some integrity back in the system. It is actions like these which will take us a long way toward restoring some of the faith in the system, faith that may have been lost in recent months and years.

• (1140)

Before I close my remarks I would like to take a moment to deal with an issue which has caused some criticism of the legislation. That is the resolution to take the decision making to allow a serious criminal to stay in Canada for humanitarian or compassionate reasons away from the immigration appeal division and put it in the hands of the minister.

This is not a plot to rob the appeal division of power, it is simply making the system more accountable. The immigration appeal division may still review these cases on questions of law and fact. The way it stands now, the minister must deal with the consequences of allowing a serious criminal to stay in Canada, but the minister does not take part in the decision making that led to those consequences.

If this legislation is approved, the government does not project or predict that far fewer removal orders will be stopped. What we do say is that our goal will be to protect Canadians who might be a danger but to still recognize the fact that some serious criminals should be allowed to remain here on humanitarian grounds.

There is a chance with this legislation to restore some faith in the system. Let us be honest here, governments do not get too many chances. If we fail on this we may not get another chance. That is why we take it so seriously. That is why we have zero tolerance for this kind of behaviour.

Let us be very blunt about this. If Canadians turn their backs on our refugee and immigration policies, the world will be a much darker and bleaker place. None of us should be playing politics with an issue which, if we look at the world around us, is a life and death issue for far too many people.

I urge all members to move this legislation forward swiftly.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the parliamentary secretary. What in this legislation addresses the concern of the member for Québec–Est, removing violent criminals who are not citizens of this country? What in the legislation deals with that problem?

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted the hon. member for Calgary Northeast is speaking for the member for Québec–Est, who I am sure will manage to speak for himself as well.

At any rate I would suggest that the hon. member for Calgary Northeast read the legislation. It is there in the bill. Perhaps if the hon. member is having some difficulty with the interpretation he could check with one of his female colleagues—I am sorry but I forget the hon. member's riding—who I know is a member of the bar. She or perhaps the justice critic might be able to help him.

However it definitely is in the legislation. I am sure if the hon. member for Calgary Northeast reads it quite carefully he will see what is there.

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, with great respect I think members should try to treat each other with a little bit more respect than was just given in that answer. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary has any comment on that.

Ms. Clancy: No, Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has no comment on that except to say she is mystified at your remarks. I do not understand. Perhaps you could explain. I am sorry.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments, the hon. member for Bourassa.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. She is a great expert and very competent in the field. She did outstanding work when she was in the opposition, but I admit that I do not follow what she was saying in her speech today. On the one hand, she talks a very humanitarian line, she always did, but on the other, how can she justify this Bill C–44 which I think is contrary to several principles of the Geneva convention?

For example, a political crime is not distinguished from a common law crime. How can she justify transferring much of the IRB's mandate to the department and the minister? For example, how can she justify no longer allowing permanent residents who have been here for 10, 20 or 30 years to appeal to the appeal division of the IRB?

• (1145)

She will expel these people because they committed a crime punishable by 10 or more years in penitentiary but in fact were fined, given a suspended sentence or put on probation. Why did the parliamentary secretary not admit, as the member of our party just said, that the crime rate has gone down in Canada in recent years and fell by 5 per cent in 1993?

Why does she not admit that the crime rate for immigrants is lower than the crime rate for Canadians who were born here and

that on the whole immigrants are more law abiding than Canadians born here? I do not follow her. I admit that she is very competent, she knows the field well and she has always taken a very humane position in this regard.

[*English*]

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I reassure the hon. critic for the Bloc, the member for Bourassa, that we will not be deporting people who do not break the law.

We agree with him very strongly that the crime rate for immigrants and refugees in this country is indeed lower than the national average, absolutely and no question. He could look it up as I am sure he has.

I would like to correct a couple of things. It may have been a difficulty in the translation but with regard to the offences it is one indictable offence under the law and two summary conviction offences.

Perhaps I did not get the question on that. If the hon. member wants to rephrase it or ask me again, I will try to get it. It is fairly straightforward. If there is a problem there I would be happy to address it.

On the question of right of appeal, the right of appeal to the appeal division of the Immigration and Refugee Board is still there on questions of law and questions of fact. There is now a humane and compassionate right of appeal to the minister. As I said in my speech, the reason for it is that the minister deals with the consequences. It is a question of accountability, as the member knows. We as elected members of Parliament are accountable to our electorate in four to five years.

In consequence, because the minister bears the responsibility in the House but the Immigration and Refugee Board is as it should be on questions of fact and law at arm's length from the minister, the minister now has a place to make decisions based on humane and compassionate grounds.

As I said in my speech as well, we do not expect the number of appeals granted to go up in leaps and bounds, but this is yet another safeguard of the humane and compassionate grounds rooted in political accountability.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, to give the member for Halifax a chance to redeem herself, I would like to ask her essentially the same question that my colleague from the Reform Party just asked her, which she did not answer. Would she be so kind as to tell me how this bill will deal with a case like the one I mentioned before?

[*English*]

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, it is with some trepidation that I get into these waters again. The hon. member did bring up a specific case in his remarks. I am sorry but I did not hear the full details of the specific case.

It would not be wise, as I am sure Mr. Speaker would agree with me, to comment on the specifics of a case. I would be happy, as I frequently do for other members of the House, to look at the file the hon. member is talking about. If he would like to see me either in my office or in the lobby to deal with the specific case I would be happy to look at it. However I think it would be unwise to deal with specifics in the matter of general debate.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to some of the debate that just went on with the hon. member for Québec–Est. He cited examples of abuse of the system. Even the answers of the parliamentary secretary made reference to some concerns that are purportedly in the legislation. Perhaps we will establish in what I am about to say that they are not in the legislation.

• (1150)

I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak on the amendments to the Immigration Act contained in Bill C–44, dealing with deportation and the strengthening of the enforcement system to deal with the threat of criminals entering into Canada. This is an area which has been in need of a serious overhaul for a long time. It is an area which my party has brought to the attention of the House and the minister on numerous occasions. Reform members have been forceful in their desire to see serious and strong amendments brought forward in the area of immigration.

While I am glad to see our efforts finally being acknowledged by the government, the bill is only a partial step forward. I believe Bill C–44 may do more harm than good by luring us into a false sense of security.

Canadians will be told that immigration has been amended and that criminals will now be kept out of the country, but this is not the case nor will it be. Canadians need to know the facts. The issue must not be glossed over by the efforts of the government to pretend that its stop gap measure will actually stop anything at all.

The bill amending the Immigration Act falls short of its desired goal because the system has not been redesigned to accommodate the changes. It is the system itself that is at fault. As we have seen in countless legislative examples past and present, without a willingness to make core systemic change tinkering with legislation will not work. There must not only appear to be a willingness to address criminality in our immigration process, but real will must produce some of the results we see are lacking in the system.

Bill C–44 is a step in the right direction in that it will help ensure that criminals are kept out of the immigration system once they are identified. And once they are identified it does limit the appeals they will have.

However the bill is impotent in that persons with a serious criminal past can arrive and stay in Canada free to move about as they wish with no restraints. Persons entering into Canada will still not have a security check done on them until just prior to a refugee hearing or when they fill out an application for permanent residence. Yes, immediate steps will then be taken to

ensure that a criminal is removed and that is good, but that is very similar to someone drawing up a plan to get a fox out of the hen house after the fox has had his run through the place. The goal is not to set up a strategy to get the fox once he is in the hen house. The goal should be to set up a system whereby we can prevent him from entering the hen house at all.

We have the people on the frontline who are there to interview those who make a claim for refugee status at the port of entry. Why do we not empower them to make an inquiry as to whether or not the applicant is a wanted criminal or someone with a serious criminal past? We do not even equip them with the necessary tools to make such an inquiry. We even go as far as to leave the door on the hen house unlocked and open with a sign that reads: "If you are found to be a fox you may be asked to leave".

This summer I had the honour of meeting with a group of police officers in the 12th Division B Platoon in Westside, Toronto, the friends and co–workers of Todd Baylis. This 25–year old constable was brutally murdered in the line of duty by a deportee designate on June 16, 1994.

What I saw and felt as I met with them was the grief of men and women betrayed by the system they try to uphold. They told of harassment, lack of information, lack of immigration enforcement, manpower and training, continual imminent danger and plummeting morale as they cope with life and death, drugs and violence in a once peaceful community.

I read the new legislation and I paused to reflect on their grief and anger on the one side and the response from the government. The new rules would do nothing to prevent the very same event from happening again.

I am amazed, as should all Canadians be, that after a senseless death—and a full inquiry by the way placed no blame—and the consequential drafting of the legislation that Todd Baylis would be in the same danger today as he was on that fateful night. Shame on those that have been part of this so–called solution. It is too late simply to say this tragedy should never have occurred, but for the friends of Todd Baylis it is a reality.

It is therefore imperative that we as legislators take seriously the obligation to tighten up a system that needs a major overhaul so that the memory of Constable Baylis will serve as a catalyst to ensure that such mistakes do not happen again.

● (1155)

The minister has said that the immigration system was not solely at fault in this particular case and the murder was as much a product of our society as deserving deportation as an immigrant. Unfortunately some truth may be here. This young man's pattern of criminality was well established over many years. Much of it was under the Young Offenders Act, another government system of rules and excuses that destroys accountability and creates a mockery of respect for the laws of the land.

The government's tinkering in both systems—the Immigration Act and the Young Offenders Act—does not reflect the will of Canadians or the real need toward the security of our streets and homes.

Bureaucrats and politicians must wake up and listen to Canadians. I have met with shop owners on Queen Street in Toronto who watch 100 crack deals a day in front of their empty stores. I have talked with struggling immigrant restaurant owners whose livelihood investment is being sucked dry by a decaying criminal neighbourhood. I receive overwhelming community feedback for changes to the age identification and record keeping for young offenders. If the government wants safe streets and homes, it should make those changes happen and make them happen soon.

The legislation before us today leaves us with some very serious unanswered questions which must be addressed. To begin with, there are serious administrative questions. The budget for the removals division for fiscal year 1991–92 was $13 million. This increased to $23 million in 1993–94. This 77 per cent increase begs this first question: How was the money spent in light of the fact that an administrative nightmare still exists in the issuance and tracking of deportation orders?

Second, what has happened to the thousands of inactive cases we heard about in the inquiry that were kept in boxes in immigration offices because there were not enough officers or administrative support staff to deal with them? Have they been dealt with now?

What about the request for a shared database between police and immigration agents to help track down those who have effectively avoided deportation? Have the department's computer systems been brought up to date with regard to determining exact numbers of refugees and immigrants that are out there facing deportation orders? Has a better system been put into place to keep track of those who were supposedly ready to leave voluntarily on their deportation orders?

Let me expand on the importance of getting answers to these questions. This summer there were approximately 26,000 warrants outstanding on deportation orders. Of these, there were approximately 11,000 immigration warrants in the Canadian Police Information Centre system which alerts police across the country to persons who are arrestable for immigration reasons.

There is a great discrepancy in these numbers. The main problem is the poor administration in this crucial area. Police are often not aware of whether or not the person they are dealing with is under a deportation order. Those people in the system and operating it are not even fully aware of the number of

deportation orders that are still active because of all the unknowns currently existing in the system.

For example, there is no way of currently knowing if a person has indeed left the country, or even if they were requested to do so, unless they were escorted out or informed the immigration authorities that they were leaving. This must change. There exists a serious flaw within the present deportation system where great emphasis is placed upon personal compliance with the order to leave.

In response to a request by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, Mr. Hallam Johnston from the department agreed to provide members of the committee with a list of impediments to removal. I quote from his reply:

> The most significant impediment to removal is the failure of persons to effect their open removal from Canada. Some examples of this include (1) failure to comply with the deportation order; (2) failure to show up for removal arrangements (approximately a 40 per cent no–show rate experienced), and (3) failure to appear at port of entry to effect the removal after arrangements have been completed (approximately a 10 per cent no–show rate experienced).
>
> The lack of travel documents is also an impediment in effecting removals. Foreign governments require returning citizens to be in possession of a valid passport or other re–entry document. The difficulty is to secure a document and satisfy the foreign government that the person being returned is a citizen.

Nowhere within this amendment is there reason to believe that this serious problem in supervising the deportation of those requested to leave Canada has been addressed. It is ridiculous to continue in this pattern. For the department to even admit that its biggest obstacle in carrying out deportations is the failure of people to remove themselves is incredulous. How can Canadians feel their confidence in this government is well founded when they hear reports like that? How can Canadians feel reassured that they are safe and secure that criminals will be deported when this government has been relying on the criminals checking themselves out of the country?

• (1200)

It should also not be of any surprise to us that foreign governments are reluctant to take their citizens back when they discover they are being deported for criminal activity.

The ironies of deportation of professional criminals was pointed out this weekend in a national news report. It was reported that Canada returned 227 deportees to Jamaica from January to July of this year, one–quarter of the total from all sources. It also pointed out that wealthy countries such as Canada are viewed by some countries as dumping our problems on them.

Does this government have a plan to assure Canadians that proper and sufficient paper work will be available for needed deportations even in the face of resistance or lack of co–operation from receiving nations?

Once those criminals are deported, can this government assure us through the integrity of our own system that those same individuals will be made to stay out?

In most cases the problems should have been averted by denying access of the criminals to Canada in the first place. This could be accomplished by having the proper computer system set up that is linked into the CPIC and Interpol systems and able to do a criminal record check on anyone applying for refugee status at the port of entry. This must be a priority.

There is also a problem with too few investigators doing the job with very little training and lack of proper backup and protection. Is it any surprise that a large number of deportations being carried out each year are served against those who are charged with overstaying their visitors' visas? These are grandmothers and grandfathers visiting kids, not dangerous criminals. Why should this change? Has the need for more investigators, better administrative support and working computer systems been established yet? Are police constables like Todd Baylis walking the beat on our city streets better informed now than they were in June?

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has stated there are three main objectives to his removal strategy: getting foreign criminals out of Canada, ensuring compliance with removal orders, and ensuring that failed refugee claimants are removed properly.

On July 7 the minister stated: "This government has adopted clear priorities for removals. Our top priority is to remove criminals. Those who present a danger to Canadian society and those who wilfully abuse the immigration system will be clearly identified and we will take whatever action is necessary to see that these people are removed from Canada. The legislation and other measures I have introduced related to criminality will allow immigration officials to take prompt, decisive action in these cases".

These are tough words. The minister must have a great deal of confidence in his present system to believe that it can accomplish these objectives without very major overhauls to the system of which to date there has been no sign.

Is this minister willing to back up these words by putting his job on the line? Will he resign his position as minister if his new task force and deportation plan are ineffective in preventing any more tragedies like those we heard about this morning and that have occurred even in this last year?

The commitment made by the minister is not new. It has been made in the past by other administrations but this minister has

promised immediate action. How has his promise been translated into action? This week there was a report in the *Globe and Mail* suggesting that Pearson International Airport authorities and facilities were unable to cope with new arrivals. Criminals were slipping through desperately overcrowded immigration facilities and given free access to our communities.

How can this minister believe we can have confidence in task forces and deportation plans when the system he claims to be adequate continues to justify the deep concern that Canadians have about an immigration system that is not working?

Since the immigration–RCMP task force came into effect in July it has identified 1,888 deportation cases involving criminality. How effective has his prompt decisive action been?

Out of all the cases identified a total of 14 have been removed from Canada. That is less than .7 per cent of the total number identified. As a matter of fact the task force has discovered that another 14 of the individuals being sought have been found to be deceased. At least the task force is keeping even in its efforts in this particular statistic.

• (1205)

Another thing for us to remember is that a task force is a temporary measure, not a permanent one. How can Bill C–44 be properly implemented when the task force and its personnel are no longer working on these cases? Where will the personnel come from? Who will be serving the deportation notices? Who will be monitoring the outcome and ensuring that those required to leave are doing so? What permanent steps are being taken to deal with the shortcomings in the system and the great need to implement the changes being proposed.

When one looks at the numbers released by the task force in August, it is interesting to note that 414 of these cases are presently in the judicial system. Another 779 are currently awaiting decisions on their claims for review of their cases. Another 532 are under investigation. Does this mean they are currently being looked for?

A major flaw in this legislation is that it presumes that someone with a serious criminal past will come to Canada and then appear at a refugee determination hearing where a security check will finally be done. It presumes upon the criminal mind that they will wait to be discovered instead of immediately going underground to prevent themselves from facing automatic deportation. There is nothing in the system or the amendments to prevent them from doing so.

In conclusion, we must ask ourselves whether or not these steps are a real solution to the problem or simply a reaction to a crisis. For example, we have yet to see how the system will deal with those who have criminal records for a string of offences including assault for which a 10–year maximum sentence does not apply. These are people who may be powder kegs ready to blow and yet the immigration system will take no action against them because they have not yet committed the ultimate crime. This particular amendment, like the Young Offenders Act, completely ignores repeat criminal activity to the peril of all Canadians.

The fact that we need tough legislation in this area is apparent enough to the people of my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam. Just mention the name of Michael Drake there to someone and you can see the anger flare up as they realize the system is still trying to deport this convicted child molester back to the United States. Not only has Drake been successful in deferring his deportation orders time and time again but he has been successful in ensuring that he is free to roam the streets while he awaits his hearing.

It is our responsibility to see that the laws are in effect that will end these kinds of travesties. Bill C–44 in itself will not make the necessary changes needed to right the wrongs created by a system that suffers so greatly from neglect. But we as legislators need to ensure that any changes we propose to the system are aimed at the heart of the problem and not simply at the needs of the moment.

We need to equip those in the trenches not just with a book of rules but with the tools to do the job. We need to assure the shopkeepers, the businessmen, the parents and the police, Canadians by birth or by choice that they do not need to fear the system that should protect them.

Bill C–44 regarding the amendments to the Immigration Act is a step in the right direction. However this legislation alone cannot make the system succeed. The government must go further to demonstrate its commitment to the safety of all Canadians in their homes and on their streets.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Port Moody–Coquitlam for a very clear presentation. I would remind her to look at the minister's remarks when he introduced the bill when he said: "Throughout the years immigrants have helped build our country. The contributions of recent immigrants are also widely recognized. But Canadians will not tolerate and I will not tolerate those who abuse our generosity and violate our laws". That is what this bill is attempting to do, to remove any immigrant or refugee who violates our laws.

We have heard from the Reform Party how we must reduce our annual deficit and public debt. I agree with the Reform Party on that. To do what the Reform Party wants in immigration will require additional resources, additional personnel resources, additional financial resources.

• (1210)

I would like to ask the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam where her party suggests we get the additional funds to implement what the Reform Party would like to see in Bill C–44.

Mrs. Hayes: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. I would like to comment on what he said aside from his question.

Certainly in my comments I sought to address the needs of all Canadians by birth or by choice. All immigrants are not criminals. In fact very few are. It is the same as with all Canadians. Very few are involved in criminal activity. It is the immigrants as much as Canadians who suffer from the abuse of our immigration system. I want to make that very clear. That is my purpose. The people whom I met in Toronto were immigrants who were victims of what was happening by the abuse of this system. I speak for them as I speak for all Canadians.

What the hon. member says is true. We feel that for the sake of the integrity of the immigration system for Canadians and new immigrants the present system is not working. It is not working in the criminal element. It is not working in the way that immigrants are welcomed into Canadian society.

We need people who can come here who have jobs available to them. We need to provide a future for people who come to this country.

True, we need to get our fiscal house in order. We need to make our economy work. We also need to provide those opportunities for the people who come here. We have to select the people so that they have the opportunity when they get here. If we bring people here with no future for them, is that fair to them or is that fair to the fellow Canadians that they join?

Yes, the immigration numbers need to be addressed so that we have an economic mix that works for all Canadians new and old. By doing that we will in fact be more than able to afford it because it will work for all Canadians.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have the greatest respect for my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam. We serve on the same committee together. She is well known for her carefully reasoned remarks on all issues.

I must say that I was surprised that in her speech she suggested this bill does not provide sufficient precautions for keeping deported criminals from re–entering the country. I was surprised at that remark because coming from a western province she will know that Canada has one of the longest undefended borders in the world and that it is traditionally and always has been impossible to keep illegals of all sorts from crossing the border at one point or another.

I would suggest to her that this bill addresses that fact by its provisions for the seizure of false documents. The way our security authorities keep track of illegals, be they criminals or otherwise, is by the fact that their documentation eventually comes under scrutiny and thus raises a red flag for the proper authorities to take action.

I point out that we are talking here about criminals who as a means of getting back into this country and staying in this country falsify passports, drivers' licences, health cards, birth certificates and so on.

I would request that my colleague opposite comment on this. Surely she would agree that this is a fine and progressive measure in this bill to close this loophole of false documentation to get these illegals out of this country.

Mrs. Hayes: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his comments and his question. I do commend this legislation for the fact that it does close that loophole of allowing illegal documents into the country. The fact that that was previously allowed astounds me. It seems most appropriate that now there is legislation in place which says no, these will not be allowed in the country.

However I do not know if I have quite addressed the hon. member's question.

• (1215)

That legislation is toward the boxes of illegal documents that would come through our postal service and then be available within this country for people to use here. The thing you were referring to though was people coming across our borders from outside with illegal documents. That part of the legislation would in no way affect someone presenting themselves at our border from outside with documents that were illegal or falsified. It could not affect that particular case.

It is at that point where our present system has no check point. We take a person's word for it. They come into our country and then are not actually processed by a security system until they then present themselves for a refugee hearing or some other kind of a hearing.

I go back to the comment I made earlier. We let the foxes into the hen house and then expect them to show up for a process that will then check their validity. There is the problem and that is not addressed by this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis): Mr. Speaker, hon. members of this House, I am proud to rise to support Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act.

[*English*]

Canada is a great and generous country. Its doors have always been open to welcome all people who dreamed of a better future,

people who came for a better life in a country free of civil violence or war in order to raise a family in one of the best countries in the world, as the UN so honoured us not once but twice.

These immigrants, people like my parents, became Canadian citizens and participate actively in all facets of our society. Canada's history is full of stories of immigrants who through their hard work and perseverance have made this country what it is today.

[*Translation*]

Throughout our history, immigrants have come to Canada. These immigrants included some individuals guilty of serious offences. Amendments must be made in order to put a stop to this problem and to correct some flaws in the Immigration Act. I want to discuss these changes, because Canadians rely on us to protect them and their children. They rely on the department of immigration as well as on Canadian police forces at the municipal, provincial, territorial and national levels. But first and foremost, they rely on the government to pass legislation that will protect their interests.

In its present form, the Immigration Act contains complex provisions as well as loopholes which allow criminals to abuse the system.

Every day, you meet people who were not born in Canada. These persons overcame various difficulties to come here with more or less money, and they adapted to our society. I am one of them.

If you ask these persons what they think of criminals and individuals who abuse the system you will see that, like the rest of us, they are frustrated, shocked and resentful. They also fear that all immigrants will be assimilated to these offenders.

Bill C–44 is an essential piece of legislation if we are to meet the expectations of all Canadians. It brings solutions to specific problems. We must send back those who are not deserving of our institutions and who only want to take advantage of our generosity, while hurting the reputation of honest immigrants and genuine refugees.

[*English*]

Canada's immigration policy plays a key role in our country's future. We believe strongly that Canada must conserve this policy and the changes which we are proposing today will help to alleviate the abuses in the system and the problems that exist.

[*Translation*]

The minister of immigration said, on August 24, at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police: "I will not tolerate those who take advantage of our generosity and violate our laws. No Canadian should put up with such an insult. A good immigration policy is one that ensures a balance between equity and tolerance, on one hand, and law enforcement, on the other hand.

• (1220)

I do not want to have to go looking for these people; I want them out of the country".

Remember that Canada has an immigration program that is the envy of the whole world. We cannot let a handful of individuals discredit it and take advantage of us. We have a good program, but it needs to be changed and fast.

The problems in this area are long–standing. It would be pointless to search for their causes. We need to act now and to take whatever action is necessary.

I would like to take a few moments to go over the four–point strategy announced by the minister of Immigration last June.

First, we want to amend the Immigration Act in order to reduce fraudulent claims and improve law enforcement measures, which should help us stop criminals from cheating the system.

Second, we want to make some changes to the management of the immigration appeal division of the IRB and improve the decision–making process.

Next, we need to exchange information with the Correctional Service of Canada on parolees facing deportation, if necessary.

Finally, guidelines are being developed to ensure that immigration officers are better prepared when they appear before the Board to discuss the files of war criminals or people who systematically use an assumed identity.

Let us review the proposed changes to the act. Right now, the immigration appeal division of the Immigration and Refugee Board can allow serious criminals to enter Canada and to stay in our country for humanitarian reasons. The immigration appeal division will lose that authority and only the minister will be entitled to allow a permanent resident, someone for example who has lived in Canada all his life, to stay in Canada for humanitarian reasons or to deport him.

[*English*]

We need to prohibit people convicted of serious crimes, crimes punishable by a sentence of 10 years or more, from claiming refugee status. This should apply whether the crime took place in Canada or anywhere else.

Dangerous criminals will no longer be able to seek refugee status in their goal to postpone removal from this country. We need to ensure that criminals are not allowed to ask for refugee status.

We also need to regulate the problem of multiple applications. Last year over 800 people presented more than one claim for refugee status. Under the proposed legislation only the first claim will be studied by the Immigration and Refugee Board.

We need to stop the flow of illegal documents used in claims. That is why we are proposing to give immigration officers the power to seize identity documents from the international mail that might be used by impostors for fraudulent or improper purposes.

[*Translation*]

The minister instead of the cabinet will be authorized to make the decision in all cases of rehabilitation of former offenders. Once the Federal Court has determined that a security certificate is justified or not, it will no longer be possible to file an appeal with the immigration appeal division of the IRB. Let us take these measures seriously. Would we not all agree that we need to have all the necessary information before we grant these people Canadian citizenship? That is exactly what another of these changes will ensure.

The proposed provisions are reasonable and fair. Contrary to what our colleagues opposite have said, these provisions are in keeping with the Geneva Convention relating to the refugee status where crime is concerned. This is a question of justice, a question of democracy.

That is why our government is committed to maintaining an immigration policy which would truly put a stop to illegal immigration and ensure effective control of our borders.

• (1225)

In order to do that, we must establish a close co–operation between the various agencies involved in dealing with frauds and crimes, for example immigration officers and members of the RCMP and of the various police forces.

We need all the men and women of local, regional and provincial police forces if we are to better enforce the law. Only with their co–operation shall we improve our effectiveness in getting rid of undesirable elements. We created a partnership with the Correctional Service of Canada for that matter and foreign offenders will not be allowed to remain in this country once they have served their sentences.

[*English*]

In addition, the minister of immigration will be working closely with the Solicitor General and the Minister of Justice. We are all partners when it comes to maintaining the security and prosperity of our country and in preserving our quality of life. These measures we are introducing will ensure the integrity of Canada's immigration and refugee system.

[*Translation*]

I will say it again, not all immigrants are criminals. Immigrants have been a part of the development of this country since the beginning of our history. Today, in this changing world, there is a constant movement of populations and the high number of immigrant applications poses crucial problems.

I am sure you will be surprised to learn that our officers have interviewed more than three million persons last year. Clearer legislation would make their work much more efficient. We all know that among the immigrants who come to Canada, some set up small businesses and contribute to job creation. We would be wrong to think they come here to steal our jobs. This is not my own saying; it has been demonstrated by statistics. Immigration is good for Canada and it must continue to be so.

[*English*]

Our intention in proposing this legislation is to eliminate the small percentage of abusers in our system who profit from the loopholes in our law. All immigrants should not have to be made to pay for the few individuals who take advantage of our country's generosity. Unfortunately this small group of immigrants is drawing the attention of the media and of course of the opposition which in turn sensationalizes these events and causes Canadians to question the integrity of our programs.

My experience of 15 years in dealing with immigrants has shown me that the large majority of immigrants want to live a peaceful and productive life. Just look around this Chamber and see how many hon. members are of ethnic origin. Many on this side of the House are children of immigrants, including the minister of immigration himself, who are now giving back to this country what this country gave to them.

[*Translation*]

Bill C–44 that we are bringing in today fulfils our requirements. It does not penalize those who wish to make an honest living in our country, but it will prevent abuse of our system. It will not have any impact on those individuals who, in good faith, make application to the Immigration and Refugee Board. As I said at the beginning of my speech, Canada is a generous country. Help us maintain that image of generosity and keep our reputation in the eyes of the world and help us prevent abuse.

Therefore, I trust that you, as members of the opposition parties, the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party, will support us. Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced that you will give your general support to this important bill.

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, you can count on the Bloc Quebecois as far as the

principles of the bill are concerned. Canada must protect itself against immigrant criminals. There is a very real problem, but this bill is not the appropriate way to deal with it. I think many of your constituents will be astonished by this legislation.

• (1230)

In St–Denis there are a lot of immigrants, a lot of Latin Americans whom I know personally and who will be astonished by your speech today, which does nothing to help the cause of immigrants or refugees. You said that Canada is generous, but its generosity is waning, unfortunately, like that of all industrialized countries, and I was surprised the other day when I heard the minister of immigration say that he would favour European immigration.

There are a lot of people who do not come from Europe, and they feel a little insulted and hurt by the minister's words. The other day I said there were a lot of socio–economic problems, which are often the reason why Canadians and a number of immigrants commit crimes. There are enormous problems in Canadian society as a result of a lingering economic recession, unemployment and problems experienced by young people. I do not think the bill provides a solution to these problems.

You say that the bill does not violate the provisions of the Geneva Convention relating to refugees. I have here a document that has just been released by the Canadian Council for Refugees, and it says the exact opposite. The Council is a respected organization in this country, and I would appreciate your comments.

Mrs. Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, it is true that my riding includes constituents who belong to various cultural communities. These are the people who voted for me, and I want to thank them again for doing so.

I have had the privilege of working with these people for fifteen years. The hon. member for Bourassa knows that I have been working with immigrants for 15 years. In fact, these very same people agree that we must do something to deal with the abuse in the system.

I will repeat what the minister said, which is that we are not trying to penalize immigrants who have not committed serious crimes. We are only trying to eliminate the abuse that exists in the system and ensure that criminals are deported from this country.

You said something I thought was very interesting. You said that we favour European immigrants. I do not think the minister of immigration ever said that this government only favours European immigrants. It is not this government's policy, and it should not be, as far as I am concerned.

I repeat what I said in my speech: We are a generous society and we want to keep it that way. Genuine immigrants who are not criminals are aware of this. Canada will continue to keep its doors open.

[*English*]

What we want to do is close the loopholes in the law.

I find it rather unusual that we have one opposition party saying we are going too far and the other one saying we are not going far enough. This indicates to me that we are doing the right thing somewhere along the line.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that the vast majority of immigrants are law abiding and contribute to Canadian society. Of course that is true. I am an immigrant myself and am making a contribution.

However when my wife and I immigrated to Canada in 1979 it was a pretty tough process. We had to apply three times from outside the country, even though we had money to buy a house here and we had jobs to come to in Canada. On entry we had to sign away our rights to UI and welfare for five years and we did not think that was a hardship. We felt proud that we had earned the right to come here. I do not personally see anything wrong with setting high standards.

When the hon. member accuses us in the Reform Party of sensationalizing some of the absolutely dreadful situations that are occurring with the immigration system, it would not be necessary if there were some sort of strict control like there was at the time when I immigrated in 1979.

I would like the hon. member to address that and answer the question as to what is wrong with establishing some reasonable standards once again.

Mrs. Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are trying to do. We are trying to establish reasonable measures in which to make sure that the few—and I want to repeat that constantly, because the image the opposition party gives to the general public is that these few people are in fact vast numbers.

• (1235)

I do not want to say that all Reform members stand up and speak about immigrants in a negative way. I really do not want my words to be misinterpreted in that way. All I want to say is that there are a few examples which are exaggerated by the media and some opposition members. Unfortunately, because members of the general public may not have the same opportunity to be in contact with members of our cultural communities across Canada, they may be left with that tainted image of someone having abused our system.

The reason I support Bill C–44 is that we are trying to do away with the loopholes and close the doors that lead to the abuse of our system and to also get rid of those criminals who take advantage of our system.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I certainly share some of the comments the member just related. However, the growing concern for many Canadians as they learn more about our immigration policy is that certain matters should be addressed.

There is the Immigration and Refugee Board which spends over a billion dollars of taxpayers' money every year. We have a system that does not adequately screen individuals who come

into the country. There is the expedited process in the Immigration and Refugee Board which allows people with very questionable backgrounds to enter and a system of sponsorship where immigrants are self–selected. I know that is being tightened up now. However this is a system that has been in place and certainly one that the people in this country question. The integrity of the government's program has to be questioned. I believe it has failed the test.

I would like the member to speak to those particular issues. The taxpayers are here. The taxpayers are paying the shot and I think they have a right to know. Would she not agree?

Mrs. Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are just as concerned as the hon. member about the costs of our system. The minister has stated publicly that he is reviewing the whole process. We are taking measures to make sure the public purse is not being overly burdened by the system.

I would also like to say that no system is perfect. There will always be people who will find a way to abuse the system, any system. That is exactly why Bill C–44 is an important piece of legislation. We are trying to do our utmost as a government to plug those loopholes that do exist. However, no law is perfect and there are always people who will get around the law. However we are doing our best as a government to make sure there are fewer ways of getting around the law.

As far as sponsorship is concerned, I think the hon. member answered the question himself. The minister has tightened up those rules and will continue to do so.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, this bill has serious, serious problems. Reform Party members elevated this issue of crime and immigration. We focused the public's attention and anger. We forced the minister who began his term as minister by stating there was no problem with crime and immigrants to introduce these measures. It may seem a bit ironic that after doing that, we are now opposing this bill.

I can assure this House and all Canadians that the Reform Party does not oppose getting tough on newcomers to Canada who break our laws. We do not oppose many of the specific measures in this bill. What we do oppose is the minister's attempt to sell this package of minor reforms as a package that will significantly address the problems of undesirable immigrants in Canada. We oppose the notion that this bill will somehow fix any of the major problems that are plaguing immigration to Canada.

We need to look no further than a few very recent high profile instances of criminal immigrants to see what effect this legislation would have. I will give away the surprise by telling members that Bill C–44 would have done nothing to prevent these tragedies.

• (1240)

First is the much publicized case of Clinton Gayle who is suspected of the murder of Constable Todd Baylis. Mr. Gayle came to the country legally. Mr. Gayle had a removal order issued against him. Mr. Gayle evaded that deportation order not by running and not by tying up the system with appeals. Rather, Mr. Gayle avoided removal because his file was lost. Mr. Gayle avoided capture and removal because the system was overworked, because priorities for removal were confused. It is more likely than not, although we will never know, because someone dropped the ball.

Bill C–44 does nothing to change the priorities of immigration enforcement. It does nothing to ensure that the system is less overworked than it is now. It does not address the problem and this problem is just as fundamental and troublesome as the actual issuance of removal orders, namely, the capture and physical removal of those who are issued removal orders.

The second case that has outraged Canadians and has illustrated the deficiencies both in immigration and in the priorities of this government was the very recent case of one Mr. Forbes. He is currently being sought for the senseless shooting of several people in Toronto over the weekend.

Tragically two of those people died at the hands of this individual. Mr. Forbes who is also from Jamaica came to Canada on a visitor's visa, as so many illegal entrants do. He overstayed that visa and a deportation order was issued. Rather surprisingly, he was removed from Canada.

I say surprisingly because the numbers of people who are removed because of an overstay on a visa are very small indeed. These cases while important tend not to receive a high priority from an overworked immigration enforcement bureau.

One must keep in mind that this took place in the mid–1980s, during a time when the number of immigrants to Canada was roughly one–third of what it currently is. Those reasonable numbers actually permitted the immigration department to do its job.

Nonetheless Mr. Forbes returned to Canada. He was again ordered deported and he again left the country. To no one's surprise he came back again and the results of his return have been tragic.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all Canadians to publicly offer my sincerest condolences to the families of those two people who were struck down by this madman and also to the other victims who were shot. I am sure all members of this House join me in offering our sincerest hopes for a speedy and full recovery.

Too often in the heat of political debate we forget about the victims and concentrate only on the perpetrator. However there

are victims here and they highlight the urgency that we must feel as we look for solutions to the problem of violent non–citizens.

The Forbes case illustrates several things. First, it illustrates the importance of enforcement in the immigration system. We can issue removal orders until we are blue in the face. We can try to stop the system from being abused. We can adopt a one strike and you are out policy for those immigrants and visitors who violate Canada's laws.

However what good does that do when we do not have any officers to carry out those removals, and I can assure you we do not. In the region of Toronto where a vast majority of deportable criminals reside, there are a total of 30 investigation and enforcement officers. That used to be 36. Before he decided to get tough, the minister cut that number. He also cut overtime staff in the Vancouver region. There simply is not the staff to find deportables.

Currently there is a backlog of deportations that best estimates put at around 40,000. Bill C–44 would do nothing at all to ensure the speedy removal of those people. Bill C–44 will probably just add to the backlog.

• (1245)

Second, Bill C–44 shows the laxity with which visas and immigration permits are granted.

It is my understanding Mr. Forbes came into the country for the last time, sponsored by his wife, despite the fact that he had been removed from the country twice before. I asked the minister yesterday, and did not receive an answer, why would someone who has been removed with a deportation order twice for whatever reason be allowed back into the country. The spokesperson for the department was reported as saying that Mr. Forbes had been removed for reasons other than criminality in the past.

Mr. Forbes had intentionally violated Canada's law by overstaying a visa. He had intentionally violated and flouted Canada's immigration laws. These violations do not carry a sentence of more than 10 years. Thus, according to the terms of Bill C–44 Mr. Forbes would not be found in violation of the act to a degree that would warrant his permanent removal from Canada. That simply does not make sense.

There are other very serious problems that the bill does not address that undermine the very integrity of the immigration policy in Canada.

Over the summer I released a document that came from the department of immigration which outlined guidelines for fast tracking through the refugee system various categories of people who in the minds of some senior bureaucrats and refugee advocates were self–evidently refugees. This included armed insurgents, former and present guerrillas, former and present members of such anti–democratic and even genocidal regimes like the Mengistu regime and the former communist government of Afghanistan, very choice members of Canadian society indeed.

These people, I have to reiterate, are not only being allowed to make refugee claims, they are being fast tracked after they admit to participation in these regimes.

I know that these folks might face persecution in their home countries and that is a good enough reason for some people in Canada's immigration industry to invite them in. In the words of one spokesperson for the Canadian Council for Refugees, it does not matter if people are torturers or terrorists, if they face persecution, they deserve refugee status in Canada. Those are his words.

I am willing to wager that most of my fellow Canadians would call that silly logic and certainly not agree with the idea that these are the sorts of people who deserve to be at the top of our list for refugee status, but currently they are.

Despite what some misinformed voices have said there are no background checks for criminality, for war crimes or for crimes against humanity done at the refugee hearing stage. Very recently the Immigration and Refugee Board told its refugee hearing officers that they were not even allowed to conduct checks through Interpol or other such recognized sources. No background checks can be performed on a refugee claimant until after they have been accepted as refugees. Often that is when the information comes forward, after they are in the system and making an application for permanent residence.

Bill C–44 will allow a refugee hearing to be halted if a criminal record is found but the bill does not give adequate power to the refugee hearing officers to undertake a thorough background check of all applicants for refugee status. It does not override the orders of the Immigration and Refugee Board to refrain from conducting background searches.

As with enforcement and as with the granting of permanent residency, this bill proves itself to be on the right track. It even displays good intentions but it does not have teeth.

If Bill C–44 is implemented I am willing to predict the following. The effect will not have an increase in the amount of deportations. It will not have an effect of clearing the system of appeals and bogus refugee claims. It will not significantly increase the onus on the refugees to prove that they have clean histories before being allowed into Canada.

• (1250)

I know as a former police officer that laws are a good first step but they only work when there are individuals who have the means and the authority to carry them out, to make sure that they are enforced. I have shown with only two examples of serious

immigrant offenders that Bill C–44 would not have the effect of getting rid of the people we most need to get rid of.

Further, I have shown that Bill C–44 does not address the fundamental problem of an Immigration and Refugee Board that is stacked with members of the immigration industry, political appointees not working in the best interests of Canadians and who, it would appear, have an agenda to accept as many refugees without question as possible.

Bill C–44 does not do the job. If the minister had announced a bill that tackled only one area of the Immigration Act, let us say criminal refugees, and then revamped the working of the Immigration and Refugee Board to add teeth to the act then it would have my full support. The minister has taken a shotgun approach and has hit in Bill C–44 a number of different areas of immigration law, all of which are troublesome, but left huge gaping holes in our system and has not backed up any of his proposed changes with staff that have real power to make the measures work.

I applaud the minister for listening to the people and to the Reform Party. I only wish it had not taken so long. I truly wish it had not taken tragedies to make him stop listening to those out there who insist that there can never be problems in immigration.

Further, I applaud the minister for taking the initiative to act and to table legislation that at least takes a crack at toughening up the system. I applaud him for stripping the power of the IAD to overturn deportation orders on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. I only wish he had not gone half way. The minister knows how to toughen up the system. Starting with cutting the numbers down to a level that our immigration department can handle would be a good beginning, then revamping the IRB, taking power away from the irresponsible and unaccountable appointed members, giving refugee hearing officers the ability to do full and thorough background checks before refugee status is determined.

There are so many measures, not simple measures but obvious ones, that could have gone into this bill if there had been the political will to do so. There was not. I am not talking about minor technicalities. The Reform Party would not oppose this legislation if the problems were minor, but this bill has such gaping holes it fails to address the most important issues that we simply cannot give it support. We simply cannot allow the Canadian people to be lulled into a false sense of security.

The minister's task force was a small step but he heralded it as though the problems in enforcement had been solved. They have not. The success or lack of success of the task force speaks volumes to the insignificance of the measure.

With Bill C–44 the minister is trying to tell the Canadian people that Canada is cracking down on those who violate our laws and abuse our system. We are doing no such thing until we address the real issues. We cannot support any immigration bill that makes itself out to be the be all and end all of a strategy to take care of the problems of criminal immigration.

I would urge all members of this House to send a clear message to the minister. Vote against this bill, not because you oppose specific measures in it, not because you oppose the broad intent, but because you want real change in immigration law, because you want to answer responsibly to your constituents who have been demanding change, radical change, because you want immigration to work once more, to be a boon to the country and not a cause of grief.

I urge you to send a message to this minister that things really need to change. This bill simply does not offer enough.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have waited all morning in patient expectation to hear the speech on this subject from the member from Calgary who is well known for his knowledge on immigration matters, and I have an almost subservient respect for his views on the subject.

• (1255)

I found myself disappointed in that his speech addressed many examples of the failures of immigration and refugee policy in the past. It never at any time—I think *Hansard* will show this—offered a constructive criticism of any aspect of Bill C–44.

I do appreciate that there have been abuses in the past. Indeed, some of the horror stories he mentioned will be addressed in other legislation and belong in other legislation. I was hoping to hear specific criticism.

To help him in this regard, I would like to suggest that he give us his views as a former police officer on the question of identity, the use of false identity, false documents, as a mechanism by which criminals get through the immigration process, getting into this country.

Would he not agree that in Bill C–44 we are making a giant step toward enforcement and for keeping out these undesirables? Would he not agree as a former police officer that this is an excellent step and this is an excellent bill?

Mr. Hanger: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I would like to make a comment in reference to the preamble that the member presented before his question. As far as the bill is concerned and what the Reform Party is stating here, it does not go far enough.

It still does not address the concerns that many Canadians have when it comes to actual removals of individuals once a deportation order has been issued. We have 40,000 individuals right now under deportation orders. Why are they not being removed? They are not being removed for problems within the policy, the law. They are not being removed because there is an

insufficient number of individuals assigned for removal to take care of that specific problem.

The immigration department in so many areas is overworked and understaffed in many respects. The question of finances came up when reviewing staffing problems so that increased staffing needs could be achieved to meet this demand.

There are not sufficient resources on the front end of enforcement and too much for the administrative aspects of immigration. There is increased cost to the taxpayers for having to assign individuals to try to pick up the pieces afterward through the courts as they prosecute individuals violating our laws.

Those are the problems with the immigration department. They go far beyond what this bill will ever offer or address. When it comes to the point of documents, certainly I am not arguing with the specifics that this will address part of the problem. It does not address it all, as was pointed out by my colleague. This deals only with those documents that may be in the mail.

There is a major problem at the point of entry when it comes to evaluating documents or to even questioning individuals who enter at whatever the port of entry may be. No immigration officer on the frontline questions those who pass through the points of entry.

The immigration officers are pushed to the back of the offices. When the customs officer addresses an individual who may come into the country, he may refer him to the immigration officer if there is reason to do so. You really have no frontline protection there when it comes to immigration. That has to change.

The borders are not secure. I can point to several other areas as well. Specifically, to address the member's question on documents, certainly C–44 is a start but it does not address the whole problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I come from different backgrounds. You are a former police officer, while I am a former refugee. We do not share the same experiences, the same situations. You want to have more stringent measures, while I find that the bill will not solve the real problems. There are already three working groups made up of the RCMP, the immigration officers and the local police in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Do you think this is enough?

• (1300)

You also know that there are Canadian criminals abroad. There are Canadians in prison in a number of countries. They too need our protection and I have received several calls. Canadian consulates are there to offer some protection to these Canadians, who have usually been sentenced for drug trafficking. What are you going to do? Are you going to ask these countries to deport them to Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Hanger: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the member's second question first.

As far as I am concerned if an individual enters another country and violates its laws he should pay the price, and if he is not a citizen of that country he should be expelled immediately. I would venture to say that the majority of people agree with that position, including the member across the way who asked the question.

The problem is that in this country that does not happen. First, it is lucky if they pay the price for the crime that they commit. Second, who is going to remove them and why are they not being removed? That is the problem and Bill C–44 does not address it.

Are there enough policing agencies or enforcement agencies to deal with enforcement of the Immigration Act and the Criminal Code? I would venture to say there are not. I am not looking for Draconian measures. All we are doing is seeking the best for the Canadian people to protect them in the best way we can. There is an undesirable element slipping into the country. There is no question about that. That undesirable element should be removed. Bill C–44 does not go far enough to remove it.

My only suggestion is that the bill be voted down and that a complete review be done of the immigration policy in the country. The voice crying for a moratorium is getting louder. We are not suggesting that but some people in society are. I suggest we start to clean up what we have now before that voice gets louder.

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a question and I would like to make a comment.

Bill C–44 is a law that thinks about the victims in our society. Despite what the hon. member said, we as a government are concerned about the victims. That is why we want to introduce the legislation.

I also want to bring to the member's attention that the minister has said he will collaborate both with the Solicitor General and the Minister of Justice to make sure that the law is enforced. If the problem of enforcement is there the three will work together to make sure there will be enforcement of the law.

I understood the hon. member to say that there were no deportations last year, if I understood him. Perhaps I am wrong; perhaps he could correct me. Does he have knowledge of how many deportations were issued last year and how many individuals were deported last year?

Mr. Hanger: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

There were 8,200 orders carried out; 1,200 of those orders were criminals and a minimum of 3,000 orders were against criminals who still remain in the country and cannot be located.

• (1305)

The member spoke of the collaboration between the Minister of Justice and the minister of immigration to deal with the matter of removal. I agree that is what has to happen. Under the terms of Bill C–44, however, removal will not occur at any faster rate than it is right now.

The minister recognizes that in the fourth paragraph of page 5794 of his legislation. It will be a lengthy process and we will be faced with the same problem that has been addressed by one member of the official opposition.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for questions and comments. Actually the five hours of debate expired at 12.38 so we are now into 10–minute speeches from all members and no questions.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the subject of Bill C–44 now before the House.

The bill marks advancement in the approach of the government toward enforcing the Immigration Act. It marks an advancement in our respect for people from around the world who come to this country. It also marks progress in the way we see Canada's role as a protector of individuals who are refugees from oppression.

Canada has been and continues to be built on the efforts and ingenuity of immigrants. They came, saw opportunity and settled. New Canadians became second generation, third generation or tenth generation Canadians. At some point in time they stopped being new Canadians and simply became Canadians.

The House has 295 members of Parliament. I submit 293 of them are new Canadians. Some are newer than I am. Some are older than I am. However new Canadians enjoy the prosperity and happiness the country provides to all.

Today at every port of entry, at Canadian embassies and consulates the world over, people ask to become the next group of new Canadians. They hope to join the rest of Canadians on our unique journey. They want to grow from who they are to whom they could become, if given the opportunities that Canada provides in abundance and that Canadians enjoy.

I believe that most people who have asked to become Canadians want to share the same feeling of pride many of our ancestors experienced when a judge, an immigration officer or a postman delivered the news of their new citizenship. They want to stand as Canadians and sing *O Canada* whether it is for the first time or the thousandth time. They want to be one of us, to contribute, to make a life, to create their future.

At this point I want to remind the House that every year April 17 to April 24 is Citizenship Week. This year for the first time members of Parliament in the House and the Senate and their staff gathered in the Hall of Honour to reaffirm their citizenship. When *O Canada* was sung I was amazed and happy to see tears in the eyes of many of the singers, including some members of Parliament, who were born here. They really enjoyed the atmosphere; there were tears in their eyes. That is the way Canada wants to have it. That is the way Canada wants to keep it.

Being a Canadian means having an open mind and an open heart. It means accepting each other's differences, celebrating them and not condemning their differences. Being a Canadian means sharing generously. Canada has much to offer those who come here. Canada offers a potential for self–development that exists in few other countries in the world. Tolerance, generosity and potential bind Canadians together, attract newcomers to our shores and brought our forebears to the country many centuries ago.

The first step on the road to obtaining Canadian citizenship is to become a landed immigrant or to be found to be a convention refugee. If we do not protect our immigration and refugee system from abuse we endanger the citizenship system, which demeans the concept of Canadian citizenship.

• (1310)

Bill C–44 is a manifestation of our government's responsibility to protect new, old and potential Canadians from hoodlums that would like Canadian citizenship under false pretences. A Canadian passport is a very precious possession. Inside the cover of every Canadian passport issued we can read these words:

> The Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada requires that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer of this pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford the bearer such assistance as may be necessary.

And at the bottom of the facing page it reads: "The bearer of this passport is a Canadian citizen". There are people for whom these words mean nothing. The promise and protection they offer means nothing to them. They seem to come to this country to make deals, and they would abuse the system if they had the chance to do so.

Fortunately these people are few and far between. The overwhelming majority of newcomers to Canada see these words as a source of protection, pride and hope. They see these words as a chance to better themselves in a country that welcomes new Canadians. They see these words as a promise of freedom, both in Canada and abroad.

However for a tiny group of people who do not share this vision and who would abuse their status as immigrants the country has laws. We want to prohibit any serious and dangerous criminals from becoming fellow Canadians or from being able to stay here. We want to give enforcement officers the power to seize documents from international mail that might be used by people who do not deserve to have citizenship here.

We want to change some of the responsibilities of the Immigration and Refugee Board. We want to make sure that if there must be exceptions to the rule it is the minister who shall judge those exceptions and be accountable for them in the House. We want to close the loopholes that have been exploited by those who would pervert the process of becoming a Canadian citizen.

The tools to accomplish these things are in Bill C–44. It is as simple as that. By letting hoods and thugs into the country we tarnish what it means to be Canadian. We must never let that happen.

Canadians will not tolerate an abuse of our generosity. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration said to Canada's chiefs of police last month: "No Canadian should have to accept such a slap in the face". Even a few abuses, and there are very few, destroy the trust of Canadians in our immigration system. Abuse erodes the acceptance of Canadians of a progressive immigration policy.

I call on hon. members of the House to act as Canadians want us to act, to apply the laws of Canada as Canadians want the laws applied and to continue Canada's long tradition of a tolerant, generous, progressive and enlightened immigration policy. I ask that we move swiftly to protect the integrity of the Canadian passport and give meaning to the words found inside.

To that end, I call on all members of the House to support Bill C–44. We owe it to the people of Canada who have placed their confidence in us as leaders and legislators. We owe it to our neighbourhoods, our families and our friends.

The safer Canada of tomorrow is in our hands today.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk this afternoon on Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act. As members have heard, the member for Calgary Northeast says that while the bill has made some small beginnings, it does not go far enough to warrant our support and to vote in favour of the bill.

• (1315)

The government seems to be sending out mixed messages. I quote from page 5792 of *Hansard* dated September 19, 1994 when the minister was giving his speech on the introduction of this bill:

> The actions of a small group of people are causing Canadians to question the very limits and the very merits of a system that has done much to build our nation as we know it. In short, the deeds of a few have cast a shadow over the reputations of many.

On the subsequent page it reads:

> Abuse of the system by a few has been cause for alarm. While the numbers of those causing the problem are small, the damage they have done is large.
>
> We have read the reports, heard the stories, seen the pictures or maybe even attended a funeral. A criminal minority has used the immigration system to its own advantage. There has been slow enforcement and some of us have watched with growing anger while a justice and immigration appeals system was used as a stalling tactic to delay departure orders.

The minister says he is concerned about the criminal element that has tainted and tarnished the reputation of our immigration and refugee policy.

Earlier this morning the Reform Party presented a motion to amend the bill that the minister introduced. We introduced a motion to decline to give second reading to this bill and "to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act because of its failure to bar, prior to a refugee hearing and an application for permanent residence, those who have been convicted of a crime that would carry a sentence in Canada of 10 years or more and those individuals who fall under the category of persons listed in section 19(1) and (2) of the Immigration Act".

That motion was defeated by the Liberal Party. The Bloc Quebecois of course joined the Liberals and defeated any attempt by the Reform Party to put some real teeth into the minister's bill. That is why I say we have mixed messages coming from the government where it talks tough. When the Reform Party says that we want to really talk tough, the government backs down and nothing really gets going.

The fundamental philosophy of the Canadian refugee policy needs to be altered. The current philosophy seems to say that a refugee is into this country unless we can prove at a later date that he or she should not be in, at which point in time deportation hearings begin.

That philosophy needs to be reversed to say that a person cannot come into this country unless there are good reasons why he or she should be allowed in. I know and I endorse a policy of opening our doors to millions of refugees, the hundreds of thousands of refugees who seek and have obtained a safe haven in this country. Of the millions around the world there are few who are brave enough, lucky enough or enterprising enough to make it to our shores. However far too many times those who were brave enough, lucky enough or enterprising enough were actually the perpetrators of the prosecution.

The first thing we must be aware of when a refugee applies for refugee status is that they need not necessarily be the helpless and hapless victim of persecution. Refugees should not be

allowed automatic entry into this country and move around freely until three specific checks have been performed.

Number one, we should verify they are indeed helpless and hapless innocent victims of persecution and not the perpetrators of the persecution themselves. In the last couple of years all of us have seen situations in the newspapers where we have definitely found that refugee applicants are not refugees but the cause of the refugee problem.

Two, we should also check that they are not criminals who have a record of violent crime in the countries where they come from.

• (1320)

Number three is that we have not barred them entry for failing to meet the first two criteria or for abusing the privilege of being in Canada and carrying out criminal activities. This is basically saying that if we have deported once, why go through the hassle of even thinking about it again. Let us call the situation as it is.

Only after they meet those three checks should we consider that Canada would be available as a safe haven for them.

This bill has some positive features such as stripping the Immigration and Refugee Board of its ability to overturn deportation orders. It is long overdue. We have had appeal after appeal after appeal, when it is absolutely obvious there is no way we should even be considering the application. The minister himself referred to the embarrassment of the appeal board having to go to a Kingston prison to hold hearings with convicted murderers to find out whether or not they should be allowed entry.

The bureaucratic process grinds on spending money, when I know and everybody else in this country knows that the answer is to let us get them out and get them out now.

The bill also ensures that someone convicted of a crime in Canada which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years or more will automatically be subject to a deportation order that can only be appealed to the minister. That is one of the better parts of the bill, but as I say it does not go very far in our point of view.

One thing we are concerned about is that the bill does not identify criminals before they are allowed into the country. No criminal checks are performed on the claimant until his refugee status has been determined. I had to scratch my head to understand the logic here.

Ordinary Canadians are telling me that surely this is putting the cart before the horse. Why would we allow a refugee in if we are going to find out subsequent to granting him refugee status that he is a serious criminal from wherever he came and does not deserve refugee status? Then we have to turn around and get the process in order to ship him back out, when we could have stopped him long, long before. This seems to be an example of the refugee and immigration industry cranking through the mill just to keep the system going and keep them all employed.

We say the criminal checks should be front and centre of the review process, not after the fact. When it comes to deportation, it seems that this bill is a tiger without teeth. There is a major difference between a deportation order and a deportation itself. Last year 25,000 deportation orders resulted in only 8,200 deportations. So we have a law that is being laughed at, ignored and ridiculed by people who we find undesirable in the first place and who we want out of the country.

Canadians I have spoken to also want the assurance that once an individual has been deported he will not be allowed into Canada again. That seems a fairly simple and straightforward thing. Once someone has been deported immigration officials should be able to say no at the border, long before the individual sets one foot on Canadian soil. If we have been through the deportation order once, why would we even think about doing it again? Millions of dollars are wasted as the whole industry churns on to arrive at a decision that should be obvious and already concluded. Once someone has been deported they are out to stay out. Out should mean out.

I think I can congratulate the minister for his about turn. He is halfway around the U–turn from his position this spring when Parliament first sat. At that time he was quite satisfied in many ways with the immigration department and the levels of immigration in this country.

However this bill demonstrates he has been listening to Reform members and this House and to Canadians across this land and he has discovered there are many more Reformers in Canada on the immigration policy than there are Liberals. It is, however, unfortunate that he did not listen more closely and complete the entire U–turn. If he had paid closer attention some of the problems and the deficiencies that are still present in this bill would have been cleared up.

• (1325)

It is also unfortunate the minister did not act more like the ordinary Canadian. It makes perfect sense to everyone I have spoken to, although I have to admit I have not spoken to the minister, that we should ensure that individuals are not criminals before we allow them into our country. Something that simple seems to be beyond the minister's comprehension.

In conclusion this bill represents a small first step, but such a small first step that we cannot support it. The minister should listen more attentively to the wishes of Canadians and to Reform members in this House.

While the bill deals with some of the issues, it does not tackle the fundamental problem of criminals entering into Canada. It does not resolve the process that allows refugees to be in limbo

for years while they build a social case for staying in Canada that has nothing to do with why they left in the first place.

If the minister wants my support he has to go all the way around the U-turn and make a serious attempt at solving Canada's definitely serious immigration problems.

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C–44, which is an amendment to clarify and codify changes to the Immigration Act.

The people of Canada will not tolerate the abuse of our generosity. Even a few abuses destroy the trust Canadians have in our immigration policies of fairness and tolerance. It also means that Canadians' acceptance of a progressive immigration policy is compromised.

Bill C–44 will further the government's commitment to control illegal immigration and control our borders. This bill also provides further evidence that we take our commitments of the trust of the Canadian people seriously.

There are four main areas where Bill C–44 will improve the Immigration Act.

This bill will assist our frontline people to intervene in situations where someone is using the system to his or her advantage. As an example, a person who can have more than one claim before the Immigration and Refugee Board means the system becomes clogged with overlapping, repetitive, frivolous claims. The IRB is spending too much time investigating the already investigated and assessing the already assessed. Under Bill C–44 the first claim will take precedence and all subsequent claims will be terminated.

This bill will help to keep serious criminals out of the refugee determination system. At any time in the refugee determination process if senior immigration officials discover a serious criminal offence either in Canada or abroad, they will be able to suspend and terminate the process before the Immigration and Refugee Board makes a final decision.

Claims for refugee status can be dismissed for a number of reasons. The amendments in Bill C–44 will prohibit people convicted of serious crimes from claiming refugee status.

Under the Geneva convention on refugees, criminality is a valid basis for refusing a refugee claim. Bill C–44 will encourage this, as well as provisions for the exclusion of war criminals. As well the IAD will no longer have the power to allow serious criminals to remain in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. The minister will assume the authority to decide humanitarian and compassionate exceptions. Of course the IAD will still have the jurisdiction to grant stays of removal for reasons of law or fact or a mix of law and fact as it does now.

Finally, immigration officers will have the authority to seize identity documents sent by international mail. There is a disturbing trend toward the distribution of genuine counterfeit visas, passports and identity documents as part of attempts to bring illegal immigrants to Canada.

To that end customs officers will have the authority to examine international packages for documents like passports, visas, health cards and other documentation. The suspect material will be referred to an immigration officer who will determine if these documents might furnish evidence relevant to attempts to get around the immigration policy.

• (1330)

There are other pertinent amendments contained in Bill C–44. These specifics can be found in the relevant documents you have before you, Mr. Speaker. However, the central theme of my remarks is to endorse the spirit of the changes proposed in Bill C–44. The people of Canada want to see laws applied with some consistency and fairness. Where persons have broken the law or have misinterpreted their claim as a refugee or are trying to manipulate the system and the spirit of the Immigration Act we want to have the ability to act in the best interest of Canada.

If that means throwing a person out then it means throwing that person out. If it means convicting them of fraud with jail time then it means a conviction for fraud and jail time. It also means that we are going to enforce the laws reasonably, fairly and equally. The system is going to be changed for the better with this bill.

I call on all hon. members of this House to act as Canadians want us to act, to apply the laws as Canadians want the laws applied and to continue the tradition of fair, progressive and enlightened immigration that Canadians have grown accustomed to. To that end I call on all hon. members of this House to support Bill C–44.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I too am very pleased to be able to speak to Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to the Customs Act.

Bill C–44 goes a long way to address the concerns of many people. It provides the necessary tools and authority to maintain the integrity of our immigration and refugee system. There are a number of key points to the bill which merit highlighting. I would like to highlight a few.

Immigration officials, for example, would be given expanded powers to seize suspicious documents for inspection. Enforcement officers would have the authority to prohibit the shipment of documents which could be used to circumvent the rules and regulations of the Canada Immigration Act. These papers are the documents used to establish false identities to enable persons to enter and travel to Canada illegally.

Last year during a five–month period over 120 packages containing one or more status or identity documents were found in major Canadian cities each week. These packages had to be returned to the mails because there was no authority to seize them.

Under the provisions of Bill C–44 serious criminals will be prevented from using the refugee process to delay their removal from Canada. It should be noted that this is not a violation of their human rights. The United Nations convention on the status of refugees recognizes that some individuals are not deserving of protection because they had committed serious criminal offences.

This bill would also transfer from the immigration appeals division to the minister of immigration the authority to disallow permanent residents convicted of serious crimes to remain in the country on humanitarian grounds.

As many hon. members in the House are aware the immigration appeals division has recently been involved in a number of controversial decisions that allowed certain people to stay in Canada in spite of the crimes they previously committed. This amendment will place this important and controversial duty squarely in the hands of the minister, which I believe makes the system more accountable to Parliament.

Nevertheless, the immigration appeals division will retain jurisdiction to stay removal orders on humanitarian and compassionate grounds for permanent residents convicted of minor offences.

There are a number of serious other provisions in Bill C–44 that I believe will have a positive impact on our immigration and refugee system. For example, a person who is found to have made multiple claims will not be able to pursue a claim of their choice once the series of claims has been discovered. Instead, the first claim will now take precedence and the Immigration and Refugee Board will be notified to terminate all subsequent claims.

Senior immigration officers would also have authority to make removal orders besides the powers they have now at ports of entry and inland. In addition, all permanent residents who are ordered removed will lose their permanent resident status.

• (1335)

Abuse of Canada's immigration system and the existence of criminal immigrants and refugees are real serious concerns to many people in my constituency of Nepean. During the summer months I held a forum in my riding to garner the views and ideas of my constituents regarding Canada's immigration policy.

Throughout the evening a number of topics with a wide range of opinions were examined. One of the underlying themes of the discussion was a tremendous concern about newcomers who undermine the integrity of our immigration and refugee system.

The people of Nepean recognize that crime in Canada is not a result of any particular ethnocultural group of immigrants or refugees. They do however clearly feel that we must take steps to prevent criminals from entering Canada, expel those who commit crimes while in the country and impose barriers to those who have been able to cheat the system, attempting to enter Canada under false pretences.

A copy of the full report on the thoughts of the participants at the Nepean forum has been filed with the minister of immigration.

I firmly believe that Bill C–44 will work to tighten up our enforcement system and help to restore not only the faith of my constituents but of all Canadians in the integrity of our immigration and refugee system.

I am confident that hon. members in this House will see the merits of Bill C–44 and join me in supporting this legislation. We owe it to the people of Canada, both native born and newcomers alike, to ensure that our country is a nation where peace, prosperity and safety prevail.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the division bell having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been asked by the government whip to defer the division until a later time.

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the recorded division on the question now before the House stands deferred until daily adjournment on Monday, at which time the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

• (1340)

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think you would find unanimous consent, notwithstanding any order of this House, to have the vote which you have now announced as being deferred to Monday at 3 p.m. deferred to Tuesday at 3 p.m. at the same time as the other vote previously announced earlier this day.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from September 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, today I address this bill before us on sentencing reform. These proposals fulfil a commitment made in the red book by the Liberal Party.

The hon. members opposite should take note that we are keeping our promise. The main goals of this bill are to ensure the rehabilitation of offenders to become law–abiding citizens, to separate offenders from society when necessary and to promote a sense of responsibility in offenders by making restitution and acknowledging harm done.

To achieve these principles the bill sets out a number of fundamental principles to guide the courts. These principles are, first, to reflect the seriousness of the offence and the responsibility of the offender. Second, the courts must consider the aggravating and mitigating circumstances. Third, similar acts should receive similar sentences. Fourth, the principle of sentencing totality is upheld. Fifth, the offender should not be imprisoned if other options are appropriate. Sixth, all reasonable alternatives should be considered. I mention this especially because of the aboriginal offenders.

There are a few features of this legislation on which I would like to focus. The use of alternatives for aboriginal offenders is a very important principle of this bill. In my province of Saskatchewan the aboriginal population is the fastest growing segment of society today. It also represents a disproportionate percentage of offenders incarcerated.

The courts in Saskatchewan have started to experiment with sentencing circles. A sentencing circle brings together elders of the community and also includes members of the non–native community and professionals such as lawyers and police officers.

The emphasis is not on retribution but rather on returning the community to its sense of harmony as defined by the aboriginal population.

Recently in Saskatoon an accused, a Saskatoon Metis, was sentenced in this manner. The sentencing circle was convened after this individual had robbed a gasoline station in my city. The sentencing circle met and decided that this individual must perform certain punishments to return its community harmony. He was instructed to do voluntary work for the gas station he had robbed, a certain number of hours of work or days, to volunteer at the Metis society and to admit his guilt to the community. Over and above this he was also sentenced to a penitentiary term of imprisonment.

The gas station owner was hesitant at first but has publicly said that he believes that justice has been served by the sentencing circle. This is an important part of criminal justice, the belief by members of the public at large that justice has been served, has been fulfilled.

We must resist the urge to incarcerate everyone who commits a crime. It costs more money to keep someone in jail for a year than it does to send a student to school.

Another important function of the bill is to provide for victims' impact statements at early parole hearings held under section 745 of the Criminal Code.

Section 745 is the section that allows for review of the mandatory life sentence without parole for 25 years to determine whether the person should be paroled after 15 years.

• (1345)

I have strong feelings on this issue. Constable Brian King, a constable in the RCMP, was killed in Saskatoon. Constable King was a personal friend of mine. He was ruthlessly killed in the line of duty in 1978. Last year the individual convicted of killing him made an application for early parole under section 745.

Imagine for a moment the frustration and sense of helplessness of his family as they were forced to sit in a courtroom in Saskatoon and hear witness after witness give evidence but were not allowed to say a word themselves to the court. They were not allowed to bring the victim's voice to confront the person who had done the wrong.

Death, thanks to the current provisions, has not only silenced Brian King, but it has also silenced the memories of his family in the courtrooms of the land. Is this justice?

Finally, I would like to say a few words in support of the restitution provisions of the bill. When a criminal is sent to jail, does the store owner he robbed feel better? Maybe he does. Does the sentence imposed upon the criminal help the store owner make ends meet at the end of the month? Restitution provides the opportunity to make criminals pay for their crimes.

The legislation makes allowances for restitution for people who unwittingly buy stolen property. Currently if one buys stolen property and it is confiscated by the police, one loses what one has paid for it. Now restitution can be ordered by the courts and innocent victims of crime will be compensated.

This bill shows that the Liberal government is committed to showing criminals that crime does not pay.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's speech. I have one question that I would like to ask. It is whether or not he would favour extending the right of individual groups to sentence people in their own group to groups beyond the aboriginals?

Mr. Bodnar: Mr. Speaker, the contributions of the aboriginal community in the area of sentencing and sentencing circles to the rest of society can be very important. We should be looking to many of the provisions that the aboriginal community has, one of them being sentencing circles.

That method of sentencing may be far more beneficial than many of the provisions that we presently incorporate into our criminal justice system. My answer is yes.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, this past week I attended a conference in Hamilton sponsored by Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating its Termination otherwise known as CAVEAT.

There were 185 delegates present, Canadians from all across Canada representing all walks of life including victims, police, educators, law societies, politicians, members from the other side of the House. Numerous others were present at this conference.

At the conclusion of the conference many recommendations will be forwarded to the government, recommendations that I fully support—that must frighten some of them on the other side of the House—and believe would create an atmosphere that would make Canada a safe place for its citizens.

In comparison, I look at the various proposals put forward by the government from the justice department, proposals like Bill C–41, Bill C–42, Bill C–44, Bill C–45, Bill C–37. While they are all small steps, and I emphasize small, in the right direction, all of them are a far cry from what Canadians are calling for and what these recommendations are going to represent.

• (1350)

In my final analysis, I believe these proposals, including Bill C–41, will not produce the means to reduce violent crimes in this country to any significant degree. I listened to speeches from members of the Liberal caucus who say these bills are nothing more than a small step in the right direction. I am also aware of petitions put forward in the House calling for serious amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada, amendments to the Bail Reform Act of 1972 and the Parole Act, petitions I might add with over two million signatures from all across Canada.

The only result that all the proposals for change that this government is producing will be an attempt to convince people all across the country that another promise by the red ink book has been fulfilled when in fact these proposals will do little or nothing to improve the safety of Canadians regarding violent crimes.

Now is the time and the opportunity for the government to bring forward legislation that announces zero tolerance for all acts of violence, and this is a far cry from that. What is wrong with zero tolerance? Why do we want to continue to live in a country where we have to be afraid for our children and grandchildren? What is the point? Let us continue to work hard in the area of prevention, but for heaven's sake draw the line in the sand and let all violent offenders know immediately that crossing that line will result in harsh meaningful punishment that they would regret.

The Minister of Justice is anxious to introduce new gun laws to make Canada safer. Why has one of these bills not been legislation that deems the use of a weapon in any crime will result in immediate incarceration to be served consecutively with any other sentence to a crime? Is the justice minister saving the gun issue to bring in legislation that will create a burden on law–abiding people? That is exactly what it will do when you start presenting legislation like I have seen. The criminal element will look at this legislation, they will laugh, make a joke and enjoy life.

What is wrong with legislation that says life means life and repealing such sections as 745 of the Criminal Code? Remember the victims. You seem to forget the word victims. Remember that victims of all violent crimes are affected for life by these crimes so why should punishment for the criminals be any less?

I agree with the Minister of Justice when he says that we need to reduce the population in our prisons. There are better ways to deal with some non–violent offenders. But to suggest that violent offenders should be considered for release from a life sentence in 15 years is totally ridiculous. I shudder to think that Clifford Olson and his type may be on the street again some day.

That is why we have to ensure that sentencing guidelines are clear and consistent with the feeling of Canadians as represented by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The preamble to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms states in section 15 that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. Bill C–41, clause 718.2, subclause (1) states that: "When a court imposes a sentence it shall take into consideration the following: That the evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability" and

now they want to include sexual orientation "of the victim shall be taken into consideration".

I cannot understand what is the difference between murdering a white man, a black man, a heterosexual or a homosexual. Violence is violence. Why do we want to make it tougher because they happen to believe something different than the rest? There is no way in the world that inclusion of sexual orientation, for example, in this legislation should make one iota of difference as to how severely the criminal should be treated.

I personally believe that this clause conflicts with section 15 of the charter. There is no reason to say that a sentence should be tougher because of violence or hate. Violence is violence and hate is hate. There should be no exclusion when it comes to sentencing. The whole point of sentencing is protection of the victim and punishment for criminals based on severity of the crime.

• (1355)

In summary I would like to say this. This country is alarmed, people are alarmed. If we think that 2.5 million signatures to this government can be ignored then we had better think again. I can promise that from what I have seen from the recommendations of those petitioners, that is exactly what this government has done. It has ignored their recommendations. The government better open its eyes, read them when they are received and adhere to them or one day we will truly regret it.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, there has been reference made to the question of mandatory sentences when the firearms are used in the commission of an offence.

A close review of the provisions of the Criminal Code will show that that is already the case. There is a mandatory jail sentence for the use of a firearm in the commission of an offence. The minimum sentence is one year. The problem that arises is not one of legislation. It is enforcement of the code by the provincial attorneys general.

Further, there was reference made to zero tolerance. Zero tolerance of what? Police officers now lay charges when a person commits an offence. I would like to know from the hon. member what he means by zero tolerance in charging.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, apparently we are running into the same problem we always run into with these people. When your head is in the sand and your eyes and your ears are buried you do not hear or see what is going on. When you get a petition with 2.5 million names and you cannot hear the message, you should get your head out of the sand.

I do not have to defend zero tolerance. Canadians will do that.

The Speaker: My colleagues, as you have seen, I have just come into the Chair. I noticed that when the hon. member was saying "you" that he was looking sort of in my direction. I presume the remarks were for the Chair and I take them as such.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SUCCESS NOVA SCOTIA 2000

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, September 16 our government teamed up with the province of Nova Scotia to announce Success Nova Scotia 2000.

This five–year project under the strategic initiatives program will assist 3,000 young Nova Scotians gain valuable work experience in leading industries. The objective is to develop and implement new opportunities by promoting internships as an integral part of our learning culture. Success Nova Scotia 2000 is a reflection of our government's commitment to finding better ways to help young people secure jobs in their chosen field.

I am confident that the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants will seize upon the opportunity to make this program successful for our youth.

By providing leading edge job opportunities for our young people, we will enhance Nova Scotia's position as an economic leader in the years to come.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in Montreal, the president of the Council for Canadian Unity embarked upon the referendum campaign trail, stating he entirely approved of the absence of any new federal offers.

For the Council, unity is tied to the status quo. The renewal of the Canadian federation is not longer an option.

After 30 years of lamentable failure, in this show of honesty the Council is revealing its true colours.

The Council for Canadian Unity which—let us not forget—is subsidized by Ottawa, confirms that Quebecers are to expect nothing better from Ottawa than more duplication, more overlapping and more squandering of their tax dollars. In other words, more of the same.

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice should be aware that opposition to gun control is not just a preoccupation of rural westerners.

In the past few weeks I have received more than 100 angry letters from urban Ontario residents who do not share the minister's jaundiced opinion of the competence and integrity of Canadians, or the patronizing view that gun owners need to be protected from themselves.

I have advised these people that I am one of the good guys and that they should direct their anger where it belongs: at the minister.

A few of these correspondents are probably part of that huge crowd out on the lawn today. They are sending a clear message against statism. I hope the minister is listening and perhaps rethinking his elitist prejudices.

Tough gun controls have proven ineffective in many jurisdictions including New York, Illinois and the United Kingdom. Why must we continue down this—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Guelph—Wellington.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, individual Canadians manage their responsibilities every day with enthusiasm and dedication and slowly make their mark on the people around them.

One of these individuals is Terry Lynch, director of education for the Wellington County Board of Education. Terry is bright, amazingly energetic, and has much to offer in common sense and determination. He has worked relentlessly to succeed in order to ensure that the board is the finest in the province of Ontario. I am proud to call Terry a friend.

As children across Wellington County return to school from their summer vacation, they should thank educators like Terry who work hard behind the scenes with endless energy to make their education experience rewarding and first class in order to prepare them to succeed in their future.

* * *

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, fear of violence and violence itself is a severe restriction to equality for women. This sad reality of our society sees women and children at risk of danger in many situations, including the most fundamental action of walking safely after dark.

The federal government is committed to addressing the widespread problem of violence against women by working in partnership with local communities to find solutions. I send my support to the London group, Women for Action, Accountability and Against Violence Everywhere, and to all women as they march to bring an end to violence in the Take Back the Night rallies happening this week across the country.

I encourage Canadians to get out and support the right of women to walk freely within our communities.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL NICKEL COMPANY OF CANADA

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, this summer I was a guest of the International Nickel Company of Canada. The tour was arranged through the Parliamentary, Business and Labour Trust. I visited the research centre in Mississauga and the mine, smelter and refineries in Sudbury. I met with the CEO, vice–president, managers, miners and union officials.

What impressed me most were two things: the commitment of everyone in the corporation we met to compete internationally by virtue of research, new technology, enlightened management and downsizing; and, second, the corporation's ongoing commitment to the betterment of the communities where it is situated and to the preservation of the ecosystem by the reduction of pollution.

Sudbury and the surrounding region is no longer a moonscape. The air no longer smells of sulphur. Thanks to the forward looking, sustainable environmental policies of Inco and its co–operation with the local municipalities, the region is now a green landscape again.

* * *

[*Translation*]

APPOINTMENT OF SHARON CARSTAIRS TO THE SENATE

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just shown once again his lack of understanding and respect for Quebec. The appointment of Mrs. Sharon Carstairs to the Senate reinforces the idea that the government of Canada knows how to reward those who publicly attack Quebec.

• (1405)

Making no secret of her anti–Quebec feelings, Mrs. Carstairs has worked relentlessly to sink the Meech Lake Accord. She tried to put Quebec in its place, and for her trouble, she is rewarded with a seat in the Senate. She who used to enthusiastically support Senate reform now considers this institution necessary because its members are better educated than those of the House of Commons.

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, please bear in mind that sometimes an attack on colleagues from the other place can also be an insult to the Senate as an institution. I trust this will be taken into consideration in the future.

Some hon. members: Order.

The Speaker: Order. After Question Period.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, in failing to balance its budget the Liberal government believes its dilemma is the lack of revenue when clearly the real problem is out of control spending. The same confused thinking has resulted in the emphasis on more gun control rather than getting tough with criminals.

The earlier decision to give in to the tobacco smugglers only shifted the emphasis to guns and alcohol. Our borders are leaking like a sieve when it comes to stopping the guns that are coming in.

The Ontario Provincial Police found during Project Gun Runner that 94 per cent of the guns on the black market were smuggled from the United States.

No amount of gun control is going to solve this problem. We need a government that is willing to start enforcing the laws that are here now rather than adding new ones if we are ever to stop violent crime.

* * *

SUSAN AGLUKARK

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

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

[*English*]

On Monday, the 1994 Country Music Awards for Canada were handed out. Among those honoured that night was Susan Aglukark, a young Inuk singer and songwriter from Arviat in my constituency.

In 1990 Susan's video called "Searching" won the top cinematography award from MuchMusic. Her first recording entitled "Dreams for You" was followed in 1992 by the critically acclaimed CD "Arctic Rose".

At Monday's awards ceremony, 27–year old Susan won the Rising Star trophy.

Susan and her music are special. Susan sings in her native language Inuktitut as well as in English. She sings about life, its problems and its joys. While celebrating the Inuit language and culture, Susan's music transcends cultural boundaries.

Congratulations, Susan. We are all proud of you.

CULTURAL CENTRES

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate the parish of St. Maximillian Kolbe in the city of Mississauga, a parish that my family and I belong to, on the official opening of the Pope John Paul II Polish Cultural Centre.

The centre was built by the parishioners using volunteer engineers, designers and site supervisors. It was built entirely with funds raised over the past eight years. It was completed for just over $2 million and carries a very modest mortgage. Not one dollar came from any level of government.

The centre will serve more than 8,000 families of Polish descent and will throw its doors open for use by the whole Mississauga community. This is an excellent example of multiculturalism for the nineties: a self–sufficient ethnic group reaching out to welcome members of the Polish Canadian community while sharing its facilities with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Again my sincere congratulations go to the founders: the president Lottie Misek, Father Stanley Bak, Father Ted Novak and to the 8,000 families that have worked so hard to see their dream come true.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE LATE MARCEL TOURANGEAU

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint–Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to Mrs. Gabrielle Tourangeau and her children on the death of her husband Marcel.

• (1410)

Marcel was well known in Saint–Laurent for his many activities as a volunteer and his tireless involvement, particularly as the founder and chairman of the Montpellier seniors group. Among other activities they could be seen playing pétanque every day of the year, whatever the weather—outdoors in the summer, indoors in the winter.

Marcel will be missed by all and especially by his family and his many friends. We have lost a great Canadian.

* * *

MEMBER FOR CENTRAL NOVA

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, September 20, the hon. member for Central Nova made hateful comments about the gay community, associating homosexuality with bestiality and pedophilia. The Liberal member shows partisanship and a serious lack of judgment by objecting to the fact that an offence motivated by hate, based on sexual orientation—

[*English*]

The Speaker: Order, please. In the last few days we have been bordering in some of our comments and some of the attacks on getting perhaps a little more personal than the House is willing to accept in the normal give and take of Parliament.

I would ask all hon. members to consider that whenever we attack one another directly like this it is not always in the best interest of the House. I would ask hon. members to look over the statements they will be making so that they are not referring in any way to what has transpired before.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister left the impression that the Reform Party was profiting from the national unity issue with a 1–900 phone call. Let me set the record straight.

From September 26 to October 3 we will be conducting a cross–country telephone referendum on Canada's future. The phone company, not the Reform Party, charges $1 a minute for each call. The Prime Minister appeared shocked at this. "Unbelievable" was his response.

What is unbelievable is the national debt. It is growing by $88,410 a minute. We believe ordinary Canadians should have a say. Canada's future is too important to be left in the hands of the political elite.

I encourage English speaking Canadians to voice their opinions by calling 1–900–451–4841 et, pour mes amis français, 1–900–451–4032. It is the best value on the Hill.

* * *

JO WELLS

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate Jo Wells, one my constituents from Burlington, who this summer became the first woman to run the full length of Canada.

Jo began her incredible journey in May leaving from St. John's, Newfoundland, and arriving in Victoria, B.C., 111 days later. Along the way, a long way—some 7,295 kilometres—Jo was greeted, cheered and encouraged by many Canadians in all regions and by many members of Parliament.

Her goal quite simply was to show that it could be done, that anyone who sets goals for themselves however big or small can accomplish them. Jo was especially running to raise awareness about the abilities of women, to show that there are no limits to what women can do.

We can all learn from Jo's extraordinary determination and enthusiasm. Please join me in congratulating an amazing woman, a terrific Canadian.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. David Berger (Saint–Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my support to the Minister of Justice and his initiative to draft legislation on gun control. The minister is striving to strike the right balance. He has told the House that his bill will focus on three areas: stopping illegal firearms, toughening the criminal justice system for firearms offences, and improving the regulation of firearms with a goal to enhancing community safety.

The minister has also assured the House that he is keenly aware that hunting has a long tradition and is an important economic activity in many parts of Canada. His proposals will reflect not only the need for a safe society and a strong criminal justice system but will also respect the legitimate interests of hunters, farmers, and those who use firearms for subsistence.

• (1415)

This is the kind of balanced approach to gun control that Canadians need and deserve. I encourage the minister to stick to his timetable and table new legislation in November.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, today on Parliament Hill there are thousands of people protesting the proposed gun laws that the government is considering.

While the government has been talking about legislation to restrict guns, it has also been cutting back on the resources to enforce the existing laws that we have.

For example, since 1992 the RCMP budget has been cut by $33.4 million. This means a reduction in prevention services, community services, enforcement services. I would urge the government to restore adequate funding to the RCMP so that crimes can be prevented and the laws we have enforced. It must be part of any overall approach to making our streets safer.

The Speaker: Before we pass to Question Period, I know we have just been back for three or four days. I wonder if we might consider putting our questions a little more quickly, especially in the supplementaries, and cutting down and making almost non–existent the preamble. I would urge all hon. members who are answering questions to perhaps come to the point a little sooner so that we might get on more of our colleagues in the question and answer period.

[*Translation*]

That said, we now move on to Oral Question Period with the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government promised to reimburse Quebec for the expenses incurred in the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord. On Tuesday, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said that his government was not bound by this commitment and that Ottawa would therefore not reimburse Quebec. I remind you that the commitment in question was entered into by one first minister with another.

I put my question to the Prime Minister. What is the commitment of a Prime Minister of Canada to the Premier of Quebec worth if his successor can go back on it so shamelessly and with such impunity?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I asked senior officials in the Privy Council to check whether there had been commitments. I even discussed it at one point with current and former senior officials and we could not find any commitment made by the previous government in this regard. Under the circumstances, it must have been understood by the persons involved at the time that there was to be no compensation.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, if requested, I will file a statement from the public accounts of the Government of Quebec showing that the federal government still owes $47 million for this item. Furthermore, Senator Jean-Claude Rivest, a Liberal, who was Mr. Bourassa's principal advisor at the time, said yesterday that Prime Minister Mulroney had made such a commitment to Mr. Bourassa. I would remind the Prime Minister that he is less scrupulous than his Minister of Heritage, who on a mere rumour honoured a commitment made by some unknown person to allow an unacceptable transaction with Ginn Publishing to proceed.

Does the Prime Minister know that his refusal to reimburse will force Quebecers to pay twice for the referendum? Does he realize that the injustice is even more flagrant because the Charlottetown referendum dealt with a question formulated and presented by the federal authorities?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we will respect the commitments made by the government. If someone can clearly establish that the Government of Canada made a commitment, we will respect that commitment. We were not there, we were not part of the discussion and I asked senior officials to verify whether commitments had been made between the two levels of government.

• (1420)

No trace of any commitment was found. Therefore I conclude that we have no obligation and that the Government of Quebec at the time knew very well that if it held a referendum under provincial law, the expenses would be incurred under that same law.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the Ginn Publishing case also, it was an anonymous verbal commitment made under a previous government—we never found out who had made it—and it was supposedly honoured.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister seems to be making a strange distinction between the Prime Minister, the head of the federal government, and the government, as if the Prime Minister did not have authority to commit his government when he gives his word of honour to another first minister. There must also be honour among first ministers.

Is the Prime Minister not ashamed to punish Quebecers in this way for rejecting the Charlottetown Accord?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am quite surprised that the leader of the Bloc Quebecois is asking me to keep a commitment made by someone else, when last week, he asked the leader of the Parti Quebecois in Quebec not to keep his word about holding a referendum within eight to ten months.

If the Hon. Leader of the Opposition could just give us a document showing that there was a commitment between the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, we will honour the government's commitments. However, I have been unable to find any commitment of that kind. It is not mentioned anywhere in the minutes of Cabinet or in any documents.

Gentlemen, give me proof that my predecessor and the previous government made a commitment and we will gladly pay.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, instead of going on about the Quebec government's referendum, which is none of his business, perhaps the Prime Minister should start by paying his bills, and I am referring to what he owes Quebec.

On January 28, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said in the House that he was looking into the request from the Government of Quebec. On May 4, the minister stated that the government had not yet reached a final decision. Yesterday, he said in passing that the government would not pay, which has been confirmed by the Prime Minister.

Is the Prime Minister trying to say that the federal government's refusal to pay the $26 million was motivated by the election of a sovereigntist government in Quebec, which would

confirm what was said by the Deputy Prime Minister on Tuesday: "That is the price of separation."?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member claims that what the Province of Quebec does is none of our business. What were he and his leader doing during the provincial election, when they went on the hustings? They are federal members, and federal members should stick to federal business. But he went around the province and ended up looking like a Don Quixote tilting at windmills.

We did not cross the line between our jurisdictions. However, Canada's future is the Prime Minister's business.

• (1425)

I am a citizen of Quebec, and Quebec's separation is my business, and I will do everything that is necessary to keep this country united.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister of Canada wants to know what we were doing in a federal election, we were getting elected. He still does not realize that.

Is the Prime Minister's attitude, which deliberately and for no good reason is depriving Quebec of the $26 million to which it is entitled, is that attitude supposed to reflect this new spirit of co–operation with the new Government of Quebec? Will the Prime Minister of Canada, from now on, take the position that agreements do not count and he is the boss?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to say the same thing twice. If the Bloc Quebecois can establish that there was a commitment, we will abide by that commitment. I cannot make it clearer than that. However, we have worked very hard to find any evidence of such a commitment, and there is none.

At the time, the Premier could easily have asked the Prime Minister to put it in writing, but we have found no indication whatsoever that any commitments were made.

You said "we were getting elected", but I think it is now clear you got elected under false pretences.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): Oh, yes. Mr. Speaker, they said: "We are going to be the real power in Ottawa", but they are all in the opposition, and not for more than four years. There will be no repeats.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that while the Prime Minister and the Bloc were arguing about the cost of this referendum and the bill from Quebec, the total debt of the country just went up by a million dollars.

The minister of immigration has been giving tough talk and proposals to the House that purport to tighten up the loopholes that allow criminal immigrants to remain in Canada. At the same time his department has been giving the Immigration and Refugee Board guidelines that specifically expedite the refugee claims of such dubious characters as Algerian double agents, members of the former Ethiopian dictatorship and guerrillas from Latin America.

The minister gives the appearance of shutting the door to undesirable immigrants on the one hand, while allowing the IRB to open it right back up again.

How does the minister plan to resolve this glaring contradiction in the implementation of immigration policy?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that there is no contradiction. The editorials across the country, after your critic spoke on that, talked about the fabrication of the words spoken by your critic. Certainly that—

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. minister to please direct his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I think that put the matter to rest.

• (1430)

Pursuant to the Hathaway report, we have made it very clear to our case presenting officers that they have a duty to aggressively, regularly and consistently produce information to those applicants that would suggest that they either have a criminal background from the country they came or in Canada itself. Second, I made it very clear that the refugee case presenting officers have a duty to put forward the same information.

The only question at the heart of those guidelines is that both my officers and the independent officers to the refugee board should not get involved in the adjudication of that case but they very clearly have the obligation to provide that information. If the information sticks then that will be carried out in the case of the adjudication.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the system does not work. When the minister denigrates the critic from Calgary Northeast he should remember that he is a 20–year veteran of the Calgary police department who with his colleagues has spent years dealing with the defects of the department's processes and the failures of its processes.

His perspective on this issue is not an academic or an interest group perspective, it is a street level perspective to which the minister should pay more attention.

The minister's department used to handle all dimensions of immigration including the refugee dimension. Since the quasi–judicial IRB was set up and populated by members of the immigration industry the minister denies responsibility for the defects of the—

Some hon. members: Order.

The Speaker: Order. I would ask with all respect that the hon. member please put his question.

Mr. Manning: My question, Mr. Speaker, for the minister is this. When is the minister of immigration going to assume full responsibility for immigration policy?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that on this subject matter this leader is out of his depth because he does not know what he is talking about.

First, neither I nor my government have ever abdicated policy for either the IRB or immigration policy. For you, sir, there is a difference between—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would ask you, my colleagues, to please address your remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Perhaps the minister is out of depth on parliamentary procedure, Mr. Speaker.

We are talking about depth, Mr. Speaker. The real reason, and the minister knows this, for the difficulty in keeping illegal immigrants and foreign criminals out of Canada is that the Canadian courts ruled some time ago that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to anyone who is physically present in Canada regardless of how they got here or their criminal defects.

Surely this is not what the Parliament of Canada nor the legislatures intended. They did not intend that the charter would undermine the ability of Canada to protect the integrity of its own boundaries.

We can think of two ways to rectify this situation.

Some hon. members: Order.

The Speaker: This is quite a day. Welcome back to Parliament. I wonder if the hon. member would please put his question.

Mr. Manning: Does the minister have any proposal for getting to the root of this problem?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, through you, the hon. member is as convoluted as his party's policy on this. He moves from Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the IRB to immigration policy. He is changing his adjectives.

This minister has not abdicated policy for the IRB. What I have said time in and time out is that this minister and this government will not get involved in the day to day adjudication of cases before the Immigration and Refugee Board regardless of how many times its critics get up and give us the blood and the guts and the gore of individual cases. We are responsible for the general policy framework under which the IRB operates.

• (1435)

Second, you want a tangible way as to how to get at the root problem.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Lobbies of gun owners and manufacturers have stepped up their pressure on the government to go back on its election promise regarding firearms. Just today, these lobbies are holding a major demonstration on the Hill in order to sway the minister.

Will the minister abide by the commitment made in the red book and resist pressure from gun owners and manufacturers, and undertake unequivocally not to water down his party's promise to tighten up control of the circulation of handguns and semi–automatic weapons?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, last May the Prime Minister asked me to prepare proposals for the fall with a view to strengthening firearms legislation, and I will do so.

I spent most of the summer consulting Canadians throughout the country and I listened to what they had to say. We are currently examining a full range of possibilities and I will be tabling a bill in the House within a few months, probably in November. Our primary goal at all times will be the safety of Canadian citizens. We are, I believe, at the point where we must decide what kind of country we want to live in.

[*English*]

We will have substantial changes in gun control for the safety of Canada in the months ahead. Make no mistake about that. In the preparation of that package we are taking into account the legitimate interests of firearms owners. I spoke this afternoon to the crowd gathered on the Hill and I emphasized—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Rock: —that in complying with the Prime Minister's request of me I would assemble proposals that both take their legitimate interests into account and serve the interests of all Canadians who want a safe society.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Justice still recognizes the need to strengthen controls on the circulation and possession of firearms, why does he not tell us today, right now, how he intends to do so, instead of

making us wait, diverting our attention and letting us think that he is faltering?

[*English*]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the process in which I am engaged has taken me across the country to speak to people interested in this subject. I have consulted with my colleagues in the Liberal caucus who come from every province and territory of the country.

Rather than tell the House today what it is that is going to be done, we are developing proposals through that consultation and we are being respectful of the legitimate interests of firearms owners.

I can tell the hon. member, as I emphasize on each occasion when I am given the opportunity to do so, that our fundamental objective is a safer society, that we are going to deal with illegal firearms in this country, that we are going to toughen the criminal law in its response to those who use firearms in the commission of offences, and we are going to deal with the regulation of firearms in the hands of lawful owners in a manner consistent with safety in our society.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I can see clearly from the last exchange that the law–abiding gun owners from Quebec out here on the lawn do not have a representative here in the Bloc.

• (1440)

The Speaker: This is a very far reaching Question Period we are into. I know the hon. member is going to put his question forthwith.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the justice minister as well. In his 1993 report, the Auditor General indicated the previous government's Bill C–17 was not formulated upon a sound statistical basis and that the government proceeded for reasons of public policy.

I ask the Minister of Justice this. Will his proposed amendment to the gun control legislation be based upon statistical information that clearly demonstrates whether or not the current controls are meeting their objectives which is to reduce the criminal use of firearms in society or are we again proceeding simply for the purposes of public policy?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice has indeed commissioned studies. It has received factual research information about the situation with firearms in this country.

We have read with interest some research information released yesterday by the Toronto police about the incidence of the use of handguns in the commission of crime in that city. We read the report recently about the defects in the present registration system for restricted firearms and the need to improve the registration system.

We have read studies about the need for change in the criminal law to send the message that if one uses a firearm in the commission of an offence, one will get a stern response from the justice system.

Our proposals will be based upon fact. They are going to be based upon research. But they are going to be based more than anything else upon the policy of this government which is to take steps that ensure the safety of our society.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that response. I am sure that he will submit those reports to the members of the standing committee on justice.

My supplemental is this. In describing Canada's current gun control legislation, the courts of Canada have used the terms such as vague, uncertain, invalid, inconsistent with the charter, convoluted, fictitious and twice removed from reality.

I ask the minister this. Will he put aside any proposed legislation and immediately undertake a complete re–evaluation of the current legislation to ensure it is clear, consistent and of direct effect upon the criminal element to provide the protection needed by our society?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the exercise in which we are now engaged.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAINTED BLOOD

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

While Canadians are, with good reason, asking themselves serious questions about the blood supply system, the minister told the Canadian press that the reason Canadian standards are not as stringent as those in effect in the U.S. is that Canadian donors are volunteers.

How can the minister make such irresponsible comments when the tainted blood scandal of the early 1980s occurred under the volunteer donor system?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to clarify the hon member's question and to inform all Canadians that our regulatory system is different. The reason it is different is that it is based on a different philosophy, on a volunteer donor system instead of a paid donor system.

• (1445)

This does not mean that one system is better than the other. In fact, we are working to harmonize the two systems so that blood donor centres can meet the standards established. We will take the best from each system. We will adjust our system according-

ly. We will not lower our standards in order to meet those of the U.S. system.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, this does not make any sense any more.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Picard: In fact, I noticed that we are quite different. I asked a new question and I heard the same thing again today for the second time because I asked yesterday. I would like to get a clear and precise answer.

How can the minister seriously claim that people are fully informed of the risks of blood transfusions when we have learned that the Montreal centre's director general had to request operational and procedural directives in French, if you please, which she is still waiting for?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I will answer very clearly.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Marleau: Our blood supply system is among the best in the world. We are always looking for ways to improve it. Every day, every hour, in every hospital in the country, we save lives thanks to our blood supply system. We must continue to encourage our volunteer donors to give blood.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, this summer the results of a very revealing immigration poll were released. Sixty per cent of Canadians believe immigration levels should be lower. Sixty–nine per cent said sponsorship should be limited to immediate dependent family. Ninety–six per cent did not want people admitted with terrorist or anti–democratic backgrounds.

Will the minister of immigration admit that his policies of high numbers and extended family reunification and his recently released guidelines that fast track those with violent and anti–democratic backgrounds fly in the face of what an overwhelming majority of Canadians want?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the member missed out one number. Only 10 per cent support his party and the number is dropping.

I was trying to tell the leader of the Reform Party that the critic was as wrong on the information he spread about the fast tracking procedures as he was yesterday when he talked about a specific case. I reiterate to the hon. member that the things he said about the fast track procedures are absolutely wrong.

Also I know, as my party in government and all members do, that no Canadians would like to invite terrorists or criminals to be within their midst. No one in this Chamber or across this country would like that.

With Bill C–44 we have taken precisely the common sense approach to try to fix up the removals and tighten up the refugee system. My question is: Why is that party playing politics and not supporting the legislation?

• (1450)

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, the minister's bureaucrats want numbers cut. They want family reunification rationalized and refugee determination tightened. The minister's department, the overwhelming majority of Canadians and even a significant number of backbenchers in the minister's own party want Reform policy implemented.

When will the minister stop standing alone, stop pandering to special interests and do what everyone wants him to do: implement Reform immigration policy?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, over the last eight months this party has put in motion an unprecedented consultation process with Canadians, the very grassroots, which is what the hon. member suggests we did not do.

In fact the hon. member told our departmental officials at the two–day conference how impressed he was with the breadth of the consultation process. I challenge the member to deny that.

Not only are we putting in train, putting in the one room the individuals who accentuate one particular line, but when was the last time a minister of a government invited the Immigration Association of Canada to participate so that government could have the purview of Canadian public opinion?

Before November 1 this government will table those levels. I know the levels will be in the best interests of Canada and not in the best interests of the Reform Party.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, last June several provinces rejected the proposal to replace the GST with an alternate tax put forward by the Liberal members of the finance committee. Faced with this absolute refusal, within 24 hours, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance had disowned the report tabled by their own people, thereby throwing people into total confusion with respect to their intentions.

Will the Minister of Finance recognize that, in response to this deadlock, he is now offering two choices to the provinces: either replace the GST with an 11 per cent Canadian tax on

goods and services, including food, health care and drugs, or increase instead the income tax rate of individuals who are already overburdened by taxation?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we did approve the main finding of the finance committee regarding the need to harmonize federal and provincial sales tax to better serve consumers as well as small and medium–sized business and indeed save a lot by reducing duplication and overlapping.

This being said, we had talks with the provinces and discussions are ongoing. As a matter of fact, we intend to look at what our officials have done over the summer at the next finance ministers meeting.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is telling us that he actually resolved the matter with this proposal, but nothing was resolved. The proposal was brushed aside as soon as it was tabled. So, it solved nothing.

When will the minister recognize that the solution, the only one, is to get rid of the whole sorry mess, eliminate overlapping and respect the fiscal autonomy of the provinces, particularly that of Quebec? This would involve abolishing the GST, yet another commitment the Prime Minister failed to fulfil, and transferring this entire field of taxation to the provinces. That is the only solution and the Liberals have already reneged on their promise to eliminate the GST.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is so anxious to see the GST disappear, I certainly would expect him to tell us at the same time where we are supposed to find the money it used to generate. We have waited, week after week, for the hon. critic opposite to come up with constructive suggestions for us, but he has refused to make any.

• (1455)

Canadian taxation is too important a matter to depend merely on speeches made in this House. The hon. member had his chance, but if he is prepared to sit down with us and make some constructive suggestions, we are certainly willing to listen.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Today we hear strong voices speaking out on gun control. In his statements the minister has recognized there is a legitimate role for firearms in rural communities. Can he also assure this House that he is prepared to take the necessary measures to ensure the security of our inner cities and urban communities where gun related violence is becoming a serious problem?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I hope it is evident from my responses earlier today that the approach we are taking will deal with just the issue the hon. member has described. We will deal with the presence of illegal firearms in the country in a comprehensive and effective way. We will toughen the response of the criminal justice system to those criminals who use firearms in the commission of offences.

However I am not one of those who believes this issue is rural or urban in its division. I believe, as I think many others do, that those persons who live in rural areas are just as concerned as the urban dwellers with their personal security and safety. The facts establish that the per capita homicide rate from firearms over 10 years based on 5,000 deaths is higher in the rural areas of this country than it is in the urban areas. So we must pay attention to both the urban and the rural setting. Ultimately the bottom line for this government is the safety of this society.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I have been given a list of refugees allowed into this country by the immigration department. According to the report one such individual who is believed to reside in Toronto is reported to be trafficking in munitions.

Has the Minister of Justice considered talking to the minister of immigration about removing such individuals as a means of real effective gun control, rather than concentrating on our law–abiding citizens?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I shall be happy to take it up with the minister. I am certain he is aware of it.

But I do not think we should conclude for a moment that the question of gun control applies uniquely to people trading in munitions or robbing the cornerstore with a handgun or hunters who perhaps might be careless on occasion with a rifle. It pertains to all of that and more and we are taking a comprehensive look at the entire subject.

I do not suggest for a moment, nor have I ever, that the question is narrow. I suggest it is broad. It involves illegal firearms in the country and we should do something about that. It involves criminals using firearms, and we must do more about that. But we cannot forget either that 1,400 people per year lose their lives in this country as a result of firearms, 1,100 by suicides and one–third of those are in the age group of 15 to 22 who perhaps act impulsively on a single episode.

Let us look at the whole question. I will take up that matter with my colleague in cabinet but I shall work away at proposals that deal with the whole question.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed. At this late date the Minister of Justice is saying he will be happy to take it up with the minister of immigration. He should have already taken it up.

There is another such individual according to immigration intelligence or lack thereof. He is an international black marketer in weapons. Does the minister of immigration understand the link between criminal refugees marketing weapons and crime and gun control, or is this just one big fog?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, indeed we do understand the link very clearly. That is one of the reasons Bill C–44 was brought in today.

Consequently because of the hon. member's concern with matters like this, because of his concern about crime and justice issues in this country, those that relate to immigration and those that do not, I hope he will rethink the issue and support Bill C–44 on Tuesday.

The Speaker: It is three o'clock p.m. I would simply bring to your attention that it was a rather unusual day. We did not get in as many questions and answers as we might have. I am hopeful that tomorrow we will be able to get more questions and answers in.

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[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon you asked me to refrain from continuing a statement that I wanted to make about certain comments made by my colleague, the hon. member from Nova Scotia.

There are two points on which I would appreciate clarification from the Chair. What I wanted to say faithfully reflected what was said by the hon. member. I now wonder whether the Chair's response to my statement was an indication that there are two kinds of parliamentarians in this House, and why the Chair tolerates such comments.

The Speaker: Order, please. My dear colleagues, as you know, in the course of a debate, when we make speeches, we may use some pretty strong language. I would like to read to the hon. member what it says here in the Annotated Standing Orders: "What is acceptable depends largely on the circumstances, but personal attacks, insults, obscene language or words which question a Member's or a Senator's integrity, honesty, or character are not in order. To reduce the possibility of personal references, convention further requires Members to refer to each other by title, position or constituency names. Likewise, the Senate is usually "the other place", and Senators, "Members of the other place", although generally references to Senate debates and Senators are discouraged altogether. A further long–standing practice also protects the judiciary from disrespectful or offensive attacks."

That is why I interrupted his statement.

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POINT OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte–Marie): Mr. Speaker, you made certain remarks following the statement by my colleague from Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead during statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

I would like to make sure I understand what you meant by your remarks on my colleague's comments who was merely quoting, and I will quote her myself, Senator Carstairs as stating that the Senate was necessary because its members—

The Speaker: Again, I will give my colleague for whom I have a great deal of respect the same reason. I reacted because I thought the remarks were directed against the Senate as an institution and the senator in particular. That was my rationale.

This is not open to debate. When the hon. member spoke, I figured he was breaking that rule. I wanted to leave it at that. Is there another point of order?

Mr. Duceppe: By quoting these remarks, my colleague certainly offended no one, Mr. Speaker, while the senator who made them did offend this House.

The Speaker: Honourable colleagues, perhaps I misheard. I shall check what the hon. member said and, if need be, refer to the Standing Order.

* * *

• (1505)

PRIVILEGE

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise on a question of privilege on behalf of my 53 colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois.

Based on the precedents you just mentioned, I am sure you will understand that we have no choice but to demand an apology for an unacceptable, in my opinion, and unparliamentary accusation made by the Prime Minister during Question Period, when he accused members from the Bloc Quebecois of having been elected under false pretences.

It is not only the most serious insult than can be levelled at a member of this House but also an attack on the democratic and electoral process itself that allows us to sit here. Bloc members were elected with a very clear mandate, a very well–defined goal

within a very structured approach that was explained many times to Quebec voters.

Under these circumstances, out of respect for all 53 Bloc members, for the millions of Quebecers who voted for us and for all those who share our vision of society, I ask the Prime Minister to apologize and withdraw his comments.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I think that after reading *Hansard*, as you probably will in a little while, you will find that the quote just brought to your attention is only part of the sentence. You will clearly see, as will the members opposite, and you will tell us tomorrow that, in fact, the Prime Minister quoted a whole sentence and that taking words out of context distorts the meaning of the whole sentence.

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, I will certainly go over what was said today, I will look at what was said in context and, if necessary, I will get back to the House.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would hate to deprive my colleague, the government House leader, of the opportunity to tell us about the business of the House for the coming weeks. So, as is the custom, I would ask him to tell us his priorities for the coming days.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, for a few moments I thought I would make parliamentary history by asking myself to provide the weekly business statement to the House. I thank my colleague, the opposition House leader, for permitting me to stick with the longstanding tradition of the House, that is to give the statement only after being asked for it by the opposition House leader.

This is the weekly business statement. Today we will continue with second reading of Bill C–41 regarding sentencing. Tomorrow we will call the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C–25 amending the Canada Petroleum Resources Act regarding Norman Wells, followed by second reading of Bill C–49 to reorganize the department of agriculture.

On Monday the order of business will be second reading of two more of the departmental reorganization bills, C–46 respecting the Department of Industry, and C–48 respecting the Department of Natural Resources.

On Tuesday the first business will be the second reading stage of Bill C–50 regarding the Canadian Wheat Board followed by the resumption of any debates begun but not yet completed of the bills I have mentioned.

• (1510)

On Wednesday the House will commence with the consideration of the Senate amendments to Bill C–22 with regard to Pearson airport.

Finally, I wish to designate Thursday, September 29 as an allotted day. I believe it is a day that will be in the hands of the Official Opposition.

That completes my statement of business for the coming week.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, we are considering Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to sentencing.

While this bill has several good provisions, it also has some that concern me. It is evident that it is difficult to properly consider Criminal Code provisions with respect to sentencing without also considering the substantive provisions of the code or even to consider sentencing without relating that to the prison system or the parole system.

In other words, if we are deciding on whether to change our sentencing procedures and our sentencing policy, we have to ask ourselves how these changes will impact on our prison populations, on how they inter–relate to our parole system and how they will affect our treatment programs in prison.

If the sentencing provisions, if they are provisions that will lengthen sentences, will result in more people in prisons, then there will be an impact on prison populations. If there is an impact on increasing the prison populations, then it will also relate to the level of programs that we have in prisons to treat inmates, whether there are enough resources for those programs, enough spaces, enough teachers, enough counsellors, enough psychiatrists and so on.

My concern is if we adopt a policy of lengthening sentences and at the same time become tougher on parole, make parole more difficult to get—I refer members to some parts of Bill C–45, which was before us yesterday—and if at the same time we provide fewer resources for our correction and prison systems as a result of our campaign to cut the deficit, then we are going to have a situation in which we have more people going into the prison system for longer periods of time where those

people will stay in longer because parole is becoming more difficult to obtain and at the same time fewer resources to provide accommodation and programs for those inmates.

At the present time our prisons are extremely overcrowded. During the summer I had the opportunity to visit prisons in the Kingston area. There were prisons that were built to accommodate 450 inmates which now have well over 650 inmates. There is double bunking and even triple bunking in cells that are narrower than I can stretch my arms, and I am not a big man. There are very small cells in which there now is double bunking.

There have been reductions in the educational programs available to inmates and a reduction in recreation programs available to inmates. This goes back to the previous government from which there were continual cuts over the last nine years. I raise it now. We have come to government recently but I raise this very important matter that must be considered when we are considering sentencing and parole.

• (1515)

We have to ask ourselves what the result will be if we continue on that policy line where inmates go in for longer periods of time and do not have the same access to parole or who are not prepared for parole, and there are no programs to occupy and help those inmates when they are in prison because we are overly concerned with the deficit and we are cutting here and there and everywhere.

We can look to previous periods that had similar situations. There were hostage taking incidents. There were riots and there were higher rates of recidivism.

We must remember that the great majority of inmates who are sent to prison are there on limited sentences. They are not there on life sentences. They are there for armed robbery or assault or fraud or theft and so on for which they get sentences of five years, seven years, ten years. Sooner or later they have to be released. If we are truly concerned with the safety of the public surely we want them to be released in a situation, in a state where they are of less danger to the public than when they went in.

If we continue on this drift which is being suggested by some quarters in our society and which is principally put forward by the Reform Party in this House, I must ask whether we should simply have longer and harsher sentences and tighter parole and cut the moneys available for our prisons. What is the result with respect to the protection of society when the great majority of those inmates are released into society?

I suggest that this will leave us with a much more dangerous situation for our citizens. Inmates will be released into society without education, without training, without treatment, who have been through an experience of tension, violence and so on. We just have to look at the American experience where they have adopted those kinds of policies. Look at some of the southern states, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia where they went ahead with such policies. They had longer and harder sentences. It was more difficult to get parole and they cut back on resources.

I read recently of a situation in which a judge in a particular community had no prison space to send an inmate to because there were no places available. The prison was so full and there were so few people coming out, so many people had gone in, that here was an inmate who was convicted but there was no place in the prison for that individual. The lawmakers had not considered when changing their provisions with sentencing and parole that maybe they have to also provide resources.

We may have to build new prisons if we keep on lengthening the sentences and cutting down on the parole. We may have to build at a much greater expense than we would otherwise have to to accommodate these individuals.

Where they have done this in the United States, where they have pursued those policies, they have not protected the public. The rates of violent crimes are much higher than they are here. In those states that have brought back capital punishment, for example Florida, they are executing people in the morning and in the afternoon somebody is killing an innocent citizen simply to get his car. There was a citizen from Montreal who flew to Florida. He rented a car at the airport and was murdered simply for the automobile when there had been an execution that very same day. We hear the same thing with respect to other individuals.

Let us think out our policies on these matters very clearly and examine the interrelationship between sentencing, our correctional system and our parole system.

This bill also deals with certain amendments to section 745 of the Criminal Code. Section 745 is the article that I am in part responsible for because it deals with the review of parole eligibility for convicted murderers at 15 years. This bill would allow for certain victim information to be provided at those hearings which are meant to determine whether parole eligibility should be reduced from 25 years to 15 years.

• (1520)

I certainly agree that we must have more programs to help victims, that we must consider victims more in our criminal justice system but I have some doubt if this is the right place to provide for victims' statements.

I say that because section 745 says that upon receipt of an application under this section the appropriate chief justice shall designate a judge to empanel a jury to hear the application and determine whether the applicant's number of years of imprisonment without eligibility for parole ought to be reduced having regard to the character of the applicant, his conduct—that is, the

inmate's conduct while serving his sentence—the nature of the offence and such other matters as the judge deems relevant.

I have to ask myself whether the information of the victim's family—it will have to be the victim's family in this case, the parents, the wife, the husband of the person who has been murdered—put on the record would relate to the character of the applicant because that is what the judge has to consider, the character of the applicant, his conduct while serving his sentence and the nature of the offence. I ask how the victim's family might have something to say after 15 years about the character or the conduct of the inmate applying for early parole eligibility.

In any case, I presume that the victim information statements would have to be relevant to the matter that is before the court and not to matters that are irrelevant.

Let me explain the background of these provisions. Prior to 1976 those convicted of non–capital murder or whose sentences were commuted from the death penalty who had committed capital murder were eligible for parole at 10 years. I should point out that we have had no executions in Canada since 1962. Until 1976 when we had parole eligibility at 10 years there were very few errors. I think at the time we introduced the bill in 1976 in the history of the country there had been four individuals who had been released on parole and committed murder again. The 10–year parole eligibility experience had not been one which led to disaster in this country.

When capital punishment was abolished in 1976 we provided a life sentence for first and second degree murder with parole eligibility at 10 years for second degree murder with the possibility of the judge and jury increasing that up to 25 years at the time of the trial or the judgment. For first degree murder it was a 25 year parole eligibility period but with the opportunity of applying at 15 years for a reduction of the parole eligibility date from 25 to 15.

Some commentators and some members of this House have referred to that 15–year provision as a loophole. It was not a loophole. It was in the bill. It was debated in this House. It is clearly in the legislation. It is expressly provided for. It is not something that the government or the authorities have found and dropped between the boards, so to speak. It is there positively. It is a positive statement in the law that one can apply at 15 years to have one's parole eligibility reduced from 25 years to 15 years. If the court reduces your parole eligibility from 25 to 16 or 17 years you still have to go to the parole board and argue in favour of your parole.

You cannot be paroled unless you prove to the parole board that you are completely rehabilitated and no longer a danger to society. This is not automatic before the parole board or before the court on the 15–year review. As a matter of fact, most applicants on the 15–year review have been turned down. Even when people get before the parole board many of the cases are rejected. They are not granted parole because they are not able to establish that they are totally rehabilitated and no longer a danger to society.

• (1525)

I have proposed that we do away with the 15–year review and have parole eligibility at 15 years. Some people have misrepresented that proposal and have said that I am proposing that the sentence for murder be 15 years. That is totally false. The sentence for murder is and was a life sentence and should remain a life sentence.

One must also remember that when you are on a life sentence even if you are on parole the sentence continues. You may be serving the sentence outside the institution, outside of prison, but you are still under that life sentence. If you break the conditions of your parole—you do not even have to commit a crime—you can be sent back to prison to continue serving the life sentence. If you commit a minor offence of criminal negligence, theft or whatever, you can be put back into prison not only for the minor offence but also to continue serving your life sentence for murder.

It is not a question of changing the sentence for murder. The sentence for murder is life. I am not suggesting that it be otherwise. What we are talking about is the eligibility for parole, whether it should be 15 years or 25 years. We are not suggesting that the sentence be changed. It is a question under our system of whether you serve your sentence in a maximum security institution, in a medium security institution, in a minimum security institution or outside an institution altogether but under supervision in the community, which is parole.

There are various ways of serving sentences but you are still under sentence. For murder it is always a life sentence and nobody has suggested changing the sentence.

I simply want to say I was pleased that the minister did not do away with the 15–year review in the case of convicted murderers. I have some concern about how the provision he has put in the bill will apply and be relevant to the question to be decided at 15 years. My preference would have been that we get rid of the 15–year review and have parole eligibility at 15 years. Not everybody would be granted parole. They would still have to prove that they were no longer a danger to society and were totally rehabilitated. Therefore, people who are dangerous would not be released. They would still be kept in prison. It would give an opportunity to those who have served 15 or 16

years who were totally rehabilitated, who are ready to work and support themselves and their families to go back into society under supervision, serving their sentence in society, in the community.

I want to say again that any policy on sentencing must have as its principal goal the protection of the public. The purpose of criminal law is to protect the public from that behaviour which we categorize as criminal. That is the goal. If that is the goal of course then once we have people within the prison system our goal there has to be to rehabilitate or correct those individuals because the overwhelming majority of them will be on limited sentences and returned to society. If they are going to return to society the goal of the system has to be to rehabilitate, to correct.

We cannot expect the Criminal Code or the criminal justice system or our sentencing policy to be the principal means of preventing and reducing crime. Those policies can only relate to individuals once the crime is committed, once the damage has been done.

If we are really interested in reducing and preventing crime then we have to direct our attention to the causes of those crimes, whether they are social or economic, whether they are psychological. We have to ask ourselves why these individuals whether they are young people or adults are committing those crimes, and what can we do to prevent them.

Maybe we can have better gun control. I fully support more gun control and will support the minister when he brings in his bill because the fewer guns available the fewer crimes we will have with guns.

It could be that we have to do something about children who are abandoned or mistreated, whose parents are alcoholics or drug addicts who have abandoned their children and they grow up in a system of complete neglect without belonging to any family or group and who become very anti–social.

My point is those people who think that we can simply make amendments to the Criminal Code with respect to sentencing or the substance of a criminal offence will solve the problem and give the public the impression that will bring about a safer society are deluding society, are fooling society. They are not being honest with society.

• (1530)

We could amend every section of the Criminal Code. We could make it as hard and tough as we wish. That would not solve the problem. We have seen that, as I have said, in certain states of the United States.

If we are truly serious about protecting the public from crime, reducing crime or preventing crime, we must address the causes of crime. It is not simply a question for the Department of Justice or the Department of the Solicitor General. It is also for health and welfare, human resources, employment and immigration, provincial governments, school boards and municipal governments. We all have to play our role in dealing with society and the causes that give rise to crime.

I will bring my remarks to a close. As I said, the bill contains some very good provisions, some better alternatives for sentencing. It sets out a charter or a goal for sentencing policy. However there are a few provisions in the bill with which I have concern and I will be pleased, with the permanent committee on justice, to examine the bill to see if it can be improved in committee.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the presentation just made by the member opposite. I share some of his concerns with respect to the legislation and the whole problem of how we solve the crime situation in the country. We have heard recently that the crime rate in Canada is now going down. If that is really true then we ought to be truly grateful.

I have concern with respect to the whole idea of probation and the elements of section 745. It seems to me that people who enter the criminal justice system are those who already are demonstrating they are not good in and of themselves or they have failed. Somehow it seems we have to kick in an extra gear of the administration of justice in this case so that they will learn the harder lesson they have failed to learn before.

I would really be interested in a comment from the hon. member. He indicated that he would like to see automatic parole at 15 years instead of merely the eligibility to apply for it despite the crime. It concerns me a great deal that there should automatically be a right to say: "My punishment is over even though I have taken someone's life". That is heinous and serious. We ought to be strengthening it rather than weakening it.

I would like to hear some further justification if he has it.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I sometimes wonder whether we all are speaking the same language even when we are speaking English. I thought I said—and I have said it over and over again—that I am opposed to automatic parole. There is no such thing as automatic parole in the country. I never suggested at any time in my entire life that anybody be paroled automatically.

What I was saying and what I continue to say is that I believe at a certain date people should be eligible to go to the parole board and present their case. They would have to show they were totally rehabilitated and no longer a danger to society. If they cannot demonstrate it then they are not paroled. The last thing I would recommend would be releasing into society on parole people automatically, simply because they had reached a date.

At the end of a sentence is a different thing which I will deal with in a moment. I have never recommended automatic parole for murderers and I will not. I assure the hon. member of that. He may have read things like that, but I have never recommended that.

I have recommended the right to apply for parole at 15 years, just as they have the right to parole at one–third of sentence. For example, if they have a six–year sentence they can apply at two years. It does not mean they are going to get it. The parole board will hear their case but it may say no.

We hear of certain cases where people have gone before the parole board six times and were turned down six times because they were still bad actors. All the evidence that comes in on them with respect to their case before the parole board is that they are not ready for parole. I support that. I do not believe in automatic parole. I want to put that to rest.

• (1535)

The member raised a good point when he said that some people have demonstrated by committing their crimes that they are not good and need some time in prison. I agree with him.

Violent individuals who committed crimes of violence should be kept in prison, but they should be given a system of treatment or correction which, when they go back on the street, will mean that they will be safer. They will be less likely to commit the crimes that they went in for.

There are provisions. We find, for example, that the rate of literacy in prison is very low. People have a very low rate of literacy, very low education. They do not have trades. If we can help them in prison to learn trades, learn how to work, learn to live like ordinary people who get up in the morning, go to work, save their money, and learn the skills of ordinary people who live in society, we will be doing a great deal.

If we have a system of release whereby they are released with support when they go back in the community, whereby they have parole officers who will help them get jobs, get settled, reintroduce them to their families and so on, we will have less chance of crime when they return to society.

I believe in keeping people in prison, but when they are in prison they must be given a program that will help them do better when they get out.

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce has a great deal of experience in this matter having served as Solicitor General of the country.

He describes to us the American system which most of us regard with a considerable amount of concern and is obviously not providing a sensible solution by building more prisons and having longer sentences. It seems to be an infernal industry in the United States. They create the crime. They create the crime chasers and then they create the incarceration. There is no end to it.

The member gave a very cogent description of the problems in Florida and the juxtaposition of a death penalty in the morning and a murder in the afternoon. I understand his point about the lack of deterrence.

We also have the problem of the Canadian public desperately trying to understand what we can do. In our inner cities today we are confronted with serious problems. In my own riding of Rosedale I have serious problems in downtown Toronto. At a time 15 years ago gunshots did not ricochet off downtown buildings. Now there are women and children who are afraid to walk around at night in parts of downtown Toronto. It is no good to say we will seize all the guns. Admittedly that is a start but only a start. There will always be guns there.

Has the member found another model? Does he know of somewhere else? Is there some other model that he can draw to our attention from the depth of his experience that we could be looking at, something concrete to which we as Canadians can turn to address the problem of the violence that is getting worse in our inner cities and not react in the American way?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Rosedale. As I said there is no quick fix for increasing criminality. If we delude our citizens into believing there is a quick fix we deserve condemnation.

If we suggest to them that we can solve the problems of crime in the streets in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver simply by amending provisions of the Criminal Code or by making the sentence 20 years instead of 10 years which they have done in certain American states, if we suggest that is a solution and five months later there is even more crime, we are not serving our public very well.

We must show leadership in the House on these issues. We must deal with the causes of crime. We must make sure that we have child protection acts that intervene at an early age when children are being abused or when they start going wrong, whether it is eight or nine. They have such an act in Quebec called the Child Protection Act. I am sure they have one in Ontario which deals with children under 12 who are lower than the age for the Young Offenders Act.

Whether these are children going from foster home to foster home, whether they are abandoned by their families, or whether they are caught up in drugs or whatever, we have to intervene quickly to try to prevent these things. We also have to make sure that we have proper educational systems, employment policies and so on that help turn people to productive ways of life and not criminal ways of life. That is the model I suggest but it is not a quick fix. It means we have to spend some money but it is money that will show dividends. If we have safer communities in the long run it is money that pays off.

• (1540)

There may have been some terrible crimes in Toronto in recent years but I have looked at the statistics. Toronto had somewhere between 50 and 60 murders last year. It is a city of over three million people. If we compare it with Detroit, Cleveland or New Orleans, those communities have over 500 or 600 murders per year. Toronto is a safe city compared to those others.

I do not show any sort of toleration for the terrible murders that took place in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver or wherever, but the rate of crime is much lower than it is in the United States, maybe because we have traditionally taken an approach that was not simply a criminal justice approach.

We have had broader social programs and better educational programs. When we talk about the United States, criminal law is a state matter unlike here where it is a national matter. Some states in the United States have much better programs and systems than others. I referred to the ones that were very punitive and did not take a preventive or rehabilitative approach. There are some states that do and do much better, by the way.

If we look at states like Minnesota, some New England states and some other states there are much lower rates of crime per 100,000 than some southern states with very tough, long sentencing policies.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley and the other members of our caucus will be on during the time allotted for 20 minutes.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to address some remarks on Bill C–41 that deals with sentencing in our criminal justice system. The Minister of Justice is to be congratulated for bringing the bill forward at this time and for his other attempts to deal with young offenders and with restrictions on firearms.

While we may not always agree with the minister's proposals on this side of the House, there is no question that he is giving us food for thought. I cannot help but think that if the current Minister of Finance was working this hard on behalf of the Canadian people the deficit would be well under control.

In any event, we are here to address the various aspects of Bill C–41. I would like in my remarks today to address some of the positive aspects of the bill and then deal with some of the deficiencies—at least deficiencies as I see them—that hopefully can be cured when the bill is dealt with in committee.

As my colleagues have pointed out, one of the most important, positive elements of the bill is that for the first time a statute will contain a statement of the purpose and principles of sentencing.

There is nothing new in this statement, but it does codify the existing law and will provide explicit direction to judges in our criminal courts on the principles that must be applied in each individual case. While this is a positive aspect to Bill C–41, there are a number of negatives that I hope will be addressed in committee.

When I talk to my constituents about the criminal justice system the comments I hear most often concern the lack of predictability about sentencing. This lack of predictability can range from comments on different lengths of sentences being imposed for similar crimes, to comments that sometimes express outrage at the short amount of time some criminals have to spend in prison.

People feel that like crimes should be treated alike. That is, if a white collar criminal steals through breach of trust he or she should receive the same sentence as any other person convicted of theft. I know that in some cases white collar criminals do receive stiffer sentences than others, but because of the way our system operates most of the sentence is served on the street and not in prison.

White collar criminals should spend their sentences in prison. This is the deterrent aspect of sentencing: accountability or being held responsible for our actions. Our criminal justice system must send a clear message to all who are contemplating the commission of a crime that if you do the crime then you must do the time. It is time spent in incarceration with no special treatment.

The second issue raised by constituents deals with the length of time served in incarceration. We are all aware of anecdotal evidence of people being sentenced to long prison terms and then in a very short time they are back on the street. Our system seems to be full of opportunities for criminals to manipulate it so they do not spend nearly as much time in jail as the judge or those who are victims originally believed the convicted person would spend in jail.

Bill C–41 addresses this issue to some extent by allowing victims to make representations at early parole hearings.

• (1545)

Why should we put victims through this trauma? Indeed, why should there be early parole hearings at all? When a person has been sentenced to 10 years in prison, what is wrong with that person serving at least seven or eight of that 10 years before looking at parole or other means to put the person back on the street?

This raises a question. Should offenders of violent crimes be paroled at all? Should their sentences be reduced? Today more than ever before we are made aware of the anger of all Canadians when offenders of violent crimes are out on day passes or paroled at a very early date or receive a reduced sentence and a violent crime is the result. One death from the hands of a violent

offender who should not be out on the streets of our country before his or her sentence is up is one death too many.

The people of Canada want to see some measure of certainty in the system and this bill does not provide it for them.

Another point that I take issue with is the aggravating factor of hate in relation to the sentencing for some crimes. We in the Reform Party believe that we are all created equal. No group should have more rights than others. It makes no sense to me to grade severity of punishment on the basis that the victim belongs to a protected class. Can it be any worse to kill or wound a person of a protected group than to kill or maim someone who is not in a protected group? I do not think so. If a crime is committed, the criminal should be punished and the public should know that if you commit crime *x* then you get *y* years. Maybe that is too simple for our seemingly complex society today but it is the way we see things on this side of the House.

I heard Tuesday in this House that if a crime is perpetrated as a result of hate against the individual, there should be a harsher sentence, a stronger sentence. As I understand the example given, it was a member of the gay community who was brutally beaten causing death.

I ask the House to consider the senseless death of a 31–year old Coquitlam man, I believe it was Mr. Niven, who outside a convenience store was brutally kicked and beaten to death just recently. Is there any difference in the savagery of such a crime? Can we really state that one is worse than the other?

Does one deserve a harsher penalty than the other? Has not in each case a man been brutally beaten to death? Is one life worth less than another? I sincerely hope not. Is not all life precious and of equal value? I sincerely hope so.

We are also concerned that this bill allows provinces to establish alternative measures programs. Again, such a system while in theory its goals may be laudable will create unevenness in the system. Some crimes in some provinces will be treated differently than similar crimes in other provinces. Again, there is enough uncertainty in the system. Let us not introduce more uncertainty.

One glaring omission from this bill is that when a crime is committed and a firearm is used, a longer sentence should be automatically required. The Minister of Justice talked about this in relation to gun control. So have those who are lobbying for stronger restrictions on the use of firearms.

At this point, I want to refer to the recent report released August 25, 1994 by the Correctional Service of Canada. After it had completed its investigation report into the escapes from Ferndale Minimum Security, which happens to be in my riding, two prisoners, Timothy Denis Cronin and Michael Kelly Roberts, walked away from the institution May 3.

They were subsequently picked up in Salem, Oregon and charged with the murder of an American, all within the short time they had been free. Both men had been convicted of violent offences, each having used a firearm in criminal offences for which they were convicted. Why were these two inmates in a minimum security institution?

One of Robert's psychologists in 1979 stressed that Roberts should remain in a maximum security institution.

These are the findings of the investigation: "The board concluded that, notwithstanding the best judgments of staff and the advice of psychologists and psychiatrists in the cases of Roberts and Cronin, their placement in a minimum security institution was inappropriate and in one case was based partly on an assessment tool being incorrectly applied".

I am pleased that the error was admitted to and recommendations made to try to prevent such happenings in the future. I quote statement number eight of the report: "The Correctional Service of Canada should adopt an approach which incorporates both intensive supervision and clinical service for new arrivals and higher risk cases in minimum security".

This is the action plan: "No offender who is generally of high risk should be in minimum security". I wish it had ended there. It went on to say: "However, it must be recognized that some offenders who are suitable for minimum security require more attention than others".

• (1550)

I find problems with that. Upon reviewing the percentage of the types of crimes committed by the inmates of Ferndale I found that 43.8 per cent of the inmates in Ferndale institution are still there and they are violent offenders. I would presume as murder or violent death formed over 29 per cent of these offences that many of these crimes would involve a weapon, more than likely a gun.

Who will be the next high risk offender to walk away from Ferndale? When will we start to put the rights of law–abiding citizens ahead of the rights of criminals? Again I stress that if one more high risk inmate walks away from Ferndale minimum security prison in Mission, as they can easily do, and another death of an innocent victim is the result we are paying too high a price.

This bill would have been the ideal place to put in a provision which requires longer, harsher sentences for crimes committed with a firearm. This is perhaps the only restriction on the use of firearms which directly affects those who use firearms the most, criminals. It is high time we addressed this part of the gun control issue. I hope the government will make the bill stronger.

In closing I believe it is time that we had a comprehensive bill dealing with sentencing and, as I have said, this is a good start. In the months to come I look forward to receiving other initiatives from the Minister of Justice, perhaps in the areas of appointment of judges and proposals to reduce the tremendously high cost of our legal system. These will have to wait for another day.

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has indicated that people engaging in white collar crime should do the time. Earlier today her colleague from the constituency of Wild Rose indicated that perhaps there are mechanisms other than incarceration to deal with non–violent offenders.

How does the hon. member explain the inconsistency that has been brought forward by her party on a single day?

Mrs. Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. for his question.

Yes, I did make that statement. I do think that all people who commit crimes must pay for those crimes and must be incarcerated. However if the occasion should arise, and I say if the occasion should arise, that in our institutions we are overcrowded then the logical thing would be to look for avenues to relieve that overcrowding. Logically we would then find a way for non–violent offenders to spend time in another way. Within the community would be an excellent way to do it but only if we find we do not have places in the prisons for them.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I was quite interested in the comments made by the hon. member. We are informed that there are fewer resources now available for incarcerating people in our prison system. We are aware that it costs approximately $50,000 a year to keep a person in prison.

We are faced with overcrowded prisons. We are also talking about the possible increase of 30 per cent over the next few years of incarcerated people in our prisons. However we also know that in the United States where they have reduced actually the levels of liberté conditionnelle, as we say in French, that their levels have not been very satisfactory, that is to say that even if they are not allowing them to leave prison, the crime levels in these states have not decreased.

I am also curious to find out why the Reform Party believes that by not having gun control as we propose that crime levels will actually fall. I find it very curious that we are more concerned about sentencing when we should be concentrating on trying to control the use of firearms in society. If we were able to register firearms in this society we would have better control, but now we are more concerned about sentencing people who have already committed a crime. This is what I found illogical in the arguments presented by the hon. member.

• (1555)

I would like to know how they can reconcile the fact that we do not have to control the use of firearms as proposed by the minister, by this government, but we are better off trying to spend more in terms of sentencing and throwing people into prison when we could simply reduce the murder rate in this country if we had a real serious and comprehensive bill and law controlling the use of firearms. I would like to hear the member's comments on that.

Mrs. Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

You mentioned two or three things. First, I was very concerned every time you mentioned control of firearms. What you are really saying is that we prevent law–abiding citizens—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I would just like to remind members on both sides of the House that when intervening to direct your comments through the Chair.

Mrs. Jennings: I apologize, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize to the hon. member opposite.

What I would like to stress is that I find this whole situation very disturbing because I have respect for every member in this House. I try to think that you say what you honestly mean and you honestly believe, as I try. When I say that I mean we have in Canada today responsible gun owners. Every time we put laws in force on firearms we hit at them one more time. That is not acceptable. We have to find another avenue. You can never justify putting more laws in place that will withdraw rights from law–abiding citizens. You cannot justify that in a just society.

As far as this business of overcrowded prisons goes, is the answer because we have overcrowded prisons to open the doors and release them? Did that not happen in Russia in 1917? Are any of you aware of what happened in the small villages around the steplands in Russia to all of the innocent people? Think about it for a minute.

No, we do not open the doors. We do not let prisoners out. We try to convince even the young people of today who because they are under age can go ahead and commit any crime they want because they cannot be held responsible. We do not start a new slogan: "Do the crime and spend less time". Instead of that we stick with what we have and we make it better. We show that people have to be responsible. There is only one way and that is to serve your time. If you are not guilty of a violent offence then it is possible to look at other avenues of serving. I think we can do that but we have to work together seriously on it.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could be as generous as my colleague in commending the government for Bill C–41, but I find it is like many other pieces of legislation. It is a mere camouflage. It is a

life sentence tinkering instead of truly changing a system that needs to be changed.

I feel that Bill C–41 will not make those substantive changes that Canadians are expecting of this government. However, the true value of Bill C–41 will be and must be measured by whether it will provide safer streets for Canadians. I personally do not think that it will.

I would like to concentrate most of my talk this afternoon on one aspect of the proposed legislation and that is crimes that are motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. I agree with everybody that we need to condemn that type of crime, but we should not be creating a hierarchy of victims in doing that.

Section 15(1) of the charter of rights states that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection. I feel that Bill C–41 is going to change this. It will say that there are certain crimes against classes of victims that are worse than the same crime against other classes of victims. I would suggest that is against the fundamental principles of the charter of rights and that is that every Canadian has the same equal right to protection under the laws of Canada.

• (1600)

An example of how this could be applied happens more regularly than I would like to see. That is the home invasions which are occurring in the Vancouver area. Individuals, either alone or in a group are breaking into homes and terrorizing the occupants. They are not waiting until the homes are empty. They are breaking in when people are at home and they terrorize the homeowners and steal all the valuables. Many of these home invasions are committed by Asian youth gangs and they are targeting Asian members of the community. That is bias and it is victim selection. That would be considered an aggravating factor under Bill C–41.

In another instance there is gang activity. They indiscriminately invade homes, again harassing the victims and stealing all of their valuables. There is no aggravating factor yet that crime is just as serious and just as damaging to the victims.

They are two equally deplorable crimes. But one gang would get stiffer sentences because they were more selective in their choice of crime.

Judge the act. Judge the criminal activity, not the motivation. By judging the motivation we are delving into a risky proposition and it smacks of Orwellian thought policing. We are treading on very dangerous ground when we start to invade what we think are people's thoughts.

I would like to know whether this is there for the profit of lawyers and self–styled psychologists and psychiatrists who will soon become legal experts on this subject. Why should senseless assault be viewed as any less serious than one that is biased, based on bias, prejudice or hate?

We would have fewer problems with considering crimes where offenders abuse the position of trust with the victim to be considered aggravated. The Minister of Justice used adults and children, doctors and patients as examples. I would hope that he would also consider lawyers who abuse their position of trust with clients and politicians who abuse their position of trust with the electorate as other examples of breach of trust that should be considered aggravating circumstances.

Not only special mention of classes of victims but special consideration of aboriginal offenders also concerns me. This seems to offend the equality section of the charter. I am not suggesting there is an over–representation of the native population in our prisons, but I do not think this is the way to deal with it.

I spent 15 years in northern Alberta living in a native community. I have more experience than most on the inequalities and injustices that our aboriginal people face. They would be the first to agree that the problem is not solved in legislation. The problem is solved in the administration of justice.

I would like to give another example to consider. Suppose two individuals with identical criminal records participate equally in a crime, but one is aboriginal and the other is not. Does this legislation mean that the aboriginal offender would be given a lesser sentence even though he participated equally in committing the crime? What about an aboriginal offender who commits a hate crime? Does the mitigating factor of being aboriginal cancel out the aggravating factor of it being a hate crime?

We should not even be asking those questions. It is not for us to question the motivation of a crime. We must judge it on the act itself and make sure that every Canadian is treated equally under the law, that the law is not looking at race, colour or gender.

• (1605)

Generally I agree with incarceration being the last resort. I am well aware of the potential overcrowding in our prisons and the ongoing concern of what that will mean, but to suggest that we only want violent criminals in our jails only addresses part of the problem.

However, this bill does not in any way deal with white collar crimes. In those cases financial penalties may not be enough in themselves to deter fraudulent behaviour by corporations or people who ought to know better. Those people can easily pay a fine and need a more substantive deterrent than just paying some money.

I had hoped for more in the sentencing package. I had hoped for a greater recognition of the concern of Canadians that we need to have more control over violent offenders, that we need to

have some measure of deterrent, and that we need to consider that all Canadians should be treated equally.

The prime purpose of sentencing should not only be to have a penalty for the act but there should also be a deterrence factor. We cannot omit the deterrence factor in our sentencing legislation.

Sentences, like probation and prison terms are effective in the short term but long term supervision is needed. When a person is given a prison term of two years as the appropriate sentence for the committed crime, they should serve two years and an additional sentence of community supervision should be added on to that.

One might say that is similar to what parole is now. However there would be a greater acceptance and understanding by Canadians if they knew the courts deemed the penalty for a crime was *x* number of years and then deemed that the criminal would be assisted in getting back into the community under a period of supervision to be determined by the courts. If that happened there would be much greater acceptance for some of the sentencing that is handed down.

Serious violent offenders should have a lifetime of supervision. People who have committed murder or vicious assaults against another person should be under lifetime supervision in addition to their sentence. If Canadians were assured that long term supervision was being provided they would be a little bit more willing to allow offenders back on to their streets.

Although Bill C–41 is giving direction, it certainly does not go far enough. I wish this government would have a little bit more strength and a little bit more courage in making the tough decisions that have to be made.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I feel constrained to make a couple of comments on the content of the last address. There are some fundamental errors in terms of what information has been promulgated in that argument.

First of all, it is very important when discussing parole and the issue of when or whether someone might be paroled to understand that parole is, in effect, a community based continuation of the sentence. A person who commits first or second degree murder is sentenced to prison for life. If he or she subsequently is paroled, they continue serving their sentence in the community under the supervision of parole officials.

It is misleading to suggest that a person who receives parole after 15 years is suddenly absolved and walks away. There are limitations on that individual's behaviour which are set out under the terms of the parole. His or her life is supervised. They can no longer simply live wherever they want or associate with whomever they want. They have to report regularly.

That part of the system may have strained resources. There may be other ways to strengthen or improve that system, but a person who commits murder is punished for life by the combination of incarceration and ongoing community supervision. It is misleading to suggest there is any other structure that somehow absolves that person at the conclusion of their jail term.

• (1610)

I would also like to point out that a false example was given of the amendments which relate to crime which is affected as a result of hate. In the example the hon. member gave of a home invasion perpetrated against members of a particular ethnic group, there would not be an automatic increase in penalty, nor would the issue of the victim's race come into play unless the prosecutor could prove beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of the court that the crime itself was motivated by the hatred of a member of that group. To invade the home of a person of a particular ethnic group may not be motivated by hate. It may just have been the most convenient place to hit on that particular night.

It strikes me that the government is absolutely right in recognizing that crimes motivated by specific hatreds of race, of sexual orientation or any of the other specified classes is particularly heinous in our society.

Ms. Meredith: Mr. Speaker, I am little concerned. I am hearing the government suggest the same crime may be considered more heinous simply because it has a bias or hate or prejudice attached to it. I would like to think the crime itself is heinous no matter what the motivation or no matter who the victim is.

One thing I would like to address is there are people who have killed. Perhaps they did not get murder one or murder two. Perhaps they got manslaughter for the convenience of the courts or whatever reason, but the point is there are people who have killed and have been sentenced for five or six years. With mandatory supervision or the legislated statutory release they will be out on the streets after two years.

Canadians do not like to see that. They want some sort of protection. Maybe this person made a mistake and did not mean to do it but surely to god there should be some supervision to make sure it is not going to happen again.

Canadians are concerned because there are people who do get out and are on the streets without any supervision. May I mention the name of Mr. Larry Fisher who is out wandering the streets without any supervision because the law does not allow that supervision. I would suggest that is what Canadians want this piece of legislation to do: make sure the streets are safer by protecting them from people like him.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–41 is yet another fulfilment of Liberal red book promises. It is part of this government's safe home, safe streets policy. This policy in connection with our plans and our actions in the direction of job creation and our fundamental respect for

human rights—I see the member to whom I was addressing my remarks is leaving in any event—gives Canadians the comfort of the quality—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. Regrettably I was not possibly paying as close attention as I normally would. Certainly with regard to the presence or absence of members in this Chamber, we well know the demands on our time for House duty, committee duty and so on. Therefore, we should all be mindful and respectful of one another in terms of our coming and going, presence or absence in the House. I would ask all of us to keep that in mind in our interventions.

Ms. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, these policies dovetail together rather nicely to give Canadians the comfort of a better quality of life.

• (1615)

Canadians trust our right hon. Prime Minister and our government to deliver on our promises. That is evident by our presence in the government and our strength in the government. Indeed we published these promises in the red book and Canadians can literally check them off as we deliver on them.

Our job creation programs can be seen across the country in our infrastructure works which are completed and which are in progress. As promised by the Prime Minister the country is starting to feel better about itself. I might point out that nowhere is this more evident than in Windsor, Ontario where unemployment is down, welfare claims are down and crime is down.

Jobs mean prosperity and prosperity reduces the stress in our society. Sometimes as is the case today it is necessary to deliver legislation which seeks to aid Canadians to feel safer and to correct inadequacies in the system where they exist. This is the reason for Bill C–41.

Canadians need reassurance. Canadians need comfort. I would suggest that Canadians do not want this reassurance and this comfort to be at the expense of human rights. The government has consulted Canadians across the country and found out that Canadians are concerned about certain aspects of our criminal justice system. Canadians are not hysterical. Canadians are not narrow minded. Canadians believe that there are some injustices in our system. Canadians believe that aboriginal people for instance receive inappropriate sentences disproportionately.

Canadians believe that poor Canadians are sometimes treated more harshly by the courts or by the system than Canadians of financial substance. Canadians think that we should seek some alternatives to custody in certain circumstances. We also know that Canadians do not want all crimes to be treated the same way. Canadians recognize that the quick fix is not possible.

They recognize that there is a difference between crimes and they draw that distinction often based on the presence or absence of violence in a criminal act. They know that there are often compelling reasons to promote an offender's rehabilitation over his or her punishment. At the same time they want consistency in sentencing and a rationalization of the process.

This bill comes to grips with these expressions of public opinion through amendments to the Criminal Code. First and foremost, these amendments set out a general statement of principles and purpose in the sentencing process which covers rehabilitation, the segregation where necessary from society of certain offenders. It covers restitution. It covers the actual promotion in a convicted criminal of a sense of responsibility for his or her acts and it denounces unlawful conduct while deterring both the offender and others. At the same time it recognizes certain fundamental principles that Canadians have told us they are interested in upholding.

The sentence must reflect the seriousness of the offence. The sentence must reflect the degree of responsibility of the offender. The sentence must take into consideration aggravating or mitigating circumstances. The sentence must at least consider alternatives, especially for aboriginal offenders. When a crime is motivated by hate based on race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, disability or sexual orientation Canadians want it to be punished accordingly.

The Minister of Justice has considered all of these factors and has presented a bill which respects the wishes of Canadians and the rule of law. There is no quick fix. Our friends opposite would like us to think that there is a quick fix, a year is a year and a day is day. There are always circumstances that require flexibility. There are always circumstances that require us to take off our punishing hat and put on our rehabilitating hat.

• (1620)

I would suggest to our friends opposite that as they consider the fiscal bottom line they consider the difference between the cost of rehabilitating someone over the long term to our society versus keeping that person indefinitely incarcerated with no programs and no opportunity to recover.

The member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce spoke eloquently this afternoon about attacking not only the results of criminal activities but also the causes of criminal activities. We hear nothing about that aspect from the benches opposite.

Members opposite make it all sound so easy. Just throw them in a cell and throw away the key. This I would suggest is the result of simplistic thought and, quite frankly, knee–jerk reactions. The funny thing is it is not even what Canadians want.

The member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce, I would suggest, hit the nail on the head when he said that crime is not just a justice issue, it is a health issue, a human resources development issue and it is a human rights issue.

In Canada, sadly, some groups do not enjoy the same advantages as others because of social class, colour or a variety of other reasons. Canada is a much better and freer country than many others, most others for these people, but we have to recognize that not all of our citizens have the same advantage.

Canadians have recognized this and Liberals have recognized this. That is why we do not offer these amendments in a vacuum. When we look at Bill C–41 we also have to look at the movement that we are making to rationalize the national health care policy and the extensive social safety net reform that will be introduced shortly. This social safety net reform is intended to deliver better social security in our country. The rest of the country can then follow the example of the greater Windsor area, less unemployment, lower welfare payments, fewer welfare cases and a lower crime rate.

It is not as easy as our friends opposite make it. We cannot jerk our knee and solve the problems with a simple saying or a simple quote. We have to be versatile and we have to be flexible. I would suggest to members opposite that is exactly what the hon. Minister of Justice has done here and that it is consistent with what Liberals do and it is consistent with what this government has done and will continue to do in the future.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a clarification with respect to allegations made toward the Reform Party's view of this.

I do not think that any of us have ever made the statement or even intimated that it is a simple thing, you just throw them in jail and throw the key away, as the hon. member stated. That is not an accurate description of the feelings or convictions of people in our party.

I challenge the member opposite to think about the real issues that are involved here as we are trying to do. How do you solve the problem of crime? One of the most fundamental areas in which we have failed our young people, who then become older and at whatever age become criminals, is that we are no longer strongly teaching them by example and by word what is right and what is wrong. I am finding that even in present law making there is this intimation now that we are going to have laws that will prevent parents from spanking their children.

I do not in any way condone violence against children but children will learn to obey and respect authority if they are taught in a loving way with firmness.

• (1625)

That is how I was taught and that is very important. That is where we need to work in order to empty our jails. We need to make sure we have strong, loving families. I would like to see this government really emphasize that end of it. Perhaps the member has some comments on what I have just said.

Ms. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, one way we can ensure Canadians develop a strong, loving base in the home is to provide homes that are safe and prosperous. One of the problems we have that we see time and time again in our society is as there is less prosperity, as the economic and other stresses are placed on a family, when they cannot find food, when they do not have sufficient warmth, when they do not have sufficient shelter, when they do not have the basic, fundamental things that families require in which to thrive, then other things develop.

Parents become busy working harder or trying to find ways to bring food into the home, to raise money to support their children. They have less time for their children. It is important to accept that the issue here is not the result of crime or the criminal act itself.

The issue is making that go away, making this a better society, so we do not have to deal with it anymore. If we can do that by reforming our social safety net, by creating jobs and by making it a better country in which to live economically and socially, by acknowledging for instance that some crimes are motivated by hate and by trying to come to grips with those types of problems, then we can make it a better society, a better country, stronger families.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of whether I could get up twice in these situations, so thank you for that lesson.

I am wondering if one of the pressures that we have control over—when I say we I mean the Government of Canada—is in the area of financial pressure. There are many parents who are forced to work because of the huge tax load they face among other things.

Perhaps what we need to do as a fundamental root, way down deep solution to this problem is to manage our financial affairs to reduce the tax burden so that in those families where those stresses occur they could be reduced. Perhaps those who choose could then remain home with their children to provide them with a good, secure, solid, loving environment in which to grow up.

Ms. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, I happen to agree with the hon. member in terms of the basic premise that there should be lower taxes. I do not think there is anyone in this Chamber who would not like to be able to help lower taxes right away.

I also agree there are families now forced to have two incomes in order to make the same sort of home that our parents perhaps made with one income. There is no question about that. Let us not cross that line. Let us not assume that all families have two working parents because one of them is being forced to work.

There are many families that exist today because two parents want to work and have careers. That is a part of our changing society. I see heads nodding. I see some agreement, which is pleasant.

I must point out that without the social safety net we cannot provide the atmosphere in which these parents can work. That is why we need—this will be a little segue here—to have some form of national child care standards so we can make sure that families with two parents who want to seek careers can have the type of support they need for their children. Then they will know their children are secure and living in a healthy and safe environment and they can continue to pursue their total goal as a family unit.

• (1630)

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I stayed down long enough to give everyone else an opportunity. I really want to challenge that because it is undoubtedly true that if we do pursue this goal of national child care, nothing is going to do more to drive taxes up and put pressures on families higher. We are defeating ourselves and I strenuously object to that.

Certainly in the other areas, there are some families—I am thinking particularly of single mothers because we have so many of them now in our society—who have no choice. We must bend over backward to do what we can for them.

I do not, however, buy into the premise that the only way it can be done is by the taxpayer being plucked by the government to provide the service. There have to be many other ways to solve those problems.

Coming back to the bill that we are discussing, I would like to also say with respect to criminals that when they finish their time, we need to recognize that we are not going to put everybody in jail for life, no matter what they do.

I agree certainly that we must do something to get them ready to integrate back into society. Here again I would have a very good low cost solution to propose, particularly for people who are guilty of non–violent crimes. I would propose that they be placed into the keeping of good loving homes. It is a requirement. It is their sentence. They would spend their time there instead of in a jail so that they get a model of how life ought to be lived.

With that, I am going to quit this time. I promise.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Do not make too many promises now just for this time. Certainly I sense if this dialogue and debate went on between the two members who have been rising on the floor that we would find some points of disagreement.

Ms. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, I feel like I am going to a dance here. I thank the member opposite for allowing an opportunity to engage in this dialogue even though it is in a very structured environment.

I must say that I cannot think of very many acquaintances or friends who would want to open their houses to persons such as my friend is suggesting. However, it is not an idea that should be dismissed.

These are the types of creative ideas that I suggest this bill envisions. These amendments provide for great flexibility and versatility in terms of sentencing arrangements.

In Windsor, which is where I am from as members know I am sure by now, we have some very creative and excellent judges on our provincial court and our general division benches. Some have worked very hard to find alternative sentences within the limits of the current legislation.

As a result, we have seen in our community many community–based solutions that have been promulgated by those judges and by some programs and social workers whom we have in our community. The result is that we have had an opportunity in our community to look very closely at alternative sentencing structures.

This has been an eye opener for me as a criminal lawyer, both as prosecutor and as defence counsel. These have been very productive types of programs. I would suggest that my friend opposite has an idea that is worth exploring.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, in a document published in May 1993 from Ottawa the Prime Minister, in an election mood at the time, said: "Safe streets and homes should be a basic right of every Canadian". As he noted Canada's 40 per cent increase in violent crime he said: "Since 1984, the Conservative government has done almost nothing to combat the growing crime rate except half measures and lots of macho talk".

The Prime Minister has served Canada in this House for over 20 years. Perhaps some of the influence of the Conservatives in proposing half measures has rubbed off on the Prime Minister and his cabinet.

Bill C–41 in its intent and as far as it goes has many things that are supportable. I submit, however, that with this as with other legislation currently before the House, the Liberals are consistent. They are moving. I believe that is because the Reform Party members are listening to their constituents and are saying things on the floor of the House of Commons that typically have never been said here before. Through the pressure of the voice of Canadians being brought to this Chamber by the Reform Party the government is moving but, I submit, in half measures.

• (1635)

Let us reflect also on what my leader, the member for Calgary Southwest, was saying in 1992. While speaking in Belleville, Ontario on the issue of reforming the criminal justice system he proposed the two following things:

Number one: Reformers believe that a better balance should be struck between the amounts of public money spent on the apprehension, care and protection of the perpetrators of crime and the amount of public resource spent on helping the victims of crime. Combined federal and provincial spending on jails alone is about $2 billion a year. Police spending is $1.7 billion for the federal government alone. The court costs another several hundred million dollars each year, whereas the resources committed to helping or compensating the victims of crime are minimal.

The second thing he said was that sentencing and parole procedures should be reformed. He said: "We have proposed that automatic parole be eliminated altogether; that 25 per cent time off for good behaviour be the maximum amount by which a sentence can be reduced; and that sentencing guidelines for judges and juries be improved to ensure greater certainty and consistency in sentencing".

These proposals are in line with the recommendations made by the Canadian Sentencing Commission in 1987 but largely ignored by the federal government.

I believe that in 1993 when my leader made those comments that they were reflecting the values and judgment of Canadians just as they reflect those same values today in a more substantive way than is evident in the bill currently being considered by the House, which I have judged to be a half measure.

On the first issue raised by my leader that there must be a better balance struck between the money spent on criminals and their victims, I would like to present a couple of ideas. First, I think quite frankly that there is a problem in our wonderful free and democratic society with our news gathering systems and media. They have to set their own agenda and perhaps have to sell their newspapers or their advertising time on television.

Unfortunately, we have articles, for example from the *Ottawa Sun* on March 12, 1994, a two–page article outlining communications telling of a complex person expecting to emerge from jail as though her past and her crimes will be erased. It published a whole series of Karla Homolka's letters. In those letters there appeared, for example: "That card fits perfectly with my Mickey Mouse posters. Hey, I'm getting Sesame Street towels and sheets on Friday. My room is going to be the most juvenile in the whole institution but, hey, I like it that way." Another letter: "I'm growing bangs, or at least I am trying to".

This kind of sensationalism by the news media in my judgment does a major disservice to this whole issue. I believe that the fundamental tenets of our society are based on freedom of speech and access to information. But I challenge the news media in the way that it takes that information, distorts it, twists it, sensationalizes it and sells more issues of its newspapers by so doing. I do not think that is excusable.

However, there are responsible articles. I refer in the context of this speech to one from the *Toronto Star* dated June 26, 1994. I read in part:

> Rick Sauve, serving a life term for murder, is the first lifer in Canada to earn a university degree behind bars.

Friedman, one of the people who was an instructor to him and who used to teach classes inside prison, said:

> The greatest reward is when I talk to someone who has gotten an assignment back and they have got a 65 per cent and they are pleased as punch and say 'wow, I can compete with those guys'. It literally brings tears to your eyes.

Claire Culhane of the prisoner rights group in Vancouver believes strongly that the public should support prisoners' attempts to get post secondary education. Our policy now is to warehouse them. If you are doing 10 or 20 years, are you supposed to sit there and vegetate? If they do not want tension in prisons they have to provide something for everyone.

• (1640)

The second part of the article is that in May Sauve was granted the right to apply for parole. A hearing will be held later this year.

There are two fundamental problems here. I do not want to comment on the issue of this prisoner receiving the ability to be able to have the resources to get his university degree but I suggest that it is hard to imagine that the family of Rick Sauve's murder victim earned a university degree at government expense as a result of the loss of their loved one. What has the government been doing in terms of looking after them in the same way that the offender is currently being looked after?

I am not discussing the issue of whether Rick Sauve should have worked for his university degree. The issue I am raising in this case, as in others like it, is how much time, money and government resource is put at the disposal of victims versus the money and resources put at the disposal of the perpetrators.

The second issue is what my colleague from Fraser Valley West said on Tuesday. He made it very emphatic. Life is life, or at least it should be. Yet we see from this article that Rick Sauve was granted the right to apply for parole. We see a measure in this legislation that victims will be allowed to make representation at section 745 hearings.

While this is an improvement I believe that section 745 should be repealed in its entirety. The judge at the presiding jury or judge trial should have the ability to be able to set the sentence. The sentence should not be overridden at some future

point in time by people who were not party to the case in the first place.

This brings me to the second issue which my leader raised. Surely there must be some ultimate protection for law–abiding members of society.

In a paper produced by the MacKenzie Institute entitled "Streets of Fear, the Failure of the Criminal Justice System" the author, Brode, cited some very interesting examples of the problems with sentencing procedures in Canada.

Two Nova Scotia cases recently underline the inadequate judicial response to attacks on women. In Regina v. Swinamer a man forced his estranged wife into a truck and threatened to kill her. She escaped. Charged with unlawful confinement he was released on condition that he have no contact with his wife. Again he captured her. He drove her to a secluded area and raped her.

At his sentencing the court considered the offender's situation, that he had already spent five months in custody and had a good work record. His sentence, three months' imprisonment and 19 months' probation.

In Regina v. Desmond the husband had severely beaten his wife, thrown her out of the house. She suffered a fractured shoulder and pneumothorax of the lung.

Again it was the offender's situation that mattered for the trial judge considered that it was his first offence of this type and that he could lose his job if in prison. His sentence, 90 days to be served on weekends and two years' probation. This man except by the grace of God would have murdered his wife and he gets 90 days' sentence and two years on probation.

In my home town of Cranbrook this past weekend there was a march of citizens concerned about family violence. They were looking for changes in the criminal justice system and to see that inadequate sentencing for sexual assault is carried over into sentences for spousal abuse.

At an Ottawa conference on women's safety a couple of years ago Chief Brian Ford said that a first offence for assault on a wife usually results in a suspended sentence. Those for drunk driving are stiffer. Inexcusable.

What the government today is missing is the understanding that the late Judge Les Bewley observed, and I quote: "The control or reduction of crime depends on three essential elements: the certainty of detection of the offender; the speediness of the trial; and the certainty of punishment". He goes on to say: "These were all observed and taken for granted 30 or 40 years ago". Not any more.

• (1645)

I would like to introduce for consideration of members today the concept of retribution because the Liberal concentration has totally smothered this concept.

Take for example events which occurred in 1989 and 1990 in Perth, Ontario. Kenneth McLean, the convicted killer of Ruth Moore, had originally been convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no eligibility for parole for 13 years. McLean had told friends: "If I cannot have her, nobody else can". He strangled her and then stabbed Ruth 24 times.

The Ontario Court of Appeal ordered a new trial because of technical errors in the judge's rulings. At his retrial McLean pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of manslaughter and thereby became eligible for parole in another 18 months or released on mandatory supervision in three years. In effect, he would serve six and a half years for Ruth Moore's death.

The victim's family was outraged and violence almost erupted in the courtroom when the new sentence was imposed. The presiding judge, Dan Chilcott, sympathized with the family. He told them he understood their feelings of outrage but then he added: "Retribution plays no part in our system as far as I am concerned".

About retribution the Mackenzie Institute says: "Retribution is the root of society's motivation to punish those who seriously breach our standards of accepted conduct. Retribution is not revenge, for revenge is arbitrary and self–seeking. Retribution is a measured response to a past offence imposed after due process and it is proportional to the gravity of the offence. It does not gratify individual loss. It enforces the legal order and reflects society's abhorrence to violence. To grant lenient sentences is to say that violent acts are acceptable and are not to be truly punished".

Again, there was a recent incident in my hometown of Cranbrook. An individual had been sitting with his ex–girlfriend. She decided to have a bath. Following an argument he went in and shoved her face down in the water. She smothered to death. I grant you he confessed to the crime, but after both the crown prosecutor and the defence asked for a five–year sentence for this murder, the judge in his wisdom said: "Oh, no that is not good enough. We are going to give seven years". What is this? What is a life worth?

When we have lost the concept of retribution, of making the penalty fit the crime, we have lost an essential element of our judicial system. All judges should understand they are on the bench to administer retribution. Courts do not exist to sympathize with the criminal, but to adequately punish for a wrongdoing.

The greatest deterrent to crime is not necessarily the severity of punishment, rather it is the certainty of punishment. The prevailing system of parole and automatic remission of sentence has made punishment uncertain and in many cases unlikely. The

danger lurking in the criminal's mind that he will pay the prescribed penalty for his act simply is not there. He knows the parole system will spare him even in so–called life imprisonment. The criminal justice system therefore becomes a deception. It leads the public into believing that criminals are being punished and it shields the criminal from paying the penalty.

I wish to introduce the major reason I will vote against this bill and in conclusion I want to briefly address the declaration of this bill, that where crimes are motivated by hate this is deemed to be an aggravating factor. The minute this House strays from the fundamental principle that all Canadians are equal regardless of race, language, creed, colour, gender or religion, we open up the entire Pandora's box of inequality.

• (1650)

Let me give an example which was reported in *B.C. Report* magazine on September 12 of this year. George Mammolitti, the 32–year old NDP MPP from Toronto who spoke out forcefully against Ontario's same sex benefits law before it was defeated in June has been the target of harassment, abuse and threats.

The magazine reported that after the defeat of the bill Mr. Mammolitti received about 300 abusive and threatening phone calls often in the middle of the night. Many of the callers uttered racist epithets and told Mr. Mammolitti to go back to Italy. He was also sent a handwritten note containing a threat to kill him in front of his children. Police determined the note had been mailed near the legislature but were unable to determine who had sent it.

Mr. Mammolitti has call display telephones in his office. As a result, Craig Smith, assistant to the associate culture minister, Shirley Coppen, was found to be responsible for at least some of the abusive calls Mr. Mammolitti had received. When Mr. Smith was approached he admitted to making the calls. He was suspended with pay for three days and no criminal charges were laid.

The hate provision strides into very dangerous territory. It pits members of supposed majorities against citizens of appointed minorities. A victim is a victim and a perpetrator is a perpetrator. If the shoe had been on the other foot, if Mr. Mammolitti supposedly representing the majority of Canadians had been going after Mr. Smith supposedly representing the minority of Canadians, Mr. Mammolitti would have been in serious trouble. As it is, it does not work that way.

What are we doing getting into this with this kind of judicial law? When a person's head is kicked in, it is kicked in. Curbing is a very gross action which I believe is coming out of the slums of New York or the American inner cities. The victim is put down with the back of his head to a curb and then someone applies boots to his forehead with great force. Something has to give. A murder of that type occurred in Coquitlam within the last three months.

Now I ask: What possible service does this law serve? If the people going through due process are convicted of that crime, what possible service does it serve our society? Does it serve the victim's relatives? Does it serve the offenders if the judgment of the penalty is based on whether the victim was an identifiable minority? Clearly these people did it out of hate. Was the victim just an ordinary guy and these were a bunch of goofball fools who took this person's life? Well that is okay, we do not have to give them as tough a penalty I suppose but remember, the victim is still dead.

We are entering into very dangerous territory with this particular provision in the bill. I truly understand the motivation, but my father said it best: You cannot legislate morality.

In conclusion this is a situation of half measures. It is dangerous because it raises expectations of citizens. That leads to lost hope which when these half measures do not work leads to loss of faith in law and order.

If I could have the attention of members opposite I will make them an offer. I will provide the Q–tips for cabinet if they pledge to use them so they can hear what ordinary citizens are saying. Canadians want an end to the half measures this bill represents.

• (1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before proceeding to the period of questions and comments to the hon. member for Kootenay East, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Yukon—Transport.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the rather sensationalist comments made by the hon. member when describing the various cases which have taken place either in his riding or elsewhere across Canada.

What I heard in his exposé is that there is a lack of understanding of what kind of population we are dealing with. We are often dealing with illiterates. We are often dealing with people who never had a chance in life. We are not actually looking for solutions. Actually the only solution the Reform Party is looking for is basically to throw the key away and leave them to rot in prison for the rest of their lives.

One of the best deterrents to fight crime in this society is education. Does the hon. member know the figures of illiteracy found among the incarcerated in Canada?

Mr. Williams: So what are you doing?

Mr. Gagnon: I am asking him the question, Mr. Speaker. Can he tell us why there is a disproportionate number of aboriginals in our prisons? In many cases these people have been treated like

second class citizens. In many aboriginal communities more than half the population is 18 years or younger and have been given very few chances. Many of them regrettably have turned to crime.

It is not only the aboriginals. They are also pointing to immigrants, new arrivals to Canada, people who were not really given a chance. It is regrettable the hon. member does not look into greater detail on ways to prevent crime. That is the basis of the bill: To reorient our young Canadians or older Canadians for that matter to try to set them straight in order to make them better and more productive citizens.

Obviously I am not going to hear the voice of reason and compassion on that side but they should recognize that those who are incarcerated in Canada today are often those who were not given the privileges of education, who were not given work in some instances and have had to turn to crime in order to pursue their lives. That is what is regrettable.

As a government we are trying to turn this society around. As we very well know the rates of incarceration in Canada are second to those in the United States and they are much lower in Europe. These are things we have to look into. We should start looking into what is happening in Europe, not quoting Russia of 1917 as one of his Reform associates did earlier. We have to look at what is happening elsewhere, what we can do and how we can improve the system.

Of course being a compassionate society we understand what the victims are living through. I am sure it is a living hell for many of them. We cannot turn around and say: "No. The only way we are going to solve this question is by throwing the key away". There is the question of education. There is the question of trying to encourage Canadians to find other ways and means of earning their living.

This is what we have to do as legislators, as members of this proud Parliament. We have to try to find ways to set the course straight for many of these people who regrettably turn to crime.

What percentage are actually illiterate and what percentage come from different classes and different backgrounds? Could the hon. member come up with those percentages?

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that virtually every time we have a debate on criminal justice reform we keep on hearing that the Reform Party is just talking about the sensational.

We fully recognize there is a segment of the population that has gone through an unfortunate situation in terms of education, economics, or their upbringing which will have an impact. Everyone of those people who is in a disadvantaged state in Canada has the opportunity to move forward and get ahead.

• (1700)

Not all of them fall through the cracks. With respect to the specific question, of course I do not have that answer at my fingertips. With the greatest respect, I would suggest that probably the member having walked into this House as I did at some point in time today probably also does not happen to have those numbers at his fingertips.

If this Parliament really wants to focus on reason and compassion, I wonder if just once this government might be able to have reason and compassion for the victim. I wonder if just once this Parliament would talk about bringing in the same kind of resources.

I said in my speech very clearly that I was not critcizing the fact that this criminal behind bars had ended up getting his university degree. I was not criticizing that. I was asking what resources were made available to the victims of his terrible crime. I would suggest not many.

The last time I spoke on this issue I believe we were talking about the Young Offenders Act. It was a Thursday. Perhaps some of the Liberal members will recall that this was immediately preceding their convention here in Ottawa.

It was very instructive because we brought up what the members consistently called sensational things, that we were off base, that the only place where there is any problem with the Young Offenders Act is in the constituencies that have a Reform Party member, that we were completely out to lunch is exactly what we are hearing from the other side the entire day.

It was really quite instructive that at the conclusion of their tête–à–tête in Ottawa the Prime Minister stood up and said: "We have suddenly discovered on the basis of the input that we have received from these Liberal members that we have a problem with crime. Therefore this is what we are going to be doing".

It turns out that maybe the problem was not isolated to the 52 constituencies that are represented by Reform. Maybe it is a problem with the balance of constituencies that do perhaps need the Q–tips I was offering.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Kootenay East suggested in his remarks that retribution is not vengeance. I looked it up in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary.* According to the dictionary, retribution is vengeance.

He was indicating that one of our members was treading on dangerous ground. When the member stands up and suggests that we should be basing our criminal justice system on retribution as opposed to basing it on the rule of law, he is treading on very dangerous ground.

I want to make one other point, his arguments with respect to hate crimes. He is arguing as have other members of the Reform Party that we should not be drawing any distinction when it comes to crimes based on hate.

We should all remind ourselves that this great country of ours is a multicultural country. It is made up of peoples from all around the world and that is one of the reasons why this country is so great and so strong. We have the best peoples from all parts of the world.

We also have to say to all these people from all parts of the world that they are equal, they will not be the targets or objects of contempt, hate or prejudice, and that when we witness contempt, prejudice and particularly the acts of hate, the acts of violence of hate, we will express our dissent and our loathing in a very strong fashion.

There are different kinds of violence and different kinds of crimes. Surely my friend from Kootenay East would not suggest that violence that comes from a drunken brawl is bad and no worse and no better than violence that comes from hatred.

It seems to me that whether it is a woman, whether it is a person who belongs to a religious group or a so–called ethnic group harmed, and they are the victim of terrible violence only because that person belongs to a particular group, we as a society have to condemn and contend that strongly. That is why I disagree with the member from the Reform Party.

• (1705)

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I understand the motivation of the member and that behind this legislation. The motivation is to work against discrimination, to protect people who are of a visible minority within our society. I understand that completely.

What Canadians want are safe streets. A person who is beaten up, a person who has cracked ribs, a person who has his teeth jammed down his throat with an iron pipe has his teeth jammed down his throat with an iron pipe. The minute this House walks away from the fundamental principle that all Canadians are equal regardless of race, language, creed, colour, religion or gender, and we make more worthy victims than others, we are on absolutely indefensible ground.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We have exhausted the five–hour segment of the second reading of this piece of legislation. We will now go to the next stage of debate which are 10–minute interventions without questions or comments.

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–41 with all its original and recommended revisions is a manifestation of objectives, directives, purposes, even hopes and wishes that have been produced through a demanding problem solving process. By its very nature it can be classified as a democratic one, one in which information is gathered from a multitude of sources, from publications, studies, research, reports, individual and group experiences, input from all aspects of society, each being driven and governed by their own agendas, personal beliefs and value systems—an extremely complex process which produces a declaration of intent, purpose or direction; in other words a statute, a measure, a rule, a regulation, a law.

This government has used this complex democratic process to produce constructive reforms found in Bill C–41.

As we listen to members of the opposition parties we hear their subjective presentations, each believing that they possess some segment of the perfect law. No law made by man is absolute or perfect. No law is safe from the forces of change in a dynamic society. Each change brought about democratically brings us closer to the more perfect solution.

The justice department has heard the voices through the great country of ours and the outcome is a Criminal Code which is more balanced, fairer and rational than the codes of the past.

The section of Bill C–41 that lifts the Criminal Code to loftier heights is the proposed statement of purpose and principles of sentencing. For the first time direction is to be provided to the courts on the fundamental purpose of sentencing which contributes to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society.

Revenge is no longer the basic purpose of sentencing one who has committed an unlawful act. Although this may be judged to be true by some, a sentence will still reflect the seriousness of the offence.

To diminish the criticism of unjust sentencing the courts throughout the country must give similar sentences to offenders who have committed similar acts. A just law is one that is perceived consistently to be just and fair in every court of the land.

Significant is the statement of principle that states when an offence is motivated by hate based on the race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation of the victim, the offence must be considered as a more serious offence than in the past, thus demanding harsher sentencing.

• (1710)

This bill provides the courts with more options to distinguish between serious, violent crime requiring incarceration and less serious non–violent crime that could be dealt with more effectively in the community.

It is in this area that I feel the most positive strategies can be created to rehabilitate the perpetrators of minor offences. Community service options which have been determined co–operatively with officials of the judicial system, community leaders

and agents from various facets of society will without doubt produce the most effective results.

Rehabilitation programs which keep the offenders from any semblance of normal societal structures, in other words segregated or isolated, rarely are permanently successful. The position of segregation or isolation has built in connotations of inferiority of being a second class citizen. The proposed changes within this bill will reintroduce the minor offender to the normal patterns of community life.

Too often the poor are victimized by well intentioned rules or regulations. The 18th century law that jailed the offenders who could not pay their fines no matter how small the amount is finally being revisited and revised. Such offenders will be subject to other options such as community service or probation. This proposal will result in less crowded, safer prisons as well as decreased costs. Also, more human and financial resources will be free to deal with the more serious offenders.

Many of my colleagues have expressed their opinions regarding section 745 of the Criminal Code. Here violent crime victims are being provided the opportunity to present information which may influence parole decisions pertaining to the offender, a very worthy initiative that is also supported by police chief Karl Ratz in my constituency of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, as well as many others in the law enforcement segment of society.

There is much that can be said about the proposed revisions in the Criminal Code and the relationship to a safer and more just society. Many assumptions can be made and shall be made regarding the various sections of the Criminal Code without seeing their relationships to other forces in society.

It takes more than the breaking of a law to make a criminal. Criminal behaviour is precipitated by a myriad of social causes and ills. Desperate people often resort to desperate means in order to survive or to maintain the family unit. We must address the roles of poverty, racism, family violence, depression, plus many other factors to determine the relationship to criminal behaviour.

We could add a million more laws to the Criminal Code and operate under the illusions that the more we have the better and the closer we will be to the utopian crimeless society. That is nothing but an illusion.

Society must be proactive in the most aggressive manner to prevent crime, thus diminishing the need for impulsive, knee–jerk reactive measures. We must stop pretending. We must stop applying solutions of the 1930s to the problems of the 21st century. This bill brings us one giant step closer to a safer society.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I too am very pleased to stand in the House today to speak to Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to sentencing of criminal offenders.

Since the opening of the 35th Parliament on January 17, 1994 this government has set in motion a number of initiatives to reform and strengthen Canada's justice system.

• (1715)

Amendments have been tabled in the House of Commons to revise the Young Offenders Act to crack down on violent youth offenders. Legislation has been introduced to reform the corrections and parole systems in order to improve our handling of sex offenders and, in particular, those who victimize children.

Today we are discussing the initiative announced by the Minister of Justice to reform the sentencing process in the Criminal Code. Bill C–41 is a well balanced, wide ranging bill that not only reorganizes but rationalizes the sentencing system in Canada. These reforms provide a number of options that address the public's concern for safety and the victims' demands for restitution. They include an important principle that serious offenders should be treated differently from minor or first time offenders.

Currently Parliament's role in sentencing is limited to setting maximum penalties for specific offences. The court systems in each province have been responsible for determining the purposes and principles of sentencing. As a result the values in sentencing structures in Canada's judicial system have varied from province to province.

Under the proposal a statement of purpose and principles would be added to the Criminal Code to provide guidance to judges from coast to coast in the sentencing process. The statement describes the objectives of sentencing as follows. They help in the rehabilitation of offenders as law–abiding persons, separate offenders from society where necessary, providing restitution to individual victims or the community, promoting a sense of responsibility by offenders including encouraging acknowledgement by offenders of the harm done to victims, denouncing unlawful conduct and finally deterring the offender and other people from committing offences.

This provision would allow the federal government to take a lead role in directing the courts on the fundamental purpose of sentencing, that is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society.

Furthermore the proposed statement of principles would direct the courts to hand down sentences that reflect the seriousness of the crimes. The proposed statement of principles would meet the concern about hate motivated crime and crime committed by those in a position of trust or authority in society. It would state that these types of crimes must be considered aggravating circumstances, therefore carrying heavier weight when handing down a sentence.

Bill C–41 also provides amendments to the Criminal Code that would improve both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the sentencing system. First it needs to amend the probation provisions of the Criminal Code. The proposal would encourage the transfer of important information to the courts during sentencing hearings.

The Criminal Code would be amended to specify that basic information be included in pre–sentence reports, including the offenders' juvenile records, their criminal records, information about the offenders' employment and social history and active steps taken toward rehabilitation.

Furthermore the bill seeks to strengthen the penalties for breach of probation. Strict time limits for reporting to a probation officer, for example, will be added to the Criminal Code. The penalties for breaking these conditions of probation would also be increased to bring more credibility to the probation system.

Second, if the bill is adopted by the House it will work to decrease the work load of Canada's already overburdened court system. Like most Canadians, I shudder every time I hear of a case that has been thrown out of court because of delays caused by an exhausted court docket.

The bill provides alternative measures to court proceedings that would prevent more criminal behaviour and would lessen the harm that can sometimes be done when minor offenders are dealt with through the courts. Furthermore alternative measures would involve the community and put greater emphasis on victim–offender reconciliation in court proceedings.

A final area of concern addressed by the bill is the impact of criminal activities on the victims of crimes. I am pleased the Minister of Justice has listened to the needs and concerns of those citizens. Victims feel a sense of frustration and loss when dealing with the criminal justice system. They want their voices heard. In particular they want to be involved in the process and have their interests taken into account during sentencing hearings. Bill C–41 addresses these concerns.

• (1720)

In recent years our justice system has seen the development and limited use of victim impact statements. The bill would oblige judges in sentencing hearings to consider these statements when handing down their penalties. This would ensure that a victim has the opportunity to speak about the harm inflicted upon them by the offender and would ensure that the victim's experience was taken into account in determining whether the parole ineligibility should be reduced.

We all know that crime is very costly not only to the judicial system but more importantly to the victims I speak of. Often expensive or cherished family heirlooms and personal possessions are stolen, lost or damaged during the commission of a crime. Currently if victims wish to seek restitution for personal or property damages they must make a special application to the court or seek recourse through costly civil litigation.

While they should not lose their right to follow a civil course of action, Bill C–41 would allow judges under their own volition to consider restitution to cover property and personal injury suffered by victims.

We can be proud of these proposals. They are indicative of the government's commitment to the rights of the victims of crime.

I would like to take a moment to compliment the Nepean Police Services victim crisis branch for the work it has been performing for victims of crime since 1983. Staffed mainly by a large contingency of trained volunteers from my city of Nepean, the service provides direct crisis intervention assessment, short term counselling and referral to suitable community resources to individuals and families that suffer the effects of trauma due to crime.

The mandate of the Nepean victim crisis branch not only operates in the best interest of the client it serves but follows the mandate set out by the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada.

I am pleased to stand here today in support of Bill C–41. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Justice for having the heart and courage to listen to Canadians and for carrying out the promises we on this side of the House laid out in our electoral platforms. I am convinced that all who carefully examine the provisions of the bill will recognize that it is in the best interest of Canada and works toward restoring Canadians' faith in the safety of their homes and streets.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Bill C–41 amendments to the Criminal Code respecting sentencing.

It seems to me that the Liberal Party, as I mentioned earlier today in another speech, has been listening to the Reform Party but only with one ear. I say "only with one ear" because it has made a bit of a U–turn and is only halfway around the curve. If that party were to listen with both ears perhaps we would get all the way around the U–turn, get the job done once and for all, and get it done properly. As Reform members on this side of the House we feel the job is not being done by this bill.

It would have been simple to get it done. Then we could have moved on to other things of equal importance such as unemployment and deficit control. Here we are talking about a little change to the Criminal Code that could be so much better. If I do have to praise the Liberals for their efforts in the bill it would be so faint that it would never be heard above the noise that sometimes comes from that side of the House.

As Reformers we are serious. We want serious changes to the Criminal Code to recognize that victims deserve our sympathy and criminals are to be punished. This is a relatively simple statement of policy, but we find that the bill is into mind reading

games in order to determine the state of mind of a criminal when he commits a criminal act.

I ask the mover of the bill and the government that is introducing the bill if they can tell me the difference from a victim's point of view between, for example, someone who is murdered out of hate or someone who is murdered because he or she happens to be an innocent bystander when a bank is being robbed and catches a stray bullet. In both cases the victim is dead. Perhaps this analogy is not very good because the victims in both cases are dead and their opinions would be hard to obtain. However let us think about that particular point. A victim is a victim.

• (1725)

As my colleague was saying just a few minutes ago, if we are going to start differentiating between the motivation of the criminal in determination of the sentencing and what went through his mind when we determine sentencing, we are totally and absolutely forgetting the fact that the victim and society are what criminal law is here to protect. That is the number one objective. Canadians are equal in every sense under the law. If we are going to start differentiating between one class and another class then I agree with my colleague from Kootenay East that the country will have lost it.

My point is that whether it is motivated by hate or any other reason the victim suffers. The whole reason we have criminal laws in our country is to ensure that society and individuals are protected.

Any attempt to vary the sentencing according to the mindset of the criminal will not only do what I have just said. It will cause more avenues of appeal by the criminal and more money to be spent by the legal profession and the courts to review the case ad nauseam while the innocent victim is ignored, helpless and forgotten.

The Minister of Justice will tell us that he is introducing victim impact statements. This is only a very small step in the recognition that victims have rights. I am glad to see they are introducing victim statements. It is the first acknowledgement we have had. The Reform Party policy states that where there is a conflict between the rights of the criminal and the rights of the victim, the victim's rights shall prevail.

Here we have not only a small acknowledgement but the first acknowledgement that we should be hearing from the victim, that we should be considering what has happened to him. We can deal with the criminal. We can lock him up. We do not advocate that we throw away the key. We do advocate that we have rehabilitation, that we have punishment and that society has to be protected. That is part and parcel but let us remember the victim is number one.

Talking about the review after 15 years, the very faint hope clause, the government is going to allow a victim impact statement when the criminal comes up for a parole hearing after an automatic 15–year period if he is in for longer. Again I think it is getting a bit late if we have to wait until then to hear what has happened to the victim.

As I said, let us get the job done once and for all so we can move on to other things that are equally important. We feel we should talk about the debt and the deficit. Crime is important. The debt is important. If we get the job all wrapped up at once we could really improve the efficiency of the House.

Another thing I want to speak about is that the court will become an offshoot of the credit bureau: if your credit is no good you are off the hook as far as fines are concerned. Taking a look at the bill, I quote from section 734.2 regarding fines: "A court may fine an offender under this section only if the court is satisfied that the offender is able to pay the fine discharged under section 736".

We are only going to fine people if they can afford to pay. The rich get it in the neck and the poor get off scot–free. Is that what we are saying? Does this mean that destitute criminals are going to get a free ride, commit petty crimes and small thefts and get parking tickets and so on with impunity? If they have no money they do not have to pay. It says it right there. That is the section.

Who is going to believe him if he is standing in dock saying: "Your Honour, I have no money"? Is the court going to say: "Let us set this case aside and launch an investigation into how much money is in his bank account and how much money he owes on his credit card"?

Let us be reasonable. The law has to be applied to everybody regardless of their status in society. Not only are we talking about creating different classes according to their mindset, but we are talking about different classes according to their ability to pay. More pay for it, more avenues are appealed and so on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

PARTY FUNDRAISING

The House resumed from May 6, 1994 consideration of the motion and amendment.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, most people have heard the expression if it ain't broke, don't fix it. This is what ran through my mind as I studied the wording of the

motion before us and the previous debate which took place on March 18, 1994.

If we were to limit solely to individuals the right to donate to a federal political cause, we would surely want to do so for a good and sensible reason. Frankly, I do not see that good and sensible reason.

There is ample evidence that access to large amounts of money does not in itself ensure success in an election or in any other political activity for that matter. There is no need whatsoever to restrict the size of political donations.

The traditional parties in this House authorized enormous sums to be spent on the yes side of the Charlottetown accord referendum but it was the no side with just a fraction of the resource but with all the logic on its side that won the referendum.

As a result of the money spent by the yes side, there was no success in buying the result. As another example I use the National Party, which formed prior to the past federal election. It received a huge donation from just one person. I believe that it may have been in the range of $4 million to $5 million.

I well remember the billboards going up all around Vancouver several months prior to the election. It was very clear that the National Party was being well funded and there was certainly no shortage of funds for the individual campaigns.

Despite this abundance of funding, the National Party has in the last week or so wound up its affairs without electing a single member to this House. In contrast, if we look at the Reform Party of Canada, information from Elections Canada shows that Reform spent significantly less per person elected to this House than any other party in the last election.

Reform also received virtually all of its funding from individual small donations. In my riding we raised between $40,000 and $50,000. If memory serves me only one donation was above $200. Well over 90 per cent were below $90.

I see absolutely no need to limit the freedom of people to donate any amount they wish to political parties. As I have already said there are ample examples that money alone does not affect the outcome of an election.

There is already full disclosure of donors to election campaigns and that is all that is needed for interested voters to track down the source of funds. The corporations and the organizations such as the Federation of Labour, which may donate to various political parties, are after all just groups of individuals. It does not take much work to find out who is behind the donations.

The present system works pretty well but let us suppose for a moment that legislation were actually brought into this House to do what is requested in motion M–150, that is, to limit solely to individuals the right to donate to a political party.

The law could easily be broken by a corporation which, as members will remember, is simply a group of individuals. All that would happen is that the individual board members would make individual donations to the party. Within organizations other than corporations such as unions, the new law could be circumvented simply by having the members make the donations.

• (1735)

How would this avoidance of the law be detected? There is absolutely no point in putting in place a law which could be so easily ignored quite apart from the fact it would be an attack on our individual freedom to contribute to the special interest group of our choice.

The previous government with the full co–operation of the opposition old line parties tried to muzzle organizations like the National Citizen's Coalition with laws similar to the one proposed in this motion. Thank goodness past attempts by the old line parties to do this have been struck down by the courts.

Members in this House cherish their right to freedom of speech but sometimes some of them give the impression they would prefer if such freedoms were not extended to organizations such as the National Citizen's Coalition. Why? Simply because it could be embarrassing exposure of government waste which this House could easily eliminate if there were the will to do so.

To anyone who thinks that way I say tough luck. Maybe the truth hurts but it is morally wrong to pass laws that attempt to muzzle the free speech rights of organizations like the National Citizen's Coalition. It is also morally wrong to try to control elections and referendums by restricting the ability of people to contribute financially to the parties or issues they support.

Of course the supporters of this motion will argue that the corporations or the individuals making large donations are expecting something in return. The inference is that the elected person or government would reward with patronage or contracts anyone who supported their campaigns with large donations. The truth is that most people donate to parties and candidates because they believe that the policies and promises are consistent with their own political beliefs.

Of course they expect rewards. These are not necessarily sinister or immoral in nature. For example, donors to the Reform Party obviously want Reform to form the government. This is because among other things they expect the reward of job creation, lower taxes and more disposable income that come with getting government expenditures under control.

They expect the reward for their children to be a manageable rather than an out of control federal debt. They expect the reward of a return to sensible immigration levels and solutions to the refugee and crime problems. They expect the reward of direct democracy through the citizens' right to initiative referendum and recall, recall of an MP who is not properly representing his or her constituents. Are these causes not worth donating to?

It is not the least bit surprising to me that people want to contribute to a party which will give them such rewards. I will not vote to restrict their ability to do so. I am prepared to let the free market decide what is philosophically worth supporting. I am prepared to let the free market then decide what is the appropriate level of support.

My constituents can count on my protection of their right to support the party and candidate of their choice to the financial extent they believe is appropriate.

Finally, in dealing with the proposed amendment I have the following comments. The amendment if passed could force taxpayers to contribute $1 per voter to each candidate in the riding. What a cash cow that would be. We would have candidates and parties springing up all over the place to climb into the trough for the guarantee of an $80,000 handout every time an election was called. The worst part would be that candidates would not have to earn the right to their donors' support. It would be the worst example of grants using taxpayers' money I would ever see.

To support this amendment would be to support more government waste of tax revenues. How easy it is to give away other people's money. I wonder whether the supporters of this amendment would be prepared to give money out of their own pocket to support the amendment.

I will vote against the amendment and the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member of the Reform Party who just spoke more or less supported the amendment. However, we feel the amendment contradicts the intent of the motion introduced by the hon. member for Richelieu. I may recall the wording of the motion, which says that the government should bring in legislation limiting solely to individuals—that is the operative word—the right to donate to a federal political party, and restricting such donations—this is also very important—to a maximum of $5,000 a year.

• (1740)

I would like to start by commending the hon. member for Richelieu for introducing this motion in the House, because I think there are two objectives here, the first one being to improve our democratic system. I imagine and, in fact, I am sure that members speaking for the various parties want to maintain and improve our democratic system. The purpose of the motion presented by the hon. member for Richelieu is to improve the system.

The second objective is transparency, which ensures that we know who contributes to political parties and how much, because increasingly, people are saying that they feel cut off from government and from the decision–making process.

Recently, *Enjeux*, a program on the CBC French network, described the situation very well. The impression was that although elected by their constituents, members were losing their ability to influence the government, whether they were in the opposition or not.

According to public opinion, governments are mainly influenced by lobbyists working for big corporations. There is another factor as well. Many people say that since they are elected, members may be influenced by or mindful of the contributions they received in their riding or the contributions their party received.

So what can we conclude from the report of the Chief Electoral Officer? The report now lists the names of those who made contributions, including companies, so we know where the money comes from. But I am not sure the general public is aware of the main items in the report.

In the latest report by the Chief Electoral Officer, in the case of both the Liberal Party now in power and the Conservative Party, the statistics show that individuals are responsible for less than 50 per cent of the campaign funds raised by these parties, which alternated as the party in power. People wonder who is influencing the government, and they wonder whether contributions affect the way we are represented.

This debate took place in Quebec 20 years ago, finally leading to the legislation referred to as Bill 2 on political party financing. Since it came into force, this legislation, according to many observers, has improved the public's confidence in government. I say this for the benefit of my colleagues in all political parties, because we all meet constituents in our riding offices.

• (1745)

I imagine that when someone who made a generous contribution asks for an appointment, it is harder to say no because these people probably think the way they used to in Quebec: Now look, I helped to get you elected and contributed to your party's campaign fund, so the least you can do is see me. Rightly or wrongly, politicians get a lot of criticism nowadays. It is often a matter of public perception, however. It may not happen in every case, and I do not want to tarnish the reputation of our parties, but my point is that it must influence what members or ministers

or governments do when they have to make a decision. At least that is what the voters think.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to the latest report from the Chief Electoral Officer, which says, for instance, that in 1992, the Progressive Conservative Party received only 41 per cent of its financing from individuals and the rest from corporations. The Liberal Party of Canada, the party in power today, received only 53.4 per cent of its financing from individuals. In the case of the New Democratic Party, only 41.1 per cent came from individuals, since the left–leaning NDP, if I can describe it that way, received more of its funding from the labour unions. Amounts of up to $300,000 were contributed by one major union and some smaller unions. Nearly 1,000 different unions made donations to the New Democratic Party, which certainly must have influenced the New Democratic Party's operations and policies.

I was somewhat surprised to hear the hon. member of the Reform Party objecting to the intent of the motion of the hon. member for Richelieu, because in 1992, and I think this is an important point, 90 per cent of his party's financing came from individuals.

An hon. member: They agree.

Mr. Dubé: No, I am referring to the hon. member who said that he was—

An hon. member: He was against the amendment.

Mr. Dubé: Ah, he is against the amendment. I must have misunderstood.

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was distracted by the noise in my vicinity.

So, to get back to these figures, these are very substantial amounts. Perhaps I may start with the party in power. I am quoting again from the report of the Chief Electoral Officer for 1992, to look at the extent of these contributions. The SNC: $78,417; Canadian Pacific: $63,000; Mr. John F. Bankes: $48,454; Imasco: $47,000. I will go a little faster: Royal Bank of Canada; $45,000; Bank of Nova Scotia: $42,000; CIBC: $42,258; Toronto Dominion Bank: $40,872. There are other banks as well, and banks certainly have a vested interest: mortgage rates, and so forth.

As for the Conservatives, there was Bombardier: $70,480; Canadian Pacific, playing it safe again: $64,233; Bank of Montreal: $48,833; Bank of Nova Scotia: $42,000; Brascan Ltd.: $30,000; Baton Broadcasting: $28,833; BCE Inc.: $25,000; National Bank: $25,000. And there are more.

• (1750)

The Reform Party also had a number of contributions over $5,000, although not as substantial. I also have another example. The Bloc Quebecois, although under no obligation to do so, decided to act in the spirit of the legislation passed in Quebec, when in 1993, it raised $3,500,000 donations from 70,000 different individuals, the average donation being $50.

When we talked about real power during the election campaign, that is what we meant. We wanted to represent the voters, first and foremost, and as far as I know, corporations do not vote.

[*English*]

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this amendment which restricts individual donations to political parties to $1. It sounds like an extreme thing in the current political context and I guess it is, but I am not naive enough to believe that I will witness something like this happening in Canada in my lifetime. However, I do think the debate this afternoon allows me to enunciate a few principles which I believe in and which I believe should be applied to political fundraising.

My friend from the Reform Party indicated a few minutes ago that he does not think the system is that bad and that it should not be fixed. He was not concerned about the use of money buying elections or buying a referendum. He pointed out the Charlottetown accord. We all know the yes side in the Charlottetown accord referendum spent more money than the no side. Despite that, it lost.

Anybody with an ounce of brains knows that the presence of money in any election campaign is not a guarantee of success. We all know that. Again, I think anyone with an ounce of brains realizes that money can help and it can make a big difference under many, many circumstances. That is why political parties and politicians are constantly on the search for money. They know it helps.

Let me ask my good friend from the Reform Party a question. How many candidates were there in the last presidential election in the United States? We know of three prominent candidates: Mr. Clinton, Mr. Bush and Mr. Perot. They all did fairly well. Mr. Clinton won, but there were about 40 other candidates. How come we never heard about the other 40 candidates for the highest office in the United States? They did not have any money to provide a profile.

The only person who could break that barrier was Mr. Perot. That was because he is a billionaire. He was able to literally buy a successful campaign, successful that is in the context of a third party candidate. He could not beat the established candidates from the Republican and Democrat parties, but he could put on a fair showing because he had enormous financial resources. Money can make a difference even in lost causes such as in the case of Mr. Perot.

I support this amendment to the motion because I happen to believe that the business of political campaigns is public busi-

ness. I believe that public business should be paid for by the public. It should be publicly financed not privately financed.

I believe that democracy works best when we involve as many Canadians as possible and that includes the financing of election campaigns. We should not as democrats and believing in a democracy when calling an election turn that engagement, if I can call it that, over to private parties or private donors.

• (1755)

When General Motors carries out certain private affairs, let us say looking for a new board of directors, does it come to the public and say: "Gee, we have this little election campaign of our own to find our new board of directors and we would like you to help out". General Motors does not do that. It does it on its own. It expects that particular private engagement to be paid for privately by the shareholders of General Motors. We should apply exactly the same logic when it comes to political campaigns. We should not be looking to private donors to finance election campaigns. But we do it.

I am not suggesting for a moment that the system is fraught with corruption, that it is all broken down. But I think that we as politicians should constantly strive to do better, to improve our institutions including the largest and most pervasive institution that we have, the institution of democracy.

In this particular era we often hear the term level playing field. We want a level playing field when it comes to politics and especially election campaigns. But when we have private donations there is an edge for those who have money.

I will use the old jargon that when it comes to licking stamps, stuffing envelopes and knocking on doors and walking the streets the poor, the modest people, average Canadians are on equal terms with the rich. They are. They can walk as well and they can knock as well and they can lick stamps as well as anyone with a huge bank account. The one difference is that the rich have money and they can exercise influence. They can bring their clout to bear with money, something that most people do not have because most of us are not in relative terms rich. Therefore we should constantly look for a level playing field.

Then there is the whole matter of perception. There is a perception out there that money does have a major influence in political decisions in our politics, in our governing. I do not happen to believe that it is as bad as some people believe, but there is that perception that if you have money, if you are high and mighty you are going to get a little closer to the politicians, a little closer to the decision makers and you are going to have access and influence that other people do not have. That is the kind of thing that we should avoid.

Politicians and the people who work around politicians should not be spending a lot of time raising money. We should be spending our time governing the country, working on policy, working on legislation. It is not so bad in this country vis–a–vis the United States.

We hear horror stories about how much time politicians in the United States have to spend on the road raising money. Is that why Americans send congressmen or senators to Washington, so they can spend 50 per cent of their time raising money? I do not think the purpose of politics is to go around raising money. Yet a lot of politicians in the United States have to do that.

In conclusion, I would say that by moving toward a more publicly financed system in this country we would have a better, stronger and more representative democracy.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Liberal amendment to the motion that is before us today. The amendment is to reduce the $5,000 figure to $1. I thought I was going to have the privilege of agreeing with the hon. member for St. James. Unfortunately, as usual, they take an entirely different point of view from ourselves.

• (1800)

I was wondering if the hon. member actually understood the main motion in front of us. We are not talking here about the federal government financing political parties. If I read the main motion, in part it says: "the government should bring in legislation limiting solely to individuals the right to donate to a federal political party, and restricting such donations to $5,000 a year".

That has been amended by the Liberals down to $1. We are not talking here about the federal government giving money to political parties. We are talking about the right of Canadians to donate to a political party of their choice. That would be completely denied apart from one single dollar by the amendment put forth by the Liberals.

Perhaps they have a problem raising money. I took a look at some of the donations and donors in the last election. Some constituencies had donations from 300 or 400 different contributors. Multiply that by the money they are allowed to give and of course they were able to finance their campaign. Under this amendment the entire constituency split between several different parties would be able to spend $300, $400 or perhaps $500 in total.

If he thinks we can get through to the electorate, publish brochures, purchase television advertising and split all that between two or three parties with only $500, the previous speaker must know something I do not know.

He was talking about the concern of raising money. In the last election the Reform Party was able to raise almost $10 million or $12 million from small donors. Perhaps the previous speaker

may wish to run under a Reform banner. Then money may not be that difficult to raise in future.

We as Reformers believe that the federal government should not be in the business of financially subsidizing political parties, which is in direct opposition to the previous speaker.

We believe that political parties and lobby groups should be self–funding, raise their own money, and be self–reliant. The level of financial support is going to be totally dependent upon the generosity of the people who support their cause.

We had a demonstration outside the Chamber this afternoon. Several thousand people showed up to support their particular cause. There is no doubt that particular lobby is going to be effective in raising money to advance its particular cause because people support the cause.

That is what politics and political parties are all about. Canadians say: "This is the policy I want to see put forth. Here is the money I wish to use to support them. Go ahead and accomplish the objectives".

We are against the tax credit that makes political donations subsidized by the federal government. We hear so often in the Chamber about how we should subsidize the poor and we should subsidize the disadvantaged. However, when it comes to political donations, it gets turned upside down and the subsidy goes to the largest, the richest and the party that spends most money which quite often is the party in power.

Mr. Silye: They overspend.

Mr. Williams: They always overspend. They overspend on the budget. They overspend in every department. Now they overspend in the campaigns.

Let us stop the federal subsidization of political parties and let them get on with it. If they can get the support of the people that way we will have a true representative democracy where people are prepared to put their money where their mouth is. That is what it is all about.

In 1991 the main estimates show that it cost the taxpayer of Canada, whether he believed in politics or not, $11,503,800 to subsidize political parties, and that was not an election year.

We do not have the numbers for the election in 1993, but I can assure the House that it is going to be a lot more than the $11,503,800 that taxpayers put out whether or not they think we should all be thrown out of office.

• (1805)

I would suggest to the mover of the main motion and to the mover of the amendment that they get their heads together and come up with a real policy, a reform policy that gets government out of subsidizing political parties.

Let us put money where our mouth is and let us introduce some real legislation to get the job done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to close this debate on the motion calling for political parties to be financed solely by individuals who have the right to vote, thereby excluding unions, profit and non–profit organizations as well as corporations, so that only eligible voters have the right to donate to political parties.

I think this is in keeping with the measures taken over the past two decades. We will recall that twenty years ago, party financing depended chiefly—95 per cent of the time—on corporations.

Through changes to the election law, to allow tax credits for example, improvements were made, with the result that 40 per cent of the financing now comes from individuals. I think we need to take one more step toward a fully democratic system, in accordance with the electoral wish expressed by all the parties represented in this House to strive for fiscal consolidation. It seems to me that one way to achieve this is by limiting solely to eligible voters the right to donate to political parties.

At present, the only purpose of the federal election law is to imposes a ceiling on election expenses. Our public financing proposal would complete existing regulations in that it would apply before, during and after elections.

This motion is also consistent with the spirit of the bill. The hon. members remember the bill on lobbyists, Bill C–43, that the government introduced out of concern for transparency and integrity. I would remind the government that there is much talk in the red book of the need for restoring voters confidence, promoting integrity within political institutions and limiting conflict of interest and influence peddling. Would public financing not be a good way to implement the principles set out in the red book you brandished throughout the election campaign? Would it not be a positive step toward achieving these goals?

Over the past three hours of debate, government members have referred repeatedly to the Lortie Report. Let us not forget that this report was commissioned by the Conservative government. Before the 1988 elections, Mr. Mulroney had promised to institute public financing at the federal level, like in Quebec. This announcement made the front page of *La Presse*. Following the elections, he decided to establish the Lortie Commission to release itself somewhat of its responsibility in that regard. The commission, which was established on November 15, 1989, and was presided by Pierre Lortie, tabled its report in 1991. In this report, Mr. Lortie indicated that the report itself showed that

certain donations might be made in hope of obtaining some direct material gain.

That is on page 448 of the Lortie Report and the hon. members failed to mention it while on the subject of public financing.

I also wish to remind you that public financing would induce many people who are in a conflict of interest position not to be. Section 121 of the Criminal Code clearly states that making a donation with the intention of receiving a favour from a government is a criminal offence.

Consequently, every time someone gives $50,000 to a political party, there is a risk of that person expecting the favour to be returned. The Lortie Report makes that very clear.

The report goes on to say that limiting contributions to candidates would have little impact on campaign financing but would provide a kind of "insurance policy" against any attempt to exert undue influence.

Again according to the report, studies done on the financing of candidates' campaigns in 1988 show that outgoing members, especially ministers, receive a greater number of large donations than other candidates. Why do companies give more to ministers than to others? There may be some influence peddling.

In this regard, I would like to quote from an article in the March 31, 1994 issue of *Hill Times*, which was itself quoted in the April 8, 1994 issue of *Le Soleil*. It says that the largest donations were made by the Seafarers' International Union of Canada, which gave a total of $31,500 split among 11 Liberal candidates. Six of them are now ministers or secretaries of state. The seafarers' union is closely followed by Burns Fry, Onex Corporation, Molson, three major communications companies, namely Rogers, Canwest Global and Unitel, and then pharmaceutical companies Merck Frosst, Apotex Limited and Magna International.

• (1810)

In all, some 24 ministers, including the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and six secretaries of state from the Liberal government, benefited from these companies' generosity. There is room for questions.

We recognize that there is a danger. There is a risk of influence peddling, and limiting to individuals the right to finance political parties would address that problem. Of course, a lower ceiling could be justified, say from $5,000 to $3,000, and I, for one, would be open to reducing the amount. Still, $5,000 sounds pretty reasonable to me. We must draw a line somewhere. Some have also invoked the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, saying it would not allow us to limit corporate involvement.

It can never be said often enough: it is not companies or corporate entities but citizens who vote in an election. The motion confirms the primacy of voters over public finances. Is this not in keeping with the spirit of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms? This is also aimed at giving all citizens a renewed taste for getting involved in and controlling their political institutions whose credibility has been greatly undermined in the past, as we may recall.

The Chairman of the Royal Bank of Canada, Allan Taylor, in a speech given on February 26, 1991, argued that corporate funding of political parties does not contribute to the continuing democratization of and popular participation in politics. This quote is taken from page 446 of the Lortie report dealing with Mr. Taylor, Chairman of the Royal Bank of Canada. It is precisely this process of democratization and participation that we want to restore by proposing popular financing for political parties.

Restoring confidence means minimizing the dependence of all candidates, whoever they are, on large donations and thus limiting the risk of breach of trust. Is financing by the people feasible now? Keep in mind that seven Canadian provinces and Canada have legislated on financing. Four provinces limit donations; four provinces and Canada require publishing the source of donations.

Quebec is the most progressive in this regard since political parties there are financed only by the people. It is not something new, then, and in practice, one federal political party, the Bloc Quebecois, has put popular financing in its bylaws. No company, union or association gave anything to any Bloc candidate or to the national party during the election campaign, but we were still able to spend $3.5 million, with an average donation of less than $50 per contributor.

Now, and I conclude with this, I think that two main principles guide me and my fellow members in the Parti Quebecois, who have been joined by our colleagues in the Reform Party, so that popular financing will be enacted soon.

On the subject of transparency, voters want their elected representatives, their members of Parliament, to serve the common good and not vested interests. A voter who gives $20 has much less clout than a company that gives $50,000. If people finance political parties, voters become important again and parties are forced to be closer to their constituents and be concerned about their needs. The membership is more valued and has a greater feeling of belonging to the party; it invigorates democracy in a society and also forces a party to decentralize its authority.

I will close with this sentence, hoping that it might influence members in power and in opposition: "Tell me who finances you and I will tell you whom you serve."

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I think the bill introduced by the hon. member for Richelieu reflects the general principles defined by the Parti Quebecois when it came to power in 1976, which included a more grass-roots approach to the way political parties operated and to government in general. I believe this was a reaction to the way certain politicians behaved in Quebec and in Canada, but especially in Quebec, since the Parti Quebecois is a provincial

party, when the public began to challenge the integrity of politicians.

We all know the stories about the "frigidaires à Duplessis", refrigerators used to buy votes, and bottles of gin handed out during election campaigns. This was part of the political folklore, but there was also the story of the Liberal Party's Brinks trucks in 1970, in Quebec.

The Parti Quebecois wanted to clean up the system. I think we have seen what happened since that time, and today, even the Liberal Party of Quebec operates according to the democratic rules now in effect in Quebec. That does not prevent them from having a very substantial campaign fund, though it failed to win them the last election.

The fact remains that all parties abide by this rule. Other governments in Canada have tried to imitate the system but did not go far enough, which is why the hon. member for Richelieu presented his motion.

I think my time is up, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 6.16 p.m., is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to order made earlier this day, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, September 27, 1994 at 3 p.m.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall we now suspend to the call of the Chair and conclude the business of the day with the late show beginning at 6.30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 6.18 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 6.25 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

TRANSPORT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, on June 16, I rose to ask the Minister of Transport about his plans for the transportation system in this country which clearly seemed to indicate in large measure that they were plans to dismantle a national transportation system.

The irony is that while the Liberal government is very proud of telling Canadians how much it has done in its infrastructure program—sewer systems, roads and highways—it is at the same time dismantling through the transportation policy that was announced by the minister earlier this year the most fundamental infrastructure system, the nation's air system.

I was pleased to have received a letter from the Minister of Transport in which he stated in late June that he was interested in all members of Parliament consulting their constituents on transportation policy.

Before I was able to undertake that consultation process, just three weeks after having received that invitation from the minister, the minister made a speech whereby he outlined his whole transportation policy.

It seemed to me that it was not a serious attempt to have members of Parliament consult their constituents at all, because there was certainly not sufficient lead time on that. It led me to believe that the minister's objectives as he outlined in the response to my question were less than what I had seen actually happen in practice.

When this national airports policy—one part of the transportation policy—was announced, it clearly demonstrated where the government was going. It was a transparent attempt to transfer responsibility for airports to municipalities, provinces and territories. It seems to me there is nothing national about that, leaving communities to fend for themselves.

As a northerner, as a Yukoner, this is a particularly important question because it is very difficult for smaller airports in rural and northern areas of Canada to be self–financing. If a government is truly committed to a national air transportation system, that must be taken into account in any policy. Alas, I had not seen that in the minister's comments at the time of my question nor in his subsequent comments.

There are many questions about what the impact will be of the national transportation policy on rural and northern areas, on costs both to consumer and to carrier and of course on safety costs as well.

The government has decided to do a little word play by using the word commercialization instead of privatization but any way you slice it, it is privatization.

I recently attended a regional consultation on the automated air navigation systems being proposed. While it was certainly a useful consultation by Transport Canada—I think it presented it well—having listened to the arguments and to the people who were there from the industry, it is clear there will be two results of this policy. First, the air navigation system will be privatized; second, the cost will go up to consumers and the cost will go up to the owners of carriers.

There was no evidence to indicate this would cost less to the consumer or the owner of the carriers or even remain the same.

There are many, many questions that have been left unanswered about the transport policy of the minister. The question that I am addressing tonight is one of them, but there are many more to be addressed. I must say that I have a lot of concerns that these are not being done in a fundamental way with a full broad based consultation. Privatizing simply to lay off federal employees is not the answer to the national dream of a national transportation system.

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will agree that an efficient, reliable, safe and viable system of transport is absolutely essential for Canada's future growth and prosperity.

What Canada must have is a national transportation system that emphasizes safety and reliability, that is efficient, that builds strong viable companies in all modes. It is time to give the frustrated Canadian taxpayer a break. It is time for those who use the transportation system to pay a fair share so that as a government we can better allocate our scarce financial resources.

The budget called on Transport Canada to review the potential for the commercialization of a number of its major activities. This will be done in consultation with affected parties with the objective of improving efficiency and ensuring long term viability.

Commercialization means users dictate what services they want to have provided and how costs can be controlled. Commercialization means that whatever option is selected it must allow market discipline to lead to more efficient service, greater flexibility and less dependence on tax dollars.

Commercialization means that the goal must be higher quality and more efficient service to the user at less cost to the taxpayer. For instance the Minister of Transport recently announced a new national airports policy. Under this policy the operations of Canada's largest and busiest airports will be transferred to Canadian airport authorities made up of community interests. These airport authorities will be able to make the most of their airport's commercial potential and to explore new methods of finding financing and to achieve greater efficiency and cost saving and to match their services with the local demands.

Commercialization will not dilute Transport Canada's priority ensuring and where possible enhancing the safety and security of all Canadians.

Transport Canada does not have to be the owner and operator of a service in order to make sure it is a good service. The department's role can be defined by its role in policy and regulation.

There is every reason to believe that carefully planned commercialization will mean major savings to taxpayers and better service to the clients.

As the Minister of Transport said in responding to the hon. member's original question with commercialization: "We will maintain the involvement of the Government of Canada in a supervisory, a regulatory and policy way".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.33 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 23, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

KOREAN AIR FLIGHT 2033

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, Captain Barry Woods, the Canadian captain of Korean Air flight 2033 which crashed August 10, and who as a result of his efforts saved all 152 passengers and eight crew, was being held by the South Koreans. This morning it was announced that he has been released and allowed to return to Canada to his wife and family.

On behalf of the family, I express our appreciation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, not only for his personal efforts but for the efforts of his department both here and in South Korea for the extraordinary work that has made this reunion possible. Again, on behalf of the family I say thank you very much to the minister.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA PETROLEUM RESOURCES ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–25, an act to amend the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

The Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Irwin moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe this is a very contentious bill. It has all–party support, therefore I will be brief. It is more in the line of housekeeping than substantive change to anything being done in that area. This is the member's area. I remember that from the last round of speeches.

I would like to begin by thanking hon. members for supporting this bill at second reading and at committee. The support of members for the bill guarantees longer term benefits and stability to dozens of individuals, families and businesses associated with the Norman Wells project.

Bill C–25 will accomplish two basic objectives. First, it will extend existing jobs, create new employment and business opportunities. Second, it will ensure responsible management of one of Canada's most important producing fields.

As hon. members are aware, Bill C–25 will allow production from the massive Norman Wells oil fields to continue beyond the year 2008 and possibly to the year 2020. Without this extension the community of Norman Wells would suffer economically since it is dependent on the oil industry to a significant degree.

There is an important human element to this legislation. We are talking about maintaining existing jobs, creating new jobs in a region of Canada with few economic alternatives. We are talking about continuing a way of life and a source of income for families that have depended on the Norman Wells project for many years.

Information gathered from prolonged production and advanced technology demonstrates the extent of the field should be redefined and the expiration date should be extended to capture the full productive capability of the field.

The National Energy Board conducted an independent review of Imperial Oil's assessment. It has corroborated the conclusion that the fringe areas of the oil field extend beyond the 1944 boundaries as well as the corporation's projections on the remaining production life beyond 2008.

• (1005)

It is incumbent upon the government as the steward of northern resources on behalf of all Canadians to ensure that Norman Wells field is fully developed. The extension and expansion of the proven area agreement will accomplish this strategic goal.

All Canadians stand to win from the full development of the Norman Wells field. The benefits will be most obvious in the north and in Alberta where most of the money that supports the production and operation is spent. Members will be happy to know, Mr. Speaker, that the money is spent in your home province.

Taxpayers across Canada will gain something from the return on the government's one–third investment in Norman Wells. This is expected to bring the government millions in additional revenues after 2008. As well, the government will receive millions of dollars in royalty payments as a result of the extension. These two revenue sources will improve the government's overall financial situation and ease some of the burden on taxpayers.

I am pleased to note that a share of the royalties from Norman Wells will also go to the aboriginal people of the area under the terms of the land claim settlement agreements. This money will be used by the aboriginal beneficiaries to improve conditions in their communities, increase economic development initiatives and generally to build a better future.

Finally, extending the production day for Norman Wells will also revitalize industry interest in the north, particularly as land claim settlements create certainty to open new areas for exploration and development.

By approving Bill C–25 we will be sending a clear message that the Canadian north is an attractive area for investment. There are many arguments in favour of Bill C–25 and the continued production of the Norman Wells oil field. As far as I am aware there are no meaningful arguments against the project and I think members of the House agree.

With this in mind I urge my hon. colleagues to once again demonstrate their support for the bill so that it can be referred to the other place and be quickly promulgated into law. I know that the oil company involved has been waiting patiently for several months for this bill to go through the House and the other place. They are ready to keep on working. I do not think there is any disagreement in the House on this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak on Bill C–25. Although this bill represents only a minor change to the Norman Wells oilfield, it is a change of no small consequence.

The purpose of this bill is to exclude the Norman Wells Amending Agreement about to be signed from the application of the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. In order to understand the reason for this amendment, it is necessary to go back and examine the history of this oil well. It was discovered in 1919 and drilling operations began in 1920.

The site's distance from markets and the economic crisis of the 1930's were unfavourable to the development of the early wells. Extraction and refining were limited to meeting local needs. World War II led to renewed exploration and the construction of a pipeline to Whitehorse. The end of the war in 1945 brought a halt to operations, which had grown from 100 barrels a day in 1940 to a production ranging from 1,500 to 25,800 barrels daily.

In 1944, the government of Canada signed an agreement with Imperial Oil to ensure the development of the Norman Wells field. In 1966, over 2,000 barrels of oil were being produced daily, primarily for shipment to locations in the Mackenzie Valley, the Arctic coast and DEW line radar stations.

• (1010)

In 1974, with 54 producing wells, production was 2,738 barrels of oil daily and 4.9 million cubic feet of gas. In 1981, Cabinet allowed Esso Canada to increase its production to 25,000 barrels of crude, which were sent by pipeline to Zama in Alberta.

Since then, more than 200 injection and producing wells have made Norman Wells the fourth largest producing oil field in Canada. The first delivery to the south took place in April 1985 through a 868 kilometer pipeline, 65 years after the discovery of the field.

The 1944 agreement gave exclusive drilling and mineral prospecting rights and privileges for three 21–year periods. The agreement also established the boundaries of the oil field. As I said earlier, the agreement expires in the year 2008.

The Canadian government holds an interest in the project equivalent to a third of the value of production, less a third of all production and development costs, as well as management costs. Esso also undertook to pay five per cent in annual royalties on the other two thirds of its production.

In 1992, production rose to 12.1 million barrels of oil, representing profits of 50 million for the government. The drilling program undertaken in 1984 and new technologies have made it possible to drill horizontal wells, and at the same time to produce the oil located at the boundaries of the field economically.

The new technologies have also revealed that it would be possible to work this field until the year 2020 if its boundaries were extended.

The National Energy Board has approved the expansion of the field to include the outlying area for the purpose of oil recovery in that area. This is when the Canada Petroleum Resources Act comes into play. This act provides for submissions to be made regarding issuance of production interests.

In view of the fact that the outlying area is of no use to other producers, especially considering the associated costs, it be-

comes necessary to amend the act to allow the extraction of petroleum in that area not covered by the 1944 agreement.

It is important to consider at this point how other stakeholders might view this expansion of the Norman Wells oil field.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers declared itself in agreement with the proposed change to Norman Wells boundaries because of the very special circumstances of the case. However, the Association indicated this change was not to be construed as a precedent with regard to future issuance of interests.

As for the native people, they have given their consent to the project in March 1994 on one condition: that the bill respecting the Dene and Métis land claims settlement come into force before the petroleum resources legislation be amended.

• (1015)

This condition was met and the Bloc Quebecois is quite pleased that the government respected the wishes of the natives peoples on this issue. Such a departure from its old ways reflects a new course that should be maintained in the future.

Exploring the new area covered in the Norman Wells Amending Agreement to be signed in 1994 seems, on the face of it, like it could benefit all the communities involved. For one thing, it will allow Imperial to invest over $30 million in a development program, $10 million of which will be spent directly in that northern area. In addition, 65 direct jobs will be created, 40 of these for northeners, as well as many indirect jobs in the service industry and other areas.

The development project includes a $6 million contract for drilling equipment. The drilling contract was awarded to a profit–sharing company owned by the Dene and Métis and Imperial. As new technologies will be developed regarding horizontal wells, this company will acquire the necessary expertise to participate in other drilling jobs. You are also looking at some long term investments, particularly in the use of enhanced oil recovery technologies.

We are talking about investments of up to $100 million, depending on the exploratory period in that particular oil field. This bill appears to accommodate both the oil industry and the native communities that depend on it for their livelihood. It is also important that the federal petroleum resources legislation remain strong with regard to the future issuance of operating interests. As the Official Opposition critic for natural resources, and after discussion with my colleagues, I will not vote against this bill and I do hope it will pay the dividends it seems to be promising.

[*English*]

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this bill today, the first bill that I will be able to speak to in my new capacity as Reform Party critic for oil and gas within the Department of Natural Resources.

Bill C–25 addresses an issue in an area of Canada I am quite familiar with, having been involved in the drilling of several wildcat wells in the Norman Wells field fringe area. Bill C–25 contains a minor amendment to the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act in order to exempt the Norman Wells amending agreement which will now be expanded to include the additional lands which are under the jurisdiction of that act.

Although this bill deals with a minor wording change it is important that this bill pass in order to exclude the Norman Wells agreement from the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act so the governor in council can proceed with its action to extend the boundaries.

At the risk of being repetitive I would like to talk briefly about the history of this oil field, discuss the necessity for this bill and talk about the positive actions the governor in council will be taking to extend the life of this field.

There is a long history leading up to this current amendment. The first oil well was drilled in Norman Wells in 1920. Since then it has grown to be the fourth largest producing field in the country. In 1944 Imperial Oil and Canada signed the Norman Wells proven area agreement which included just under 3,300 hectares within its boundaries.

When the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act came into force the Norman Wells proven area already covered by legislation was exempted from the new act. Because of this bill before us today subsequent renewals and expansions will be similarly exempted.

Since the boundaries of the Norman Wells field will be changing to include areas of new production some exemption from the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act is necessary.

• (1020)

It is important to note that the original Norman Wells agreement was signed before the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act came into effect. The new land that will be included in the boundary change to the Norman Wells field is the land that would normally come under the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act. This means that without an amendment exploration and production licences on these new lands would have to go to an open bidding process. This amendment is necessary to provide security of tenure for Imperial Oil and allow for the renewed investment and enhanced recovery techniques in this production field.

This amendment will also provide for one–third ownership in the production of these new areas for Canada.

In addition to the expansion of the field this amendment allows for another initiative to take place to extend the life of this field. This is the decision by the governor in council to extend the licence of Imperial Oil on the Norman Wells field to the year 2020.

There have been advances in industry extraction techniques. Imperial Oil in the Norman Wells field has pioneered and perfected much of this new technology. It was here at Norman Wells, because much of these reserves lay below the Mackenzie River, that directional and later horizontal drilling have been developed and are now used all over the world. The technology of building islands in a water body that freezes and thaws in the spring when the ice goes out was also developed here and later used in the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea.

Other techniques of well workover for production enhancement such as water and gas flooding, formation fracturing and acidization have also been developed in good measure in this field. They have made Canada a world exporter of petroleum production technology. They have allowed us over the last 20 or 25 years to increase the recoverable reserves in Canada's conventional oil fields by up to 15 per cent, preventing the long predicted decline in conventional crude oil production.

Because of these advancements in technology they now believe that the Norman Wells field will be productive well beyond the original date. Therefore it is important that the governor in council proceed with extending this licence so that as much oil as possible can be extracted in a realistic timeframe.

With this bill allowing for the Norman Wells boundaries to be extended and the order in council decision to extend Imperial Oil's licence, Imperial Oil will be given the security of tenure it needs for long term planning and control of overhead costs. This will make this field economically viable for a much longer period.

It has been assured that there is time to realize a return on major investments in new technology. These investments are essential to maximizing the production from this field.

With the extension of the boundaries and licences, Imperial Oil will commence a $30 million drilling program. This drilling program will be undertaken mostly in the expanded proven area; more specifically, 12 new wells, four for water injection and eight for production, drilled along the field limits of the new boundaries. About one–third of the money, $10 million, will be spent directly in the north. Most of the remaining $20 million will be spent in my home province of Alberta.

I would hope this is an indication that this government realizes the importance of providing our resource based industries with predictability and stability in policy environment. If this government starts sending signals to the private sector that it is safe to make long term investment plans, it will lead to economic growth and the creation of far more permanent jobs than government can hope to achieve through any temporary government initiated make work projects.

This amendment is good for Imperial Oil because it provides a stable planning environment. It is good the Sahtu Dene and other local residents because they can rely on employment opportunities and a cash infusion into the local economy for many more years. It is good for the Canadian people because it will generate additional oil revenues and royalties.

From my perspective the only thing objectionable about this bill is that in spite of the fact that no party could or did object to this initiative, it has taken over two years to get this simple initiative through this cumbersome, unresponsive process.

Let me and my party affirm our support for this bill and encourage all other members of this House to do so as well.

• (1025)

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I want to join with others in support of this bill, recognizing as the previous speaker has indicated that this amendment will give recognition for technological development by Imperial Oil. It will be good for Imperial Oil. It will be good for the Sahtu Dene and Metis land claims settlement act process.

The Dene in the area will benefit directly in terms of wealth, particularly with the largest contract involved, $6 million, and a conditional tender given to Shethah Drilling Ltd., a Dene, Metis and Imperial Oil joint venture. This bodes well in terms of future developments in the north and throughout Canada generally.

Also, as the previous speaker has indicated, the people of Canada will benefit from this resource in two ways, through the normal royalty process and also through profit sharing. It seems to me this marries the federal government, the people of Canada, Imperial Oil of Canada and the First Nations people of the north. This is an excellent model on which further northern development ought to be based.

I had a number of questions in terms of what this bill would do. I want to indicate my appreciation to the minister who, with his associates, clarified some of these. For example, I was not certain whether the Sahtu Dene and Metis land claims settlement act had been proclaimed. This was a condition that they had for their support. I was told that has now taken place.

There was concern also because of the new technology involved. The previous speaker indicated that new technology has been developed in this part of Canada, particularly with horizontal drilling to avoid sensitive and fragile ecological areas. Quite frankly this is good technology that will help development throughout other parts of northern Canada and throughout similar environmentally and ecologically sensitive parts of the world.

The question was whether as a result of the increased oil flow and the horizontal drilling technique this would influence the royalty system. I have been assured by the minister it will not. The second question was whether there will be ongoing environmental studies watching this new process as a result of the horizontal drilling that is going on. Again the minister indicated that the National Energy Board and other agencies will actually be monitoring this project in terms of environmental concerns.

Also, I wanted to confirm again in terms of precedent setting that this agreement will continue to give one–third of the profits to the people of Canada. After all, we would appreciate that this resource belongs to the people of Canada and they ought to share directly in its development. Again, that has been confirmed.

This $30 million drilling program producing eight productive wells will not only bring job opportunities to the residents of the area which is certainly needed, but will benefit Canada in the ways I have already mentioned.

I want to say on behalf of my colleagues that we will be supporting this bill enthusiastically. I do want to share the concern raised by the previous speaker that such a straightforward piece of legislation would take so long. We have been watching this inch its way through the parliamentary process. It says something about the way we deal with business here. Perhaps it will add to the changes that will expedite business, particularly something which is so straightforward.

However, I suppose the quid pro quo would be the concern with the Sahtu Dene and Metis land claims settlement act to get their support on this. That took perhaps more time than we had anticipated.

Overall I think the point was well taken. The process here is cumbersome at best and something we must all strive to achieve is expediting the passing of legislation in the future. The world is changing quickly around us and we have yet to get this place up to speed.

Mr. John Loney (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak in favour of this important bill. While it represents a small amendment, Bill C–25 will have important ramifications for Norman Wells and other northern communities. As my colleague, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, has outlined, two important objectives underlie this bill.

First, Bill C–25 will ensure the responsible management of an important natural resource. We have heard in earlier debate how this legislation offers sound resource management. I am sure most members of this House will agree that such measures are important to our resource base.

• (1030)

Let us turn to the second objective of Bill C–25, the creation of a stronger northern economy. Passage of this legislation offers the sustainment and development of employment and business opportunities. I believe that the realization of this objective alone is impetus for this legislation.

A bit of history is necessary in order to fully appreciate the economic benefits the Norman Wells oil field has brought to the north and those it could yet bring with the passage of this legislation.

In 1944 the Canadian government entered into an agreement with Imperial Oil to develop the oil field at Norman Wells in the Mackenzie Valley. The proven area agreement that was adopted set boundaries and a production limit for the field.

At the time it was predicted that the field would be productive until the year 2008 at the latest, but with today's more sophisticated technology we know that the Norman Wells oil field has a much longer productive life. In fact, it is expected to remain productive until at least 2020.

Technological advances over the 50 years have also led to a more advanced knowledge of the extent of the oil pool at the Norman Wells area. However, it has been shown that a small part of the pool lies outside the original proven area boundaries. As hon. members know, Bill C–25 extends the proven area boundaries to include all the proven reserves.

What does all this mean for the people of Norman Wells and other northern communities? The bottom line is that it means greater economic stability and growth. The Norman Wells project injects millions of dollars into the northern economy each year.

Over 50 companies in Norman Wells and other northern communities receive a substantial amount of business directly from the oil project. This says nothing of the spinoff business generated for those and other companies.

For a better appreciation, consider for a moment how businesses would be affected by reduced spending by Norman Wells employees alone. Considering the project provides annual wages to the northern residents in the range of $3.7 million, this loss would most certainly have devastating economic effects on small business.

Now consider the positive implications of increasing the size and production life of Norman Wells. The passage of this legislation paves the way for a $30 million drilling program which will be undertaken by Imperial Oil, the operating company of Norman Wells.

This project and the extension of the field's productive life in general will increase short term employment and stabilize long term employment in the Norman Wells area. It is estimated that an additional 25 person–years of indirect employment will also be created in the north.

Northern businesses will also benefit from the opportunity to learn up to date horizontal drilling technology. Future business and employment opportunities will be enhanced for these firms not only in the north, but also in Alberta and B.C. where there is a shortage of such expertise.

The economic benefits of this small amendment to the Canada Petroleum Resources Act do not end at the 60th parallel. Indeed, all Canadians stand to benefit from the passage of this bill.

Not only will the Government of Canada's financial position improve from the additional corporate and personal tax revenues, the government's one–third investment in Norman Wells is expected to bring in millions of extra dollars.

This project will also be an economic benefit to Albertans. At a time when Canadians are looking for economic stimuli, this is clearly a wonderful opportunity. I urge hon. members to lend their support to this bill so economic renewal can continue.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)

* * *

• (1035)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food) moved that Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to begin the debate on Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to make related amendments to other acts.

In some ways this bill is a reflection of the kinds of changes the Canadian agriculture and agri–food industry has undergone in recent years and can anticipate in future years.

The amendments add the word "agri–food" to the department's name, reflecting a recognition that the department's mandate extends far beyond the farm gate. This change also reflects a recognition that what happens on the farm and beyond the farm gate are intimately linked together. The strength of primary agriculture depends to a great extent on the strength of all those downstream in the food chain who process and use agricultural products.

The bill also defines more precisely the department's responsibilities for research. The existing act only mentions research indirectly through a reference to experimental farm stations. This bill broadens the definition to cover research related to agriculture and products derived from agriculture, including the operation of experimental farm stations.

This clarification of the mandate of the department in no way takes away from this government's commitment to Canadian farmers as primary producers. In fact it strengthens it by ensuring that the importance of maintaining and nurturing the health and prosperity of the entire agriculture and agri–food industry is upheld.

Farmers are and will always be at the centre of the agriculture industry. As such the department will continue to devote a very large amount of its resources to farmers. In addition, there is a growing need to be aware of the products of Canadian agri–food processors. More and more we must be aware that market development is important not just for raw commodities but increasingly for value added products.

There are opportunities for the agriculture industry to provide ingredients for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, paints and energy products, in addition to food products. More and more we must be assured that the systems are in place to produce those products and to ensure they reach their market destinations.

Before that process even begins we must ensure that the kinds of crops and livestock demanded by these markets are being produced and we must ensure that the research and technology are there to transform those crops and livestock into the processed products in demand worldwide. That is where the department's research function comes into play, both in developing the commodities that form the basis of the industry and in pioneering new uses for them.

The research branch of the department has been conducting research to the benefit of both the primary and secondary agriculture industries for many, many years and with great distinction. The changes in this bill merely reflect that ongoing work in the definition of the department's responsibilities for research.

It is fitting to be talking about the mandate of the Department of Agriculture and Agri–food at this time. As we approach the beginning of a new century it is time to take a look at where we would like Canada's agriculture and agri–food industry to be in the years 2000, 2005 and 2010.

This industry is a very important one to this nation. It represents 8 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product and accounts for 1.8 million Canadian jobs. That is 15 per cent of all of the employment in this country. Agricultural and agri–food exports equal more than $13 billion annually. In 1992 farm inputs valued at $10.5 billion translated into farm products worth $20 billion. That translated into a further $44 billion worth of processed food and beverage products.

• (1040)

The agriculture and agri–food sector enhances the quality of life in both rural and urban Canada. It ensures a safe, high quality food supply. Because of Canada's agriculture and agri–food sector, in comparison to the rest of the world Canadians spend the second lowest proportion of their disposable incomes on food.

It is important to ensure that the success of this industry so vital to all Canadians continues. Canada's agriculture and agri–food industry must be able to compete in a rapidly changing world. A common vision is needed, shared by government and industry, to take the agriculture and agri–food sector into the 21st century. In that way we will together be able to make the kinds of decisions necessary to secure our future.

The world in which Canada's agriculture and agri–food industry does business is not the same today as it was 25 years ago or 10 years ago or even 5 years ago. For example, in the grains and oilseeds sector alone markets for Canadian products have changed dramatically. It was not all that long ago that we depended upon traditional billion dollar bulk grain markets in places like the former Soviet Union and China.

Many of those markets have been replaced by more varied and somewhat smaller and more individual markets. Customers now more and more are buying to exacting specifications. Our U.S. market has grown to almost 60 per cent of agri–food exports so far this year.

By the year 2010 rural population is expected to increase by another two billion people. Over the next five years incomes in regions like Asia and the Pacific are expected to rise by 6 per cent to 12 per cent per year. Incomes are also expected to rise in areas such as Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

With these increases in income and the changes in the quality of life that it brings, there will be a shift in global consumption patterns to more animal protein products and more highly processed food products than ever before. At the same time, key export markets such as the United States remain crucial to the continued growth and development of our industry here in Canada.

On the domestic side we are also confronted with changing marketplaces and fiscal constraints on federal and provincial budgets. Is the Canadian agriculture and agri–food sector ready to respond to changing demands internationally? Is it ready to respond to changing imperatives on the domestic front?

The industry is strong in a great many ways. The value of agricultural output continues to increase by about 2 per cent annually. Productivity growth rates are high by international standards. Many processing firms are shifting to focus more and more on world markets.

Canada's agriculture and agri–food industry has a solid basis in abundant natural resources and sound environmental practices, is productive in skilled human resources, has a well developed infrastructure and institutions and a reasonably stable operating environment. However, there are areas where we must do better.

Right now Canada has higher processing and marketing costs and less private sector research than many of our major competitors. Although Canada is exporting more of our higher valued agri–food products to the United States, our imports are growing faster than our exports and we are missing opportunities for marketing higher valued agri–food products. There is little growth in our exports of higher valued products to countries other than the United States, in particular to Asian markets where standards of living and demand are growing rapidly.

• (1045)

In 1993 our agricultural private sector, supported by federal and provincial ministers of agriculture, set a target for agriculture and agri–food exports of $20 billion by the year 2000. To achieve that goal, industry and federal and provincial governments will need to work harder to meet the challenges of the global marketplace.

Right now our growth rate in agri–food exports is not sufficient to meet that target of $20 billion by the year 2000. Change is needed if the Canadian agriculture and agri–food industry is to grow and prosper into the next century.

If we look at the grains and oilseeds sector as an example, it is clear that change is beginning to take place. Farmers are beginning to diversify out of traditional crops such as wheat and into more new crops such as mustard seed, canary seed, lentils and especially canola.

Acreage of specialty crops grew almost 130 per cent in the period from 1988 to 1994. At the same time acreage of wheat fell by about 15 per cent. With farmers beginning to diversify out of traditional crops, new demands and challenges are being placed on our grain handling and transportation system as these different crops are moved into export position.

In the last crop year, as we all know, we experienced some very serious problems with moving grains and oilseeds partly due to a rail car shortage and a number of other factors that conspired together at the same time. Those issues, as I have discussed in the House on other occasions, are being dealt with so that the kinds of problems experienced in the last crop year can be avoided to the largest extent humanly possible in the current crop year and into the future.

The whole experience with our grain handling and transportation system brings into focus the question of whether the system in Canada is sufficiently equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly changing international marketplace.

On another front we have to look at technology and we have to ensure that Canada is not being left behind. For example, non–food uses for grains, oilseeds and other agricultural products are expected to rise dramatically in the years immediately ahead. Forecasts in the United States and Europe predict that up to 50 per cent of raw agricultural materials will be used in the future for non–food industrial purposes.

Is Canada investing sufficiently in the kinds of research required to develop new products from our grains, our oilseeds and our other agricultural output?

There are many other issues on the agenda with respect to the renewal of our supply management systems, with respect to our red meat sector, with respect to horticulture issues and with respect to challenges affecting the broad spectrum of Canadian agriculture.

Clearly, as we face all the issues and challenges that provide us at the same time with enormous opportunity, we must develop a common vision to ensure the decisions taken today and the initiatives undertaken in the future are part of a comprehensive long term plan for a progressive, competitive and successful agriculture and agri–food sector.

I believe such a vision for the future must include at least five key elements. First it must be founded on economic reality. If the base is artificial then the plan will soon collapse.

The fundamental reality is the marketplace. We must produce what the world wants to buy. We must do it cost effectively. We must diversify. We must be good managers and world class marketers. We must build strategic alliances internally and internationally. We must ensure that the benefits flow fairly among all our regions and all the players in that complicated food chain.

• (1050)

Second, our vision must recognize that rural Canada is not a backwater. It can in fact be the location of wealth generation, economic growth and new jobs.

Diversification on and off the farm, value added processing, and niche marketing including exports, are all part of the equation for rural Canada, as are research and development and information technology to link the kitchen table in Sedley, Saskatchewan, to Toronto and Vancouver and indeed Osaka and Hong Kong.

A third requirement for our vision is financial security. I have not met a farmer yet who tells me that he or she wants subsidization. What they want is a decent marketplace with a decent return.

Well managed farms should expect a reasonable rate of return even though in some cases it may be supplemented by some amount of off farm income. The weather and other production and marketing risks will always necessitate a farm safety net program, but federal and provincial tax dollars are scarce and support in the form of safety nets must not distort production or marketing signals.

Fourth, we must achieve resource and environmental sustainability. We need a sensitive and sensible balance among social, economic and environmental considerations founded on enhancing our resource base, maintaining surrounding ecosystems, and developing, adapting and marketing new technologies to protect our environment. Our environmental stewardship could become a unique new Canadian export opportunity.

The fifth and final element in this vision that I would mention at the moment is the maintenance of a safe and secure food supply. That is really the foundation upon which everything else rests. Food safety has been and must continue to be a priority in and for Canada. Our reputation for safety and quality is vital to our domestic consumers and is a critical advantage in the international marketplace.

We must reduce our inspection costs while not impairing but rather enhancing our inspection system overall. That can be achieved by a national, non–duplicative system tuned to market requirements and international standards with alternative delivery options.

What I have mentioned in the last few moments is a framework in which I believe we can structure a sound and solid game plan for the Canadian agriculture and agri–food sector. It is not yet all inclusive and it is certainly not cast in stone, but I think it is a basis upon which to begin.

We cannot foretell the future. Neither can we forestall it. What we must do is define our best case scenario, where we really want to get to, and set out the steps needed to make that outcome most likely. I hope we can do it with the largest degree of consensus and teamwork.

I close by saying I am extremely confident about Canada's agri–food sector and I am very ambitious about its future. There are no guarantees but as Wayne Gretzky once said, you will miss 100 per cent of the shots you never take. We need to start shooting the puck at the net and we need to score. That is what this vision for the future of Canadian agriculture is intended to achieve.

With a strong market orientation and the careful use of scarce tax dollars, with diversification, innovation and value added, with thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources, with the enhancement of our human resources, with a sharp focus on rural Canada and local communities, with high international standards and a cohesive team Canada attitude we can meet the objectives outlined in our red book last year about growth, jobs and security. Agriculture and agri–food can play a very large role.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Bloc Quebecois on Bill C–49, introduced by the Minister of Agriculture to amend the act governing his department.

Essentially, the bill changes the department's name to Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food. As the minister explained during his speech, the new name confirms that today the government's agricultural responsibilities are not restricted to helping farmers; their economic well–being and survival are largely dependent on the need to process, market and distribute their products.

I think a country has a responsibility to ensure the smooth development of its agricultural sector, whose impact on the lives of nations and peoples is well known.

In his speech, the minister identified his responsibilities with respect to marketing. I think it is an important sector. In Quebec, I heard about demands made by fine cheese producers, for example, who saw their industry's problem as one of marketing. I hope that this bill will enable the department, in cases like these, to help our producers market their products.

Of course, in a modern state, the agriculture department's responsibilities go beyond dealing with agricultural production as such. I think a modern state's responsibilities extend to marketing and to helping and supporting agricultural producers and processors. With the globalization of markets, we must export abroad.

I think, as the minister pointed out in his speech, that the time for exporting raw commodities is over. We, for instance, used to export enormous quantities of wheat to Russia. I think that we must refine our policies in this area and take steps to process our products right here, because agriculture—as the minister also mentioned—is a major source of jobs in Canada. The downstream sector in agriculture, the whole processing industry, is very important in that respect.

It is therefore important that the Department of Agriculture work to improve our competitiveness, our independence from foreign countries, and to ensure the future of our agricultural system, and that the department do its part to promote research. The bill points out that the department has responsibilities in this area.

I would like to point out how ironic it is that Bill C–50 on the Canadian Wheat Board, proposing that checkoffs be made from sales proceeds to support research, was tabled last Monday. I do not know if, in the future, other agricultural sectors will be asked to make the same effort. If not, one has to wonder whether we are not asking wheat producers to subsidize agricultural research twice through their taxes and the checkoffs? It remains to be seen.

You can see from my remarks that the Bloc Quebecois supports this bill, even though it does not address at all the matter of overlap. Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to clarify what I mean after Question Period.

The Deputy Speaker: It being eleven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

MARATHON OF MONTREAL ISLAND

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to commend and congratulate the organizers and all the volunteers who made possible the third Marathon of Montreal Island, held last Sunday in the cities of Outremont, Mount Royal and Saint–Laurent, and in which I myself had the honour to take part.

This international sporting event provides direct economic benefits estimated at several million dollars for the greater Montreal region. Again this year, it drew more than 6,000 athletes, including many from all over the world. In short, the September 18 marathon was a resounding success.

In closing, I wish to especially point out the participation of 1,200 volunteers who worked together to make this major sporting event such a great success. I want to draw attention to the excellent work they did and I thank them very sincerely for it.

* * *

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Prime Minister of Canada takes a malicious pleasure in making Quebec pay for belonging to Canada.

This prime minister has done everything to make Quebecers like him. He was involved in the proclamation of the war measures in 1970. He was responsible for the night of the long knives. He is the one who thanked the Premier of Newfoundland, Clyde Wells, for killing the Meech Lake Accord.

Now he is acting like a bad debtor by refusing to pay Quebec back for its contribution to the 1992 referendum, which was held under Quebec law with the agreement of the federal government then in power.

Mr. Prime Minister, you are being consistent only with yourself when you show such contempt for the Quebec people, who are able to judge you when they see who is defending Quebec's interests in this House. You accuse us of being elected under false representations; we reply to you that you are robbing the Quebec people of pride and honour.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of this House the need to open B.C. land claims negotiations to the general public.

On September 20 Premier Mike Harcourt bowed to public pressure and issued a statement claiming to bring a new openness to the process. Steps have been taken to include local municipal governments in treaty negotiations but more must be done.

As the premier recently noted, closed doors negotiations and mandatory confidentiality statements have undermined public trust.

There is a mood of uncertainty and fear in affected communities. Negotiations have been secretly carried out and the average citizen is scared. Public policy is best decided in open meetings, not behind closed doors. Let the people who have to live with the decisions have a say in the decisions.

I call on the federal government to follow the premier's lead and allow the average citizen to be a part of negotiations. This is necessary to restore a mood of trust and public confidence to a process long marred by unwarranted secrecy.

* * *

SASKATCHEWAN

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I have three topics, Saskatchewan, immigration and birthdays.

My province of Saskatchewan joined Confederation in 1905. It was another Liberal Prime Minister, Laurier, whose visionary immigration policies opened the west to settlement by immigrants from around the world.

Settlers came to a land that Saskatchewan's Connie Kaldor describes as harsh and unforgiving. This land offered independence and opportunity, treasures precious enough to be worth a little dust and frostbite.

Next year marks Saskatchewan's 90th birthday, the 90th anniversary of Laurier's western visit. In only 90 years, less than one lifetime, Saskatchewan pioneers have taken us from oxcarts to fax machines.

I think of Herbert S. Wright, born on this date in 1907. An English immigrant, Stan and his wife Peggy raised three children. Starting a family at the beginning of the great depression was not easy, yet the Wrights faced the challenge, prospered and were stronger for it.

Thanks to immigrants, pioneers we sometimes call them, Canada is stronger too.

* * *

MEXICO

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, August 21, 1994 was election day in Mexico. I, along with the member for Louis–Hébert, was part of a nine member delegation for the International Centre for Human Rights based in Montreal, headed by Ed Broadbent and funded by the Canadian government.

We were part of a group of a thousand foreign observers invited by Action Civica, a non–partisan organization involving tens of thousands of Mexicans who are fighting for fair elections and a civil society in Mexico.

• (1105)

By all accounts the election outcome in Mexico, despite many shortcomings, represented the will of the Mexican people. Given our closer relationships with Mexico through NAFTA it is of great interest to Canadians that Mexico continue on the road to democratization and the building of a civil society.

Canada and Mexico can be strategic allies, ensuring that NAFTA is fair to the three countries involved. I ask my colleagues in the House to join with me in congratulating the Mexican people and Action Civica in their quest.

I further call on this Parliament to work on strengthening our ties with the Mexican government to promote the democratization and the building of a civil society in Mexico.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN UNITY

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian and a politician, I have just spent a unique and enlightening summer, and I would like to tell the House about it.

Given how much talk there is about the future of Quebec within Canada, many Canadians discuss the issue and share their views with one another. This is what I wanted to do in an active way during the summer.

I went to Quebec several times to study French and to get in contact with people and their milieu. I believe there are always two sides to a coin and at least two perceptions of a problem and its solution.

I wanted to go to the source to find out and to better understand what people think. This is what I did during the summer and I thank all those who helped me get that better understanding of the situation.

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers have long known that they should not take the federal government's word. They are also used to being forced to fight to get the millions of dollars owed to them. But what really hurts is to have to put up with the mockery and sarcasm of all the Liberal MPs when claiming the $26 million owed to Quebec taxpayers following the referendum on the Charlottetown accord.

It hurts even more when this sarcasm comes from the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal. Some day, all government members from Quebec will have to explain why they spurned with such delight the justified claims of the Bloc Quebecois.

Given their chuckling and their sarcasm, must we conclude that this is the price to pay to remain in the Canadian federation?

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal members of Parliament stand strong in their support of human rights. We stand firm behind the principles of Bill C–41 which include sexual orientation as a ground to be protected when an aggravating factor in sentencing for criminal offences.

The Government of Canada stands firm behind this bill as it stands firm in its belief that human rights acts and the charter protect Canadians from all forms of discrimination.

Sexual orientation is one of those protected heads. We promised in the red book to amend the federal Human Rights Act. We look forward to the fulfilment of that promise to make human rights the Canadian hallmark of true civilization.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, Canadians on both sides of the highly emotional, polarized gun control debate must move from their extreme positions and work to find common ground. Legitimate concerns of responsible gun owners will be listened to.

We must not equate gun owners with criminals. However, we must also work to prevent the abuse of firearms.

The shocking brutality of domestic violence must be recognized and understood by all Canadians. In Canada 42 per cent of women killed by husbands are shot, 80 per cent with rifles and shotguns. The majority of these guns are legally owned.

It is a privilege, not a right, to own a firearm. We must do whatever possible to ensure our communities, homes and children are safe.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVANTS

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, for many years, federal employees working in the National Capital Region have had to cope with upheavals that have changed their lives. The Conservative government destroyed the morale of the region's public servants, but it paid a price for its ill–advised partisan policies.

All studies on decentralizing federal services should be suspended immediately. We need a five–year moratorium on transfer of public servants.

• (1110)

Treasury Board should prepare specific guidelines that are sensible, cost–conscious, and consider the impact on public service morale and whether services will really be improved.

As members of the National Capital caucus, we intend to defend our position and demonstrate that these plans are a big mistake. Specific guidelines issued by Treasury Board would prevent the party in power from transferring services for political reasons.

* * *

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, how can we trust a federal government that repudiates verbal agreements made with the former Premier of Quebec and member of the great Liberal family?

Everyone saw Mr. Bourassa say in the Quebec National Assembly that there was an agreement on referendum costs. The government's attitude is astonishing, when we consider that the same federal government, on the basis of a commitment by an unknown individual, approved a transaction that was totally unacceptable, in the case of Ginn Publishing.

This government's double standard shows that many Quebecers are right to distrust federal politicians who fail to keep their word once they have won the election.

It is a sad reflection on democracy, and Quebecers will not forget that in Canada, they must pay twice for the federal referendum and that the word of a Quebecer who is Prime Minister in Ottawa does not mean a thing.

[*English*]

EMERGENCY PERSONNEL

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to notify my fellow MPs that I intend to bring forward a very important private member's bill that could likely save the life of a firefighter or police officer in the near future.

The bill would require hospital officials to notify emergency response personnel when they have inadvertently come into contact with an infectious disease while carrying out their life saving duties. This disclosure would be strictly private and confidential.

In an age when contagious diseases ranging from HIV to hepatitis are on the rise in Canada, protection for emergency personnel is needed more than ever. Lives are at stake here.

I ask the government to give my bill its most serious consideration once introduced. A formal symposium on this issue will be held in Ottawa next week. I feel it would be a sign of goodwill if all hon. members were to recognize the potential danger our invaluable emergency service personnel now find themselves in and pledge to resolve this dangerous situation.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, a large number of legitimate gun owners gathered on Parliament Hill yesterday to express their concerns about the government's pending gun control legislation.

They listened to the assurances of the justice minister and, in their turn, submitted a lengthy petition of many thousands of names.

The time for the presentation of petitions yesterday had passed. I wish them to know that their petition was promptly given to the Clerk of the House to review it for possible presentation in this Chamber or for formal delivery to the Minister of Justice.

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TEAM CANADA

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, during the summer months our country hosted the Commonwealth Games. I am proud to say that Team Canada turned in its best performance ever. Our team won a record 128 medals: 40 gold, 42 silver and 46 bronze.

I would like to congratulate all Canadians who participated in the games. In particular, I would like to congratulate two of Canada's athletes who hail from my riding of Victoria—Haliburton in the province of Ontario. Nancy Sweetnam of Lindsay won a silver medal in the 400 metre individual medley and a bronze medal in the 200 metre individual medley. Linda Szulga, who hails from Burnt River, Ontario, won a bronze medal in the pairs smallbore rifle competition.

These women represented Canada with a great deal of class and sportsmanship during the games and sacrificed many hours to train for their event.

Once again I salute their achievements and urge all members to applaud the fine showing by Team Canada at Victoria in August.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, this government places a high priority on sustainable development, the joint goals of achieving a clean environment and a strong, internationally competitive economy.

That is why yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Industry announced a new $57.5 million national strategy for the Canadian environmental industry.

The environmental industry strategy was developed after extensive consultations with the industry, with all levels of government and with industry associations.

• (1115)

This strategy will improve the access of the environmental industry to government programs and services, support cost effective technology development and commercialization, secure dominance in the growing Canadian market and increase exports of environmental technology.

Canada's industry has an important role to play in helping Canada achieve sustainable development, and the government is firmly committed to strengthening this sector of our economy.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, in a powerful report, the Council on Social Development expresses its concerns regarding the increasing poverty in Canada. The council concludes that although we may have to review our social programs they are still working. What is not working however is the labour market.

My question is for the person speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister.

An hon. member: Put your question.

Mr. Duceppe: I am just about to do so. I was looking about to see who could give me an answer, as there are not too many people in here this morning.

Does the minister not agree than instead of reforming our social programs, the government must put forward concrete job creation measures since, as the council pointed out, it is not social programs which are not working, but rather jobs which are lacking?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of points to make in response to the hon. member's question on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development.

It needs to be pointed out, as the minister did yesterday in some remarks, that the report of the Canadian Council on Social Development covered a period of time that ended in 1991. Therefore some of its statistical information is more than three years old.

To be fully accurate any report on poverty must take into account the rapidly changing labour market, which I think is implied in the hon. member's question, and the need to direct young people into developing job sectors that have long term potential.

I am sure the hon. member will have noted, not only in our red book proposals from the election campaign of last year but also in the throne speech, in the budget and in all the activities of the Minister of Human Resources Development, that the entire focus was upon the growth of the Canadian economy and the creation of jobs for Canadians.

The statistics would show that in the first nine or ten months of our administration a very substantial beginning has been made. It is not nearly enough yet, but there has been very good progress at the beginning of the term of the government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, could the agriculture minister explain how he is able to claim that a reform aimed at reducing costs by cutting social programs can create jobs?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Human Resources Development pointed out on many occasions in the House, the objective of the reform process upon which he has embarked is to transform the Canadian system into one that prepares Canadians for the changing requirements of the job market.

Rather than acting just as a net to catch people when they need special assistance, it is transformed into a system to help them reintegrate into the workforce and be fully prepared for the job opportunities that must exist in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, for a change in the social system , this is a real change indeed! In Quebec alone, there are 22,000 unemployed workers who are no longer eligible for UI benefits and the government reform is going to add thousands more to that number, forcing them onto welfare. In the past year, in Quebec alone, 20,000 more people have been added to the welfare roll. It is a real change indeed, Mr. Speaker.

• (1120)

Will the Prime Minister, or the Minister of Agriculture, recognize that the government itself is adding to poverty by making these unjustified and inhuman unemployment insurance cuts?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, the government's entire objective is to create economic growth and with that new jobs for Canadians.

It bears noting that since last November we have been successful in assisting in the creation of 275,000 Canadian jobs, including 79,000 in the province of Quebec.

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[*Translation*]

MONTREAL ECONOMY

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The report of the Canadian Council on Social Development identifies Montreal as the Canadian city with the highest number of people living under the poverty line; 30 per cent of the population, or 386,000 households, live under the poverty line in Montreal. This is more than twice that of all the Atlantic provinces combined.

Considering how serious the situation is in Montreal, will the Prime Minister undertake to implement an economic recovery strategy for that city, because the temporary infrastructure program will clearly not be enough?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure program commenced by the government in literally the first few hours after we took office last November has been a remarkable success story with the mayors, municipalities and provincial governments virtually everywhere across the country.

The minister responsible for infrastructure could add more detail. However, as far as I know without exception it has been heralded as a good and successful program. It is serving a very good purpose in establishing jobs for Canadians in the short term period while that program is in place over a span of about two years.

More important, that program will renew and refurbish the physical underpinning of infrastructure in every province and in most communities from coast to coast in the country, giving us a modern infrastructure base upon which to build economic development for the future.

The benefit of the program is being felt in the city of Montreal, just as it is in my home city of Regina and in all communities in between. That was the first major initiative of the government with respect to economic growth and job creation for the future.

As the hon. member will know, we have many other plans in the development process at the present time. I think he will find as those plans come to fruition that communities such as the city of Montreal and all others in Canada will be able to feel the positive impact.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière–des–Prairies): Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister intend to announce in the near future assistance measures for defence industry conversion, given that 10,000 jobs are in jeopardy in the Montreal area?

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry is doing a whole range of activities that are relevant to the member's question.

In terms of the defence industry productivity program, we have undertaken a very aggressive review and restructuring of the program so that we will be able to leverage the limited resources we have in that fund and to assist defence industries in converting so they will be much more in touch with knowledge based industries that are emerging as a new job creation force.

We are also giving them added marketing in their conversion to new industries. We must never forget the fact that as a government we are leaning very hard on all financial institutions of the country to become much more progressive in their lending activities and their service activities for small and medium sized entrepreneurs. As a government we believe that is where our greatest hope for putting people back to work rests.

• (1125)

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLAN

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I raise a question today of major concern in the minds of millions of Canadians. It is about their savings; it is about their retirement.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Why is the government considering taxing RRSPs?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)): Mr. Speaker, I keep hearing about new taxes from the Reform Party. I do not hear the Minister of Finance discussing new taxes.

First I heard of a carbon tax. Now I hear of a tax on RRSPs. All these suggestions of new taxes come from members of the Reform Party and not a single idea on a cut in spending comes from them.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions.

The Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and now the minister responsible for financial institutions have been unclear, indefinite, and have not made a statement to the Canadian people indicating that the government is not prepared to tax RRSPs.

If the minister is so sure of himself, would he stand in his place and say to the Canadian people that there will be no taxation on RRSPs during the term of this Parliament?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure you know and as I am sure members of the Reform Party will find out with their experience in Parliament, new taxes are announced in budgets. The budget is coming down next February.

In the meantime we will put out a paper in the fall. It will be referred to the finance committee and we will be able to listen to all the ideas of the Reform Party in the finance committee about taxation proposals.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I could only conclude from the answer of the minister that the possibility of new taxes for Canadians is there and that we have to be concerned about it.

The minister recognizes that RRSPs are no different from other pension plans. RRSPs were created so that self–employed people in Canada could save for their retirement.

My question is for the minister. Is the government not only considering taxing RRSPs but also considering taxing government pension plans and private pension plans as well?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that I keep hearing about new taxes only from the Reform Party. I hear about taxes on RRSPs. Now I hear about taxes on pension plans, on government pension plans, and I hear it from the Reform Party.

All these ideas about new taxes are coming from members of the Reform Party. Do they have a suggestion for cutting spending? Please let us have some ideas on that.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, as he was leaving the House of Commons, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs started his media scrum by stating: "The federal government owes nothing to Quebec". How arrogant! As for the Prime Minister, he keeps saying that he needs to get a bill before he can pay the Quebec taxpayers the $26 million he owes them.

The minister knows full well that the people of Quebec paid twice for the referendum, once for the referendum in Quebec and again for the one held in the rest of Canada. Why then persist obstinately in refusing to pay what they owe to Quebec?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, on October 26, 1992, two referendums were held in Canada: one under the federal referendum act and another, under Bill 150 and the Quebec referendum act. These are two different acts. For example, the residency requirements are not the same in the Quebec legislation as in the federal legislation. Therefore, there is no legal basis for paying the government of Quebec for holding a referendum under its own provincial legislation.

• (1130)

The issue being raised could only be settled if we had in our files a clear agreement to waive the application of the act. But there is no evidence of such a document.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, is the minister's response not proof in itself of this government's failure to recognize that Quebec is different from the rest of Canada? Is it not a tacit admission of the fact they are unable to accept this fundamental difference for one thing? Now, I would like to ask him: is the Premier of Quebec stating before the Quebec National Assembly that there was an agreement not sufficient proof of the existence of such an agreement? does the minister doubt the word of the former Premier of Quebec?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, in response to the first part of the hon. member's question, if Premier Bourassa decided to hold a referendum under his own legislation, he obviously believed it was for the best political advantage of both himself and the province to have a separate referendum.

As for the second part of the question, I cannot help but wonder: if an agreement did exist between Premier Bourassa and Mr. Mulroney, and then Mrs. Kim Campbell, why then did neither Mr. Mulroney nor Mrs. Campbell express their agreement or pay a debt they presumably undertook to pay?

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): The health minister has stated that Canada's blood supply system does not need to have as strict standards as those in the U.S. Frankly, that is hogwash. Will the minister raise her standards so that all Canadians will once again feel safe?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, our system of blood collection is among the best in the world. What is happening with the FDA, and I will repeat it again, is a question of different regulations to meet different systems, one system not being superior to the other.

That being said, we are working with the FDA to harmonize those regulations, which would help us ship plasma to the States. We are going to continue to look at any possible way that we can improve the safety of our blood supply.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, that is actually the first time I have heard the minister say that she is concerned about an improvement to the system which she has continually said is excellent and needs no changes. Frankly the patients, the people of Canada, expect no more hidebound, old fashioned statements. Rather, they would prefer to see changes that will improve our system.

Will this minister stop making those old fashioned statements that simply try to cover her tracks?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear during this whole debate. We have taken every step since I have been minister of health to ensure that we are using everything we know to guarantee the safety of the blood supply and we will continue to do that.

It bothers me a great deal to have responsible people continuing to spread uncertainty when every day in every hospital across this land our blood supply system saves lives. Let us continue to encourage donors to move forward and donate their blood to continue to give the gift of life.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. At the press conference announcing the appointment of Mr. Manera as president of the CBC, the heritage minister said that the government was committed to making no further cuts in the CBC's government funding.

How can the minister, who claims to be a great friend of this institution, justify his about–face and go back on his February 3 commitment by announcing that it would be hard for him not to cut the CBC's budget?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to note our colleague's interest in the CBC, this great federal institution which promotes our culture from coast to coast.

If she is referring to decisions that have been made, I would like to know what these decisions are. What was said earlier this year has not changed, so I think she is indulging in speculations she may have heard elsewhere. However, no changes or decisions have been made that contradict what we said earlier.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that it has not been announced, as the Minister of Canadian Heritage's colleague was saying. The budget has not been announced yet, but there is no smoke without fire. When we read in the newspaper that it will be difficult to avoid cutting the CBC's budget by 5 per cent to 8 per cent, it is a warning of things to come.

Only yesterday, the vice president, Mr. Pineau, clearly said to the heritage committee that cuts were coming. So they should stop treating us like fools. Does the minister confirm that these cuts, if they are implemented, would mostly affect the services offered to Canada's francophone and Acadian communities?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I think that our colleague is worrying about smoke. I did not know she planned a career change from member of Parliament to firefighter.

I think that if she wants to help this great institution, the CBC—which she herself is working on as a member of the parliamentary committee currently reviewing the CBC—she should say frankly that she is happy that this institution is working to promote Canadian unity and ask it to do even more.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, we have heard reports of infighting within the Liberal cabinet over a plan to uproot public servants and ship them to the east coast. On the one hand the Minister of Public Works and Government Services wants to move them to his hometown in Atlantic Canada while opposing ministers of public renewal and industry and others say, and I think the quote is: "You do not move departments around just for the fun of it".

Will the minister of government renewal bring this dispute to an end by stating categorically that there are no longer any plans to ship parts of the civil service to the east coast?

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to categorically assure you and members of this House that there is no division on this issue within cabinet.

The administration of the federal government is complex. We have hundreds of thousands of employees. Perhaps on a supplementary my colleague the President of the Treasury Board might address some of the more specific issues relating to public servants.

As the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has noted, we are planning to reshape government and reorder our financial priorities. This will be done in an orderly fashion. Certainly the statements made by my colleague the Minister of Public Works and Government Services are in no way at odds with government policy.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if they are listening to their own reports. The Minister of Public Works and Government Services has established a committee with very specific instructions. The instructions are: To develop an action plan to enhance the government presence in Atlantic Canada. That is pretty much at odds with the plan that says: "We will reorganize the civil service on the basis of cost effectiveness and efficiency".

• (1140)

Will the Minister of Public Works and Government Services fall into line with the latter, which is cost effectiveness, and state today that he will disband this committee that is merely looking to enhance his own political future?

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, all of the ministers in the government have been charged with looking at their own departments, the administration and the saving of money. The Minister of Public Works and Government Services is doing what everyone else is doing. They are looking line by line at the budget to see where savings can be made.

We make no apologies. As a national government we are proud that there are public servants across this country, not just in Ottawa.

The hon. member should not read something into what is in effect a legitimate task assigned by a government minister to deal with a very difficult situation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FRENCH–SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

After deciding not to implement a real comprehensive policy for the development of the French–speaking community, despite the request of the Federation of Francophone and Acadian Communities, the Minister of Heritage finally brought forth a policy. The policy that emerged from his drawing board is nothing more than an action plan to meet his own obligations under part VII of the Official Languages Act.

Can the minister tell us how and in what way his action plan will develop the francophone community?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member should have talked more to Francophones and Acadians across Canada. He would have the answer, because they are the ones who called for the application of the sections of the Official Languages Act. They applauded it, when we decided to mobilize the Canadian government in support of Francophones and Acadians throughout the country.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us how he can boast about his action plan when no funding has been provided and no new program has been set up?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member has understood nothing about this action plan. Perhaps he should look at it a little more closely and then he might understand that what we will do is mobilize resources throughout the Canadian government to support the development of official–language minority communities. That is what he should understand.

* * *

[*English*]

PEACEKEEPING

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

On Wednesday this House debated Canada's peacekeeping role under the UN banner with a view to reaching a decision on Canada's commitments. Will the minister please explain to this House today if a decision has been made with regard to peacekeeping in Bosnia–Hercegovina, the former Yugoslavia and, if so, the reasons behind his decision?

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does note that we had a very good debate with expressions of points of view on all sides. I think it is the general consensus that Canada wishes to remain active in United Nations peacekeeping engagements.

I have outlined in my speech that the resources of the Department of National Defence have been considerably strained over recent times. However, there is the capability within the Canadian Armed Forces to take on a number of engagements.

[*Translation*]

Yes, the government has decided that Canadian troops will stay in the former Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia for another six months.

[*English*]

We have decided to renew for a further six months our engagement in those two former republics of Yugoslavia.

I would like to put some words of caution here. We have made this decision but it is subject to review if the situation on the ground changes or if the political or military situation calls into question the safety of Canadian troops or the usefulness of the UNPROFOR mandate.

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SECURITY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, in July 1992 the Security Intelligence Review Committee issued a top secret section 54 report to the then Solicitor General, Doug Lewis. The report was entitled: "Domestic Terrorism Targets".

Has the ministry reviewed this report and if so, can the parliamentary secretary advise the House if there is any mention of the Reform Party within this report?

• (1145)

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I guess members across the way have been waiting for me to stand up for some time.

Responding in Canada's other official language to the question, I am quite aware of what has happened recently. The government is taking into account the report that will be submitted by SIRC to the Solicitor General.

There are also other investigations going on with the Inspector General and we are looking in detail at what happened. I am sure the Solicitor General will respond in due course.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the parliamentary secretary understood that this report has already been given. It is a section 54 report that went to the then Solicitor General, Doug Lewis.

Will the parliamentary secretary assure the House that unlike its predecessors, this government will advise legitimate political parties when CSIS learns that groups or individuals deemed to be a threat to national security attempt to infiltrate them?

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the policy of the government is that we do not condone any investigation of legitimate political organizations. We have made that very clear.

We have also heard from the opposition allegations of all kinds that the government is investigating various political parties. There is none of that.

The Government of Canada and the Solicitor General will make public certain parts of the report that will be handed down. I can assure the hon. member that this Liberal government would not tolerate such actions being taken by our secret service.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health.

In March 1993, the Canadian government released its funding plan for the second phase of the National AIDS Strategy. Ottawa was to spend $211 million on the strategy over the next five years or $42 million annually. Of those $42 million, $1.5 million were not set aside for specific programs but were to be allocated, at the discretion of the minister, to needs not covered by the strategy.

Could the Minister of Health indicate whether according to plan, in 1994–95, in addition to the $40.7 million for standard programs, $1.5 million will be allocated by the minister to the National AIDS Strategy, as discretionary funding?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is the case. We have established a criteria for the $1.5 million, and we will try to follow those criteria. I may add that we have already planned to spend $400,000 of the $1.5 million on a conference to be held in Vancouver at some time in 1996.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, as far as the remainder is concerned, could the minister indicate the criteria for allocating these funds and which agencies will benefit?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, at this stage we have yet to select the agencies or projects, but they must be projects that are not covered by other types of funding.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The CBC already receives more than $1 billion a year from Canadian taxpayers and the government appears to be on the move to tax even further.

The minister has in his possession a study by the Nordicity Group which recommends new funding sources for the CBC but he does not want the public to see it. The organization, development and funding of the CBC has been behind closed doors for too long now and has now become a matter of accountability.

Will the minister make public or at least provide parliamentarians with this study which recommends new funding sources for the CBC?

• (1150)

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I would like to have a chance to read the report before I decide what I do with it.

As for transparency, we have provided all the members who want to participate in the hearings of the standing committee on heritage an opportunity to look at the CBC. The hearings started yesterday and will go on for some months. There will be no secrets there. I understand a number of questions have already been put to the CBC through the standing committee.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am really quite surprised that the minister has not yet seen the Nordicity study. I find that quite an unacceptable response.

In any event, the Liberals continue to be unaccountable to Canadians. They are considering a tax on entertainment to generate more money for the CBC. Canadians cannot afford this any longer and they will not put up with any new taxes, especially for the CBC.

Will the minister tell us categorically and right now that there will be no new entertainment tax introduced in order to fund this billion dollar boondoggle?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, this morning it seems that the Reform Party wants to tax Canadians to death.

We have not talked about taxes. This is an invention coming from the other side. In due course we will see what the standing committee on heritage will have to say on the question of financing the CBC.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. John Loney (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Many economic observers claim that Canada is coming out of the recession and the job numbers are there to prove it. However as far as my constituents are concerned, there are still too many people out of work.

Can the minister please tell me how many jobs have been created in Alberta so that I can reassure my constituents?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of interest in Alberta.

This program is moving very rapidly right across the country. With the co–operation of the Government of Alberta it is moving quite rapidly in that province as well with some 719 infrastructure projects investing over $422 million and creating some 700,000 jobs in that province. This is only the beginning.

I am pleased to say that we have to this point in time allocated more than two–thirds of the money under the $6 billion infrastructure program. There are over 6,500 projects across the country and so far we have put some 70,000 Canadians to work. That is only the beginning.

There are more jobs to come in Alberta. There are more jobs to come across the country. It is attracting additional investment dollars in helping to do what this government wants to do, get Canadians back to work.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FAMILY PATRIMONY

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister or the Acting Prime Minister. After the Government of Quebec passed the Partition of the Family Patrimony Act, the government tabled Bill C–55, which received royal assent on September 29, 1992. Bill C–55 would provide for seizing or dividing federal pension benefits. Nearly two years after the bill was passed, the regulations have yet to be approved by the federal government.

Would the Prime Minister or his substitute agree that after waiting for two years, the federal cabinet should move quickly to adopt the regulations so that Quebecers who have been disadvantaged as a result of this situation can obtain the pension share to which they are entitled?

• (1155)

[*English*]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, I have now signed and recommended to the Governor General the Pension Benefits Division Act which helps to bring into effect the very regulations that are of concern to the hon. member with respect to implementing Bill C–55.

Bill C–55 was put into effect by the previous government. It required a lot of detailed examination as to the regulations. We moved as quickly as we could. We have already made changes which I announced previously with respect to incorporating part–time employees and marriage after retirement into the pension provisions and the further regulations are about to come into effect.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, can the minister give specific reasons for this two–year delay, including nearly one year under the Liberal government, and will he make a formal commitment today that the regulations will be adopted by Christmas?

[*English*]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, as I said just a moment ago, when I came upon the regulation requirements, not a lot of work had been done by the previous government. We have expedited the matter and it is nearing completion. A lot of work has been done in a very short period of time because we are anxious to make sure that the provisions are in place to better serve our retired employees and their successors.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration neglected to answer a very simple, very straightforward question.

Dudley Vincent Forbes, who is accused of a shooting spree in Toronto over the weekend in which two people died, was deported not once but twice for breaking Canadian visa law.

My question is for the parliamentary secretary. Why was someone who has flouted Canadian law twice, both criminal law and immigration law and been deported twice, allowed to be sponsored as a spouse and returned to Canada?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

Indeed the minister did not fail to answer. As the minister stated, when the gentleman came into Canada there was no reason for officials to refuse his application at that time.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, again from the minister's department we get the same mumbo jumbo, political double talk and no real, clear answers in reference to removal, deportation or whatever.

The minister is making a great to–do about his new immigration reform package which is currently before the House. Since nothing in this legislation would have prevented someone like Forbes from returning to Canada, is the minister willing to immediately undertake legislative changes to bar any applicant for immigration who has previously been deported for any reason?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am at a loss to understand. I am sorry that the hon. member did not feel my previous answer was clear. I attempted to be clear.

I will be clear again with regard to his first question. At the time there were no reasons for officials to bar the gentleman in question.

As to his second question, the hon. member who participated in the debate on Bill C–44, come next Tuesday when we vote on this bill will be here on our side and will vote for just those kinds of amendments that do the kind of thing the hon. member is asking for. We look for his support and we expect it now.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of International Trade. On the issue of lumber, first of all, the federal government failed to get Quebec exempted from countervailing duties, although it does not even subsidize exports from Quebec.

Second, the federal government has let itself be pushed around by American lobby groups that came up with all sorts of inventive ways of dragging things out. Third, having finally won, the government is not even capable of making the United States pay back the $500 million they owe us.

Is the minister in a position to announce in this House that an agreement has been signed or will he just tell us again that discussions are ongoing but still unsuccessful?

• (1200)

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member on behalf of the Minister of International Trade that the minister and the government are looking at this whole issue with a great deal of interest. The government is convinced that the monies the hon. member is referring to will be recovered. Unfortunately, for the time being, proceedings have been initiated by American groups and we must let the judicial process take its course. As the government of Canada, we are making representations to ensure the Canadian taxpayers are paid back.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ACT

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 22,000 Canadians asking for the Parliament of Canada to retain section 241 of the Criminal Code of Canada which forbids assisting in the commission of a suicide.

This petition was circulated thanks to a quadriplegic, a woman from Winnipeg by the name of Theresa Ducharme. I want to publicly congratulate Mrs. Ducharme, given the immense effort required on her part for having taken such an initiative.

[*Translation*]

IRVING WHALE

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, last week, I went to the Magdalen Islands. The people there gave me this petition concerning the wreck of the *Irving Whale*. The petitioners ask that the leaks from the wreck be plugged as soon as possible. They also ask that further public hearings be held.

Having seen and studied the reports on the *Irving Whale*, I strongly support the Magdalen Islanders' requests and I submit their petition.

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions I would like to present to the House. The first one has 478 signatures. It is a request that Parliament review and amend the Young Offenders Act to save society from further harm committed by young offenders and to discourage young people from committing crimes by increasing penalties, releasing names for serious offenders and giving the police more investigative powers.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of my constituency urging Parliament not to repeal or amend section 241 of the Criminal Code in any way and to uphold the Supreme Court of Canada's decision of September 30, 1993 to disallow doctor assisted suicides.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by members of the Kaska Dena Council. These members are from Fort Ware, British Columbia, Good Hope Lake, Watson Lake, Yukon.

• (1205)

As members of the Kaska Dena Council they are calling on the government as represented by the minister of Indian affairs not to devolve jurisdiction and control over unsurrendered lands and resources and to ensure that the land claims for the Kaska Dena Council are resolved equitably before any lands are devolved.

I have the pleasure to present this petition and to support and encourage the government to continue these land claims negotiations with the Kaska Dena Council.

KILLER CARDS

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present three petitions today on behalf of the constituents of Scarborough Centre.

The first is signed by 74 people from across Scarborough and urges the government to amend the laws to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale and manufacture of serial killer cards and to advise producers of these cards that their products if destined for Canada will be seized and destroyed.

ABORTION

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is signed by 80 residents of Scarborough Centre and calls on the government to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to the unborn.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, my third petition is signed by 115 residents of Scarborough Centre who request that Parliament ensure that current provisions of the Criminal Code prohibiting doctor assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and Parliament enact no laws that would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

ABORTION

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions from Simcoe Centre to present.

The first is a petition on the issue of abortion. The petitioners request that Parliament reconsider amendments to the Criminal Code.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on the issue of euthanasia. The petitioners request that current laws regarding active euthanasia be enforced.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the third petition requests that the Government of Canada not amend the Human Rights Act to include the phrase sexual orientation.

The petitioners fear that such an inclusion would indicate a societal approval of homosexual behaviour. The petitioners believe that the government should not legitimize this behaviour against the clear wishes of the majority.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present petitions signed by over 800 people in my riding of Cariboo—Chilcotin.

My constituents from many communities including McLeese Lake, Alexis Creek, Anahim Lake, Quesnel, Williams Lake, Tatla Lake, and 100 Mile House all call upon the government to refrain from passing any legislation that results in additional gun control laws.

I concur with these petitions.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my duty and honour to rise in the House to present two petitions duly certified by the Clerk of Petitions on behalf of the constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands and surrounding areas.

In both these petitions the petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide remain in force.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have a petition representing the views of some of my constituents which I wish to present to the House.

The petition calls on the government to enforce the existing provisions in the Criminal Code prohibiting assisted suicide. It also asks that no changes be made to those provisions that would sanction or allow assisted suicide.

On behalf of these concerned constituents I am pleased to table this petition in the House.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr Speaker, I have two different petitions to present to the House today.

I have the honour to present a petition from the Netherlands Reform Congregation in my riding regarding the subject of euthanasia. Hundreds of Canadians are in this way sending a message to parliamentarians that physicians in Canada should be working to save lives, not to end them.

I heartily concur with their statement and I trust that the Senate committee conducting hearings on this issue will listen to our collective voices.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I have the honour to present is from 89 of my constituents who are concerned about enshrining the undefined phrase sexual orientation in federal human rights legislation.

They say privileges that society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships.

I concur with my constituents.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I hope there might be consent to revert to presentation of reports by interparliamentary delegations to permit the very distinguished member for Ottawa—Vanier to present a report that he has on a recent meeting of one of our interparliamentary organizations.

* * *

• (1210)

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. I was a little distracted; I was here but not quite present.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian section of the International Assembly of French-Speaking Parliamentarians, concerning the 20th regular session held in Paris from July 10 to 13.

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 67 raised by the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve could be made an order for return, that return would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 67 be made an order for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 67—**Mr. Ménard:**

With regard to the Defence Industry Productivity Program (DIPP) administered by the Department of Industry, (*a*) which companies have been awarded financial assistance since January 1, 1994, (*b*) what type of financial assistance (grants, repayable loans with or without royalties, tax benefits) did these companies receive, (*c*) what was the amount of financial assistance that each company received, and (*d*) what criteria did the companies receiving assistance have to meet in connection with government requirements promoting defence conversion?

(Return tabled.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Milliken: I move that the remaining questions stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion. That Bill C-49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I will now continue the speech I started before Question Period. I may recall that I was commenting on the bill introduced by the Minister of Agriculture, which proposes to change the name of the department and define certain powers, duties and functions with respect to research on and processing of agri-food products.

I indicated that the Bloc Quebecois supports this bill, but I note, after reading the bill and listening to the minister, who explained the role played by his department in the agricultural industry in this country, that there is considerable potential for overlap.

If we look at what the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada are doing in the agricultural and agri-

food sectors, there are many activities that are practically identical. The Government of Quebec also supports farmers, promotes market development, supports research and also supports activities connected with the inspection of agricultural products.

It is, more or less, what the federal government is going to do as well. This is a typical example of overlap. And if we consider that historically, federal spending on Quebec's agricultural industry has always been less than Quebecers would consider their fair share as part of the Canadian federation, this may be yet another instance of Quebecers paying twice for the same service. They pay for agricultural research and development activities in their province and, since they pay federal taxes, they also pay for what is being done elsewhere.

If federal spending in Quebec could be said to be more or less on a per capita basis, we could say that we are not paying more to get the same services or services that are almost identical to what the federal government can offer. However, that is not the case.

If I am not mistaken, federal spending on agriculture in Quebec has never exceeded 20 per cent, and has often been considerably less.

• (1215)

I am not surprised, because this has been going on for quite some time in Quebec, but I am surprised that the minister failed to include in his bill a number of provisions to keep to a minimum any overlap with activities in this sector that are covered by the Government of Quebec.

I feel very much involved in this particular debate. As we heard during Question Period and statements by members, in the past three years, and especially during the 1992 referendum in Quebec, Quebecers have paid for the referendum they held under Quebec's legislation and also paid for the referendum held in the rest of Canada. Since Quebecers pay taxes like everybody else, part of the money spent by the federal government on the referendum in Canada—Regina and Toronto and St. John's, Newfoundland—came from taxes paid by Quebecers. They paid for this referendum and they also paid for their own referendum. This is an obvious case of overlap.

Quebecers understood their Premier had received assurances from the Canadian Prime Minister that they would get the money back. Quebecers believed Premier Bourassa. They did not necessarily think Mr. Bourassa was lying. Mr. Bourassa spoke from his seat in the National Assembly. Today, we are told that the word of the Premier of Quebec is not enough to prove that the federal government owes money to Quebec.

That is why I would have liked to see in the agriculture minister's bill provisions stating that the Department of Agriculture will consult with the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture in order to avoid overlap, to ensure that there are no cases where Quebecers will have to pay twice.

I would have liked to see that in the bill because I realize that if it is not written in black and white before a witness and recorded by a notary, when provisions are not perfectly clear, nothing ever gets done. So we say that even if promises were made by a prime minister, there is no guarantee if it is not in writing.

That is why I would have liked to see in the minister's bill clear indications that real efforts will be made to avoid overlap so that Quebecers will not again—as in many other cases—have to pay twice for the same service.

I will not keep the House any longer. Of course, the Bloc Quebecois endorses the spirit of the bill. We will review it in committee. In particular, we will ask that the matter of inspectors be clarified. The definition of "inspector" in French seems slightly different from that in English.

Bloc members will ask for clarifications in committee, because it is very important to convince and assure Quebec francophones that the French version of a bill says the same thing as the English version.

I thank you for your attention and let me assure you that our Bloc colleagues who sit on the agriculture committee will see to it that this bill is improved in the interest of the people of Quebec and Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, at first glance one would look at this bill and pass it off merely as simple housekeeping. Certainly as a Reform member I am in favour of any bill that would streamline and make this department more efficient.

• (1220)

However a couple of aspects of this legislation give me some concern. First, there is a new section on inspection services. It states: "The minister may designate any person as an inspector for the purpose of providing the inspection services that the minister considers necessary for the enforcement of any act of which the minister has any powers, duties or functions".

I certainly have some questions about this. Does this create another level of inspection police in Canada? For example, will this give the minister, through an appointed inspector, the latitude to enforce any laws in his jurisdiction of agriculture?

The second aspect is the repeal of section 6 which currently states: "The minister shall cause to be laid before each House of Parliament not later than the fifth sitting day of that House after January 31 next, following the end of the fiscal year a report showing the operations of the department for that fiscal year".

The questions I have in that area are, first, how much will it save? If it could save significant dollars I would be the first to admit that I am in favour of that. Second, will the standing committee be able to examine fully the report given by the minister without it being laid on the table in the House?

Forces in the world today may radically change the way agri–business is carried on. New trade deals, safety nets, farm debt, to name but a few, will drastically alter agri–business over the next few years. We have a great opportunity here. Rather than just do a facelift on the department by giving it a new name, why does the government and the minister not sit down and do a major overhaul from the ground up?

We are prepared to help in this process but not in the fashion that has been suggested. Let all of us in the House, especially including the minister, go back to square one and develop policy that has been built from the grassroots.

I believe we must do more than just tinker with an agriculture bill and change the department's name. We are facing a crucial time of rapid change: on our farms, in our support business and in both levels of government and their responsibilities regarding agriculture. We are at a time of change, perhaps greater than the dominion land settlement and the emergency action taken during the great depression. We know what the current changes are. They are global trade arrangements. They are new markets. They are new biotechnology. They are less government money. They are greater worldwide food demand. They are the need to look after our environment.

In order to meet all these challenges we must do more than just tinker. We must look at what I refer to as a reconfederation of agriculture. This is our vision. I believe this vision should have three components to it.

First, as Canadians we must encourage each other to appreciate our safe and affordable food supply more. What is more important to our daily lives than food? Yet we take our abundance of supply so much for granted. Many people in other parts of the world have had massive natural disasters or destructive military conflicts that have created food shortages and famines. Thankfully we have never suffered that in Canada.

We must appreciate our food supply more. Surely we should not only see the agri–food department in terms of statistics and figures. While the industry is only 8 per cent of GDP, what is more important in our daily lives than our daily bread?

We as leaders should be talking to people about this. This is what the minister of agriculture should be doing. I would like to see him use this upcoming Thanksgiving season to give a speech to Canadians on the blessings and the importance of a safe and abundant food supply and then to encourage his fellow legislators at all levels to make sure that we protect the resource of farming and food production. This is the first element of a vision statement.

Second, we must realize how important it is to have good legislative policy for our farmers, those who produce and process our food. The basic thing we must strive toward is to make farming profitable again. Our policies must be geared toward this.

• (1225)

It is discouraging to know that farmers' real net market income in 1991 was only half of what it was in 1971. On top of that farmers as well as other Canadians have faced tremendous inflation in land prices, equipment prices, building prices, et cetera. Personal income and property taxes have gone up dramatically. How can farmers survive in this economic climate? Support programs have had to compensate.

Farmers want an economic and fiscal environment in which they can make an honest buck on their own. We do not want handouts. We do not want government as a senior business partner. Get out of our pockets and get off our backs, is what farmers are saying.

Mr. Stinson: Right on.

Mr. Kerpan: This is the direction in which the government should be going.

The third component of our vision is that we must redefine the role of the federal government, the provinces and industry in agriculture. There must be a more clear, more precise division of responsibilities.

Our party went on record in May during debate in the House on what we feel the new arrangements should be. We are doing more work on this. Experts have told us that a brand new arrangement could be made without any opening up of the Constitution. We would need to talk to each other as players and negotiate a new and better relationship but we must streamline and stop the overlap and duplication.

We propose that the provinces have the regulatory responsibility for the management of the physical resources; land, water, crops, livestock and the training and education of human resources, youth, farmers, processors, et cetera, all the players in the system. The federal government would have responsibility for trading relationships, fiscal and monetary policy and support programs that will agree with our trading agreements. The industry would be left alone to make the vast majority of decisions related to production, processing, marketing and transportation.

This arrangement needs to be fleshed out in a lot of detail. However, I sense a real momentum and a desire building in the country to get into this. I would suggest that we take the agriculture sector and work in this direction.

I want to point out to the minister of agriculture that I appreciated his opening comments and his remarks with regard to this bill. He mentioned a five point vision. I talked about a three point vision. In many ways both of those visions have a lot of similarities.

He talked about the cross–country consultation that is being planned. I ask the question: How do you do this? How do you go to the farmers in this country and get a reading of their feelings and ask their direction? It is very difficult.

I want to encourage the minister today to become involved. There is no other way that consultation like this can work without the full co–operation and the full involvement of the minister and his complete department.

The last thing that farmers need is another consultation process with a report that gets put on someone's desk, never to be looked at. In the last few months I have had the opportunity to look at such reports. Many of them were very well done. Many of them laid out plans and policies that should and could have been implemented by all governments but they were never looked at. We cannot afford that type of consultation process any more.

The minister stated in his opening remarks that the industry has changed in the last 25 years. I certainly agree with that. We need, as the minister pointed out, a common vision for farmers and consumers right across the country.

As a farmer I can remember many times my father telling me that you must be prepared. You must be ready for any eventuality and that you must leave your options open. It reminds me of going out to do a day's field work with the tractor and not having any fuel in the tractor. You may leave the yard with the best intentions in the world of doing a full day's work, but an hour later you run out of fuel and your mission cannot be accomplished. It is simply impossible.

• (1230)

We must drive into the next century and not be pulled into it by other market forces. We must take the initiative as government and as industry and drive ourselves into the next century with good policies created and established at the grassroots level.

In closing I go on record again as saying that the Reform Party is most happy, most ready and most willing to co–operate with the government to build that policy. Hopefully together we can develop a policy that is good, that is right, and that is something farmers want for the next century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the hon. member's presentation and I would like him to elaborate on this: would rural development, in which agriculture is surely a very important factor, not require a much broader approach, which, as he mentioned when he talked about co–operation between consumers and producers, would also require a comprehensive approach?

As it is, much of what the federal government does hurts rural communities now, for example with Canada Post and with railways. In many cases, the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing and I would like the hon. member to say whether the federal government should take a different approach. What should be done to ensure that what the government does through these national corporations carries out the desire for action expressed by the Minister of Agriculture, instead of having a negative effect which destroys this good will with an excessively centralizing approach that often wipes out the efforts of local communities?

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize to the hon. member, I was mistaken. There is no period for questions and comments after a speaker for a party has spoken. It is all my fault. Can we take it as a representation or is there unanimous consent to let the hon. member ask this question?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Kerpan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to that question and I thank you for the time.

Very briefly, certainly we are in what I perceive to be a global market. There is no question about it. The role of people at the committee level is that we have to develop within our own boundaries part of that policy. Certainly part of that planning has to be a developmental policy that will lead us into an even larger global economy than what we are now involved in.

It appears to me from where I sit as a member from Saskatchewan and knowing most about my home province, that farmers are telling me that without starting at square one, the grassroots, we cannot develop the global policy.

The minister probably said it best. In his opening comments he said that without a solid foundation everything else falls down. In my experience that is in fact the case. One cannot build a building with a poor foundation; it just will not stand.

It is my opinion that we have to look at an agricultural policy as if there were none at this point in time. We have to start from step one, build it within our borders, and then expand globally and internationally.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to stand today to make some comments on Bill C–49.

I want to refresh everybody's memory on the purpose of the bill. It is giving effect to a change in the title of the department. At one time it was known as the department of agriculture or the ministry of agriculture and now it will be known as the ministry of agriculture and agri–food. That is one of the changes. Other changes and amendments will have to be made in corresponding

acts just to expand the act because of the role the department has been playing for many years. We are just bringing it up to date.

• (1235)

In response to some comments made by speakers in the opposition, the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois, concerning the allocation of spending, et cetera, they are not covered in the bill. They are not for discussion in the bill. It is at an administrative level in co–operation with the provinces and the federal government. It is ongoing at all times and certainly can and will continue.

In response to the member from the Reform Party suggesting that the minister give a speech on Thanksgiving Day, if he desires to do so he can certainly get a copy of a speech the minister made on September 19 in Regina to the Chamber of Commerce wherein he stressed the importance of agriculture and the agri–food industry in Canada. He also made some comments about what he saw as some of the issues that needed to be addressed. As the member already knows, next Thursday the minister will be attending a very detailed session on our vision and projected concerns about the total industry with members of the standing committee.

The bill makes other changes. At the present time it states that the mandate is clarified in the bill to include not only primary agriculture but products derived from agriculture. It is necessary to do that. The bill enlarges the responsibility of the minister by changing reference to experimental farm stations to research related to agriculture and products derived from agriculture, including the operation of experimental farm stations across Canada.

We need these important amendments to bring the matter up to date. They reflect the longstanding relationship between the ministry and the agriculture and agri–food industry of Canada. That relationship started changing a number of years ago when the ministry was given the mandate to ensure the safety of the Canadian food supply.

Our inspection services are still one of the most important points of contact between the industry and the department. The highest percentage of the employees in the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food are in the food inspection and production branch.

As years have gone by the department has played an increasingly important, necessary and continuing role in research and market development assistance. Enforcing safety rules is still important but the department sees itself as more of a supervisor in inspection roles.

A key activity in the department now is partnership. We must continue to rethink our working relationships with the industry clients out there. It is important to re–emphasize that food safety will always be our top priority but our priorities are in other areas as well. A partnership, however, can only survive if there is good communication among the department and the other parties. I am certainly looking forward to the type of communication and co–operation at the standing committee we have always had since I came to Parliament in 1988.

I want to emphasize another partnership recognized in Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada. It was recognized for the first time at the meeting of federal and provincial agriculture ministers in Winnipeg back in early July. I am referring to the important role farm women play in the agriculture and agri–food industry. Not only do we look to them as the nourishers of the nation, but they are playing ever increasing and ever more important roles as business people, as individuals and as partners with their spouses or in businesses. They can play and will play even more roles. They bring to our attention in the department that we have to be constantly aware of safety in agriculture.

• (1240)

In Ontario a number of years ago, I had the privilege to be on a health and safety in agriculture task force for two years. At that time the necessity of our role was certainly made clear by farm women and other people involved in the industry.

We know, especially at the primary producer level, that days and nights can be long, wet, muddy or whatever, that conditions are not considered ideal. There are also bankers that would like to get the crop in the bin or to the elevator because there are bills to pay. We have to be very conscious of those concerns and the safety of everybody involved in the industry.

The role of government is changing. Canada's food inspection system is a good example. We cannot afford to have a full time permanent inspector at every factory and every processing plant for every minute. Therefore to a large extent we must rely on the industry to police itself. It too is a net beneficiary of the very high standards of food and produce quality in Canada. It has a responsibility to ensure the products and the processes it takes part in meeting the standards we set. There is also a facilitator role for the department to play.

The industry understands the high quality of our Canadian products is one of the biggest and best selling points for our domestic consumers and those abroad, and we have many of those. Our reputation for quality in Canada is money in the bank. We must make sure we can continue that.

It is a shared responsibility that is expensive to maintain. We spend a tremendous amount of money. I am not saying it is money wasted in any way, shape or form, but cost sharing arrangements are being discussed with the industry. They have worked very well in other countries. They are working very well in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Certainly those countries have very good standards as well.

We have to keep improving the inspection system and that is not cheap. For its part the department is trying to harmonize standards across the country. To our colleague from the Bloc Quebecois who spoke earlier I want to point out that one area in which we are making good progress and have co–operation is in getting rid of duplication or overlap among provinces in the Canadian food inspection system. We have a way to go yet. We can and will get rid of the duplication.

That area is of net benefit to everyone and it is necessary to continue that co–operation. We need to work more with the industry as far as research is concerned as often the result of scientific and technical breakthroughs are benefits to all Canadians.

We have goals we must reach in trade. In his comments earlier today the minister spoke about the goals we want to reach, including $20 billion in agriculture and agri–food export trade from Canada by the year 2000. We know if we are to reach that goal, I say to my colleagues and to the industry, we will have to get better at it than we are at the present time.

We need to capitalize on opportunities, new technologies, changing markets and trading agreements such as GATT, NAFTA and all the others we are involved in. That goal is there. The market is there.

The Asia–Pacific market, for example, is one that really beckons us. We know that 50 per cent of the increase in the world's wealth between now and the year 2000 will take place in the Asia–Pacific area. We also know that 50 per cent of the increase in world trade between now and the year 2000 is going to take place in that area. We know there is a booming increase in trade opportunities in Latin America and South America and we must be there. We as a department, collectively and collaboratively, need to work with all of the stakeholders and all the partners in the industry in order to take the best advantage of that. The opportunities are there so we need to work very closely.

• (1245)

In our platform during the campaign last fall we promised the creation of an agri–food council that would focus on international competitiveness. Some of my colleagues across the way will say yes, we put things in place but what are we going to do? I can assure you that these groups of people will not be put in place unless they are going to be given a mandate and that mandate is listened to and we can draw on the resources of those people.

We also said that we would be creating an agri–food trade service. We are doing that in the markets and industry services branch in order to provide a single window to get rid of duplication and get rid of red tape. Therefore, when an industry or someone in the industry wants to discuss access to federal government programs or federal government support, whether that be in research which we are encouraging as partnerships in research, or whether that be in support as far as marketing opportunities, they can do it at a single window.

Getting Ready to go Global is a $4 million program. Earlier this week I had the opportunity to join with some constituents at the Experimental Farm in Ottawa where the Indian agricultural program is working with some support from the Getting Ready to go Global program in the development of, and I hope I call it by the proper name, white Indian corn to be made into corn chips, et cetera.

The Getting Ready to go Global program is helping them to do the things that are there. It is to improve management capability, help people promote strategic alliances, apply technological solutions and develop market intelligence. We are pleased to be able to help there.

The agri–food industry marketing strategies is another one. There is the export expansion fund. I will give an example of the type of work of the agri–food industry marketing strategy. The department is providing up to $475,000 to the Quebec Agri–food Export Club in support of its international market developments. This is a club with international sales, excluding sales to the United States, of $25 million. It provides information, advice and training to its members. It supports and promotes co–operation among members in promotional activities abroad.

The department also helps agri–food exporters by collecting and disseminating trade intelligence. We have at the present time, and we will continue to emphasize this, about 85 commissioners working either full time or part time in over 100 foreign markets around the world.

For too long the Canadian agri–food industry has been content to just sell to the United States customer. Yes, it is our biggest, our closest and our easiest. However, we cannot put all our eggs in one basket, if I can use that well–worn phrase. We have to continue to look at the other areas, and we are doing that. We have to learn how to satisfy the appetites of the rest of the world. As the minister said this morning, we in North America are probably not too far away from the time when 50 per cent of the production at the farm gate will be used in some way in our society other than as a food product. There are increasing requirements for that.

The minister said as well that we have to look at the opportunities out there, whether they be domestic or abroad, and we have to produce what we can sell. We can no longer be successful trying to sell what we like to produce. We are all guilty of that. When you are in farming you kind of get into feeling that "I have always done this and I have always done that". That is what you become familiar with, but you have to roll with the punches.

• (1250)

I want to confirm the goals that the changes in this bill emphasize and offer as an opportunity. It is more than just a recognition that we have been doing these things in the department. We have been doing these things in the Government of Canada. I want to stress that better research in agriculture and agri–food will help us develop new products. Better partnerships will help us keep our standards high. In better partnerships, be that with farm women, industry, or the stakeholders, there are a lot of links in this chain and they all have to be strong and tight in order to pull.

Better partnerships will help us keep in touch with the needs within the sector. Better intelligence will keep us on top of market trends. Better promotion will increase the demand for Canadian agri–food products not only domestically but abroad. Better relations between the industry and the department will ensure that the agri–food industry continues to be the engine of prosperity for all Canadians.

In closing, I want to remind the House and everyone in Canada that the agri–food industry from the primary producer to the consumer, including the retail and the restaurant and hotel industry, employs 15 per cent of Canadian workers. It employs 1.8 million Canadians and accounts for 8 per cent of our gross domestic product. It is an important industry.

The government pledges to work even harder in order to make it even more successful and we look forward to the support of all the members in the House in doing so.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak to Bill C–49.

This bill deals with the management of the federal Department of Agriculture. As you know, Mr. Speaker, anything that impacts on agriculture is important to me as a farmer and is also important to a great number of my constituents in Kindersley—Lloydminster as agriculture is the leading industry of the riding.

In my opinion and the opinion of my caucus this House does not discuss agricultural issues nearly enough and government action is even more rare. We did see a little bit of action when cabinet was expanded the other day. We now have I believe a minister of state with responsibilities for agriculture. I guess that is well and good but the call I am hearing from the industry is not that the cabinet be expanded but that some of the issues that are near and dear to the industry be dealt with in a real, sincere and effective manner.

I heard a rather humorous description of a man who was adjusting his tie while his pants were on fire. I think that application might apply to the current minister of agriculture who gave a very eloquent speech. There was very little in it that any of us could find fault with. We all want the best for our industry. The fact is that there are a lot of problems in the industry. Until we act, our eloquence is rather hollow and rather empty.

Most reforms to the agriculture sector have one of two results. Either money is taken out of the farmers' pockets through program cuts or a department reshuffling is initiated, leading to more bureaucracy and red tape. If anything, this bill seems to fall into the second category.

Farmers have made it clear that they are ready for action on a number of very important issues. Instead, the first bill that the minister has brought to us in this session is one that opts to perform some cosmetic changes to the department, shuffles some chairs around and hires a few more inspectors. It would seem that the minister is deliberately ignoring the issues of most concern to the agri–food industry.

For instance there is widespread consensus across the prairie provinces for a producer plebiscite on barley marketing. Opinion polls, farm groups and surveys, including one that I did in my constituency, show that a vast majority of farmers support holding a producer plebiscite. In my constituency a survey indicated that 93 per cent of Canadian Wheat Board permit holders would support a plebiscite to determine how they market their barley. The strength of these numbers indicate that those on both sides of the issue are eager to resolve the question in a democratic manner.

In fact the Prime Minister before the election called for a plebiscite on this issue. Why is this minister not taking action regarding this democratic initiative? He seems more interested in rejigging his department than acting on issues of importance to farmers.

• (1255)

Another issue concerns the Canadian Wheat Board. All farmers know that the current board is out of date and unresponsive to the needs of producers. There are some elements of the western Canadian press that are sounding the demise of the wheat board. The Reformers believe that a vibrant and responsive wheat board that gives farmers choices would be preferable to eliminating the board.

Most farmers are calling for a democratized wheat board that will listen to farmers, meet their needs and change with the times. Again, this question was included in a survey in my riding. In fact 96 per cent of Canadian Wheat Board permit holders in the riding of Kindersley—Lloydminster in the survey we conducted supported democratization of the Canadian Wheat Board. In other words, take control of the wheat board out of the hands of the politicians and give it to the producers as is the case with most marketing institutions in Canada.

It seems that the minister would rather introduce housekeeping measures that have more to do with relabelling bureaucrats than accomplishing anything for farmers.

There are some very constructive things that can be done to reform the department of agriculture and will have positive results for producers.

It is my contention and that of my Reform colleagues that the purpose of funds earmarked for agriculture support should primarily be to assist agriculture producers who, through no fault of their own, find themselves financially disadvantaged.

I remind the minister of agriculture that at present there are a total of 41 different agriculture programs at the federal level, 286 more provincial programs, and 22 joint federal–provincial programs. That brings the total number to 349 separate support programs for agriculture, each one administered and accounted for separately.

The administrative cost of running so many different and often overlapping and outdated programs is rather staggering. Over $2 billion per year is spent by the minister of agriculture, of which over $700 million is spent on operating and capital costs alone. These figures do not include the $728 million spent under the Western Grain Transportation Act. I believe those figures are for the year 1992. They have been reduced somewhat since.

This appallingly high level of overhead signals mismanagement because of overmanagement. By consolidating all those federal programs and initiatives into three or four the government could save many millions of dollars and provide better support to the industry as a result.

We must expose the myth that more money spent always results in more effective programs. In the case of agriculture it is not only possible to provide better support with fewer dollars but it is essential to the long term sustainability of the industry given the bad financial shape of the government.

The government has a moral obligation to the next generation of farmers to ensure that whatever programs it has in place today will remain economically viable for tomorrow. At present with a $40 billion annual deficit this government is not living up to its moral obligation.

Reform of agriculture programs is essential because we must be able to defend the cost of agriculture support to taxpayers, consumers and future generations. Support programs that protect farmers and producers from situations beyond their control are defensible and desirable for the maintenance of the agricultural industry.

My colleagues in this House have proposed three major programs that we support. I will not review those in their entirety today but I will list them because we believe they are defensible programs. They include an actuarially sound federal–provincial producer funded crop insurance program. They also include an income stabilization program that is a whole farm program available to all sectors of the industry. The third program that we suggest would be a trade distortion adjustment program designed to compensate exporting producers as a direct countermeasure to foreign subsidies.

My colleagues and I believe that if these improved programs are targeted to those producers who need them there will be many benefits.

A couple of them I might list are support dollars that are strategically targeted to increase their effectiveness manifold. Why are we just spending money in all directions where there is not a quantifiable need? Also, by delivering support more directly to the farmer rather than through a large bureaucracy the money gets to where it is needed and it gets there faster.

• (1300)

These are just a few examples of how the minister can increase his effectiveness and the effectiveness of his department for those farmers in need of support and at the same time reduce the burden to taxpayers. These are the kinds of things the government should be doing. Simply making a few internal housekeeping changes to the department is not going to affect producers in any meaningful way.

Rather than making some of these reforms that move the agricultural industry forward the minister is content to shuffle his department around. The minister is adjusting his tie while his pants are on fire. In other words, there are serious problems in agriculture that need urgent attention and here we are in the House today debating a recycled Tory reorganization bill.

If we look at the minister's record of action we can see why farmers and producers from all across Canada are unhappy with his performance. I will list a few of the minister's non accomplishments. The minister signed the GATT agreement the way that we forecast he would during the last election campaign. He did not change a thing, contrary to the promises in the red ink book.

We recognized the decision that had to be made while the Liberals and other parties in this House were reticent to accept the fact that Reform indicated the deal would be signed more or less the way it was signed. The agriculture minister had to sign the GATT deal more or less the way it had been negotiated in spite of promises to the contrary.

Our agriculture minister bungled the grain transportation system effectiveness last year which led to a disastrous year for many producers. Producers are worried about the same thing occurring this year because very little has been done to put safeguards in the transportation system that would not allow a reoccurrence of last year's paralyzed system.

The agriculture minister is stalling on the issue of backtracking of grain from Thunder Bay. The date has been set back and we have not seen anything of substance that would indicate he is even going to meet the targets he set.

Of even more concern is that the minister of agriculture has caved in on his commitment to defend durum producers in Canada by agreeing to export quotas to the United States when all of the cards were in our deck and we were in the right and the Americans were in the wrong. Yet we caved in and handicapped our producers who were discovering a great export market for their product where the customer had cash on the barrel head to pay for the product.

Our agriculture minister has labelled Canadian farmers as criminals for wanting to export their own grain to the United States. Rather than rectifying the problem he has lashed out at the producers he is supposed to represent. Our agriculture minister has failed to reform the Canadian Wheat Board even though most farmers are calling for it. Our minister of agriculture has failed to consolidate support programs for the agricultural industry, as I mentioned earlier in my speech. He has failed to reduce the proportion of agriculture bureaucrats to farmers. I believe at this time there is one bureaucrat for every three to five farmers. It depends on where the figures come from.

This minister talks about consulting with producers. Certainly there is no one and no party more warm to the idea of consulting with people than the Reform Party. As my colleague from Moose Jaw—Lake Centre said, we have seen consultations, we have seen studies, we have seen a lot of producers and producer groups do an immeasurable amount of work in putting forward proposals that once they have come to the cabinet table get put on a shelf and nothing comes of it or the final product is far removed from what was indicated through the consultation process.

We would urge this minister to move beyond the consultation process and move into the action mode where he either acts on the judgment and wisdom of producers who have spoken in the past or in a democratic fashion allows producers to make decisions such as on the wheat board and the marketing of barley.

The minister must get around to doing something. We cannot consult forever until the industry wanes and becomes weakened over time through inaction.

In his speech the minister talked briefly about Wayne Gretzky. Of course being a hockey fan I perked up immediately when he said Wayne Gretzky said he scored because he shot the puck. My concern is that our agriculture minister is not even on the ice. If he is on the ice he has not even gone over his blue line yet. It is a concern that many producers share.

I hope the minister has listened to the suggestions that I have put forward sharply. I admit I put them forward sharply because I believe that action is required. However, they are in a spirit of constructive criticism. My desire is that the government will very soon stop putting forward administrative bills and finally act to improve the agriculture industry.

• (1305)

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could remind the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster that the minister, wherever he is on the ice, has such a slapshot that he can score from any position.

On his criticism of the minister with respect to the durum quotas I wish to remind the hon. member that the cap that has been agreed to is higher than the average of shipments to the United States over the last number of years.

My question for this member is one with respect to the Canadian Wheat Board and the criticism of the minister again as to the shipping of grain into the United States. My question is very simple. Does the member and his party support the Canadian Wheat Board and the maintenance of the Canadian Wheat Board?

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's questions.

I want to speak briefly with regard to the durum cap that he mentioned. It was either the minister of agriculture or his parliamentary secretary who talked about the fast and rapid changes in agriculture.

I agree. As I said, the minister of agriculture was very eloquent in his presentation. Who could help but applaud motherhood and apple pie? What we have seen with regard to durum exports to the United States is a rather rapid increase in those exports to the point in the last three or four years at which we have seen a great market develop which our producers were filling and being paid a good dollar for their product.

What the minister of agriculture has in effect done is cut those exports in half in a growing market that could have expanded. While the minister recognizes that there are rapid changes in agriculture, he is stifling those very positive changes. One of the few positive changes in agriculture he in effect axed and said we will go back to the average, which is half of what producers could have expected to export had the minister stood his ground, stood up to the free trade agreement that was signed with the Americans, which protected our producers and gave us access to that American market.

That is an indefensible position. As the leader of the Reform Party said, it was a cream puff move and we are appalled that the minister would put our own producers at such a disadvantage and allow or disallow them such a good market.

With regard to the Canadian Wheat Board, yes the Reform Party is on record. We campaigned in support of the Canadian Wheat Board. I have mentioned this in the House before. Times are changing. When my father was a young man and delivered his own grain he had to deliver it with horses and a wagon 20–some miles and when he got to the point of delivery, there was only one person who would buy it. That person would offer him a price in grade and dockage over which he had no bargaining position whatsoever. If he did not like the deal he had to harness his horses and drive them another day's drive back to the farm, not a good use of time in those days when one was really busy.

Today it is a different situation. It is 1994, with numerous marketing options. Our concern is that the wheat board has been hindered by politicians getting too involved. Producers are in charge of their own marketing boards in most cases, the wheat board is the odd man out.

Even the Ontario Wheat Board, which markets the wheat for Ontario producers, is controlled by producers. It is only the Canadian Wheat Board which is confined to the prairie region that is controlled by government.

If producers control that board, they will make the right decisions for producers and if they make a mistake, they will correct it very quickly. If governments make a mistake—believe me, it has made several—it will never own up to those mistakes and will harm the producers it is supposed to be protecting.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments of the hon. member on how to better enhance our agri–food industry.

Given the fact that Canada is rapidly becoming more urbanized, perhaps he would comment on some of his proposals on how a triple–E Senate would enhance farmers' representation in Parliament.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair is having a little difficulty seeing how a triple–E Senate relates to the contents of the member's speech but I am sure the hon. member can make it relevant.

• (1310)

Mr. Hermanson: Actually I have no problem, Mr. Speaker, responding to that question.

In the United States and even in Australia where there is a triple–E senate the agricultural industry has much more clout in decision making at a national or federal level.

If we look at states such as Iowa, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota where there are two elected senators representing those states, the same number as Texas, New York and California, we realize that our Senate which is appointed—and we saw the type of appointments, always patronage appointments with no responsibility to the people they are supposed to represent—certainly is not likely to be very interested in agriculture. It handicaps the more sparsely populated regions of the country which tend to be agricultural regions.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak on the debate on Bill C–49.

My colleague, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture, has spoken about the department's relationship in the agri–industry. I would like to discuss another important aspect of this bill, its recognition of agriculture and agri–food's role in research and development.

When the department of agriculture was first established the minister was given responsibility for experimental farm stations whose research concentrated on crops and livestock. Since then the role of the department has greatly expanded. The proposed legislation simply reflects today's realities.

AAFC's research efforts are still involved with crops and livestock but they have been taken far beyond the farm gate. The department is now committed to helping not just farmers but also the entire agri–food sector become more competitive here and abroad.

The department is working on non–food uses in agricultural products. For example, it is looking at new pharmaceuticals and grain based fuels like ethanol. It is also trying to develop and promote environmentally sustainable practices in agriculture and the agri–food industry such as biological pest controls.

What does this mean for the average Canadian? Let me put it in perspective. Many people do not realize that they owe their daily bread quite literally to Agriculture Canada research. Virtually all the varieties of wheat grown in this country were developed by scientists employed by the federal government of agriculture. They are constantly working to improve our plant and animal varieties and because of their work we enjoy plentiful, wholesome and certainly some of the least expensive food in the world.

Perhaps the most spectacular success story for government and universal research is that of rapeseed, known today as canola. In World War II rapeseed oil was used as a marine lubricant. Nobody thought of putting it on salad at that time. Government scientists working with universities saw the potential of rapeseed and worked to breed out the toxic elements in rapeseed and create a new strain of nutritious properties. Canola is now the most valuable single crop, worth one billion dollars a year.

The department continues to do outstanding work in plant and animal breeding. It is now exploiting some of the possibilities of new techniques in genetic engineering and biotechnology.

We have all heard of the human genome project whose goal is to identify and record every element in our DNA. On a some-

what smaller scale, our agricultural scientists are trying to decipher the DNA pattern of the common oat. AAFC's Ottawa based plant research centre is working with Quaker Oats of Canada and three American universities on this gene mapping project. Once we know what the oats are made of we can make even better ones.

In the agri–food sector innovative research is not a luxury. In a world of rapidly evolving markets technology is giving farmers and food companies new ways to meet their customers' needs. New foods and food processing techniques could stimulate economic growth and create many more jobs for Canadians.

• (1315)

The Canadian agri–food industry must remain technologically competitive. Continuing high quality research is fundamental to keeping Canada a world leader in agriculture and agri–food.

AAFC is managing to maintain a strong R and D capability even in the face of budgetary restraint. Increasing the government's budget for agri–food R and D may not be possible, but at least we can keep what we have.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food has made it clear that his strong commitment is to research. However, we need to reallocate some of the funding. To do this, AAFC intends to reduce costs and spend smarter. It will ensure that research priorities are driven by market opportunities, in other words, by doing research that pays.

A good example of this is sunola, a hardy miniature sunflower developed by the Saskatoon Research Centre. Royalties from certified seed sales will go back to the station's budget and it will form more joint ventures with the private sector. The department is working to ensure its research meets market needs. Input from industry helps the research branch set its priorities. Government scientists are encouraged to attend market focus workshops. At one of these events last year AAFC's research branch, eastern region, unveiled 13 potential new technologies; of these 11 were judged to have great market potential.

The agri–food industry has become an increasingly active partner in research since Treasury Board allowed the department to take outside money, including financial support, retention of revenues and royalties. Industry investment in federal government agri–food research has been moved up from $5 billion in 1989 to approximately $18 billion today.

During the past year the department has run a pilot project called the matching investment initiative. The department matched every dollar the private sector was willing to put into agri–food research. Two million dollars in federal funding was put into this pilot project this year and this amount could grow substantially in coming years.

Obviously the industry would not make this kind of investment unless it thought research well worth while. When the results come in, the department does not have to waste its time looking for a buyer, because the results are pre–sold. That is why public–private joint ventures can turn theoretical knowledge into practical applications, and much more quickly and easily.

Agri–food research brings many kinds of benefits. Scientific breakthroughs in our laboratories not only add to the store of human knowledge but also help to raise our standard of living both economically and environmentally.

Consider the case of ethanol. It could be a miracle fuel of the 21st century. It is based on a renewable resource, our surplus grain stocks, and it is cleaner burning than conventional gasoline thus less harmful to the environment. Ethanol and other biomass fuels could be the nucleus of a whole new industry and a tremendous economic boost for rural Canada. AAFC scientists are helping to make this happen. Some day, thanks to them, we may export both ethanol and ethanol technology to an energy hungry world.

This is not a fantasy. There are promising projects in biotechnology under way right now in AAFC's research labs that would have been dismissed a few years back as science fiction.

Would you believe that our molecule biologists are working on a natural sweetener called stevioside that is 300 times more powerful than sugar? That AAFC's scientists are using discarded crab shells to create a truly biodegradable packing material? Genetically engineered enzymes from the stomachs of cows may be used some day instead of toxic chlorine for bleaching fabrics and paper. Not to mention the custom–made micro–organisms that AAFC is introducing for the use as natural insecticides and fertilizers.

• (1320)

Experience has shown that agriculture R and D is one of the best investments we can make. A number of studies done in Canada have shown that return on investment in agri–food research can exceed 50 per cent. Findings in the U.S. show similar high rates of return. It is an engine of growth in every sense and we must take advantage of that opportunity.

With the help of our partners in the private sector we should capitalize on many more such opportunities in the future.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I would love to ask a question about the Senate but I will refrain.

The hon. member talked extensively about research and it is an issue that is important to discuss. We also have to talk about how to fund research. Quite often the check–off system is used as a mechanism to garner funds for research.

I would like to get the hon. member's opinion on whether check–offs should be voluntary or whether they should be involuntary. Does he support the concept of how the levels for check–offs should be determined, and how they could enhance the funding for research in agriculture?

Mr. Pickard: Mr. Speaker, it truly is important to realize how research has affected the agricultural industry over the years. Over the past 40 years every dollar spent on R and D has returned many more dollars.

At the ag committee hearings just yesterday Professor McEwen of the University of Guelph gave some really interesting observations on research and development.

We have doubled the production per cow in the milk industry. We produce about the same amount of milk that we did 40 years ago with half the number of cows. In the pork industry we produce 80 per cent more lean pork than 40 years ago using far less feed. In the 1950s it required three kilograms of feed to produce a dozen eggs. Today 1.5 kilograms can do the same job. In Prince Edward Island 40 years ago an acre of land produced some 200 bushels of potatoes. Today farmers would consider it disastrous if they did not get 500 bushels per acre. That shows the importance of R and D.

Where do we go with R and D expenditures and how do we bring those forward? It was a very innovative and a very strong move on behalf of the government to open the unique venture between business and government in order to fund research and development. In that way we can spend smart as was suggested by the minister. We have to use joint ventures in order to establish what the industry wishes to engage in, how they wish to move along the research and development, and where we wish to be in the future.

If industry sees research projects as very vital and worth while it will be willing to fund part of that effort. Therefore the major direction of funding in the future will be joint ventures between government and industry in order to move our research and development forward.

I really believe that new innovations, new initiatives in research and development are very critical to our country. Therefore in answering I would suggest that the way to fund research and development and to move it forward is for industry and government to move in the same direction with the same agendas in trying to accomplish the same goals.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if I did not phrase my question clearly enough or perhaps the member was not listening. Maybe I should have asked a question about the Senate.

• (1325)

My question to the member on the other side was specifically about raising funding for research through check–offs. Maybe the member does not know what a check–off is. It is where you take a percentage of the receipts of an agricultural product, such as so many cents a tonne on wheat or so many cents a litre on milk or whatever and you then designate that funding for research.

My question was whether or not he supported the use of check–offs to raise funding for research. If so, how should that be administered? What should the levels be? Should those check–offs be voluntary or involuntary? In other words, should producers be required to participate in a check–off program or should they have the option of participating?

Mr. Pickard: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to expand the viewpoint of the House leader. He seems to be in a very narrow position on research and development.

I would support a voluntary check–off system where the industry puts in money. It has the opportunity to participate or not in the check–off system. I do not have a problem with that. However, it is very important to realize that research has a very broad base and is certainly not just restricted to commodity groups but also many other sources in the country in order to develop science, technology, research or whatever in the future.

I tried to point out how far Canada has gone in research. We as a nation should be very proud of where we have gone and where we are today. Our research is certainly above and beyond that of most countries of the world. We can sell that technology to other countries. We have done very well. If we consider from where we have come with wheat and the developments we have made, we are a very fortunate nation.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair is in a difficult position because the member began speaking at 1.10 p.m, and clearly his time would end at 1.30 p.m. I would like all members to be aware of the fact that if questions go back and forth for another three minutes the question will not be put today.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, just a short question. If the member cannot answer the question about check–offs, I wonder what his opinion is of the triple–E Senate and how it would help the agricultural industry?

Mr. Pickard: Mr. Speaker, I think members of the Reform Party have a major problem today in paying attention to what is being debated. They seem intent on keeping the question of a triple–E Senate in front of agriculture. It is really a questionable approach to take in the House.

However, I believe that the problem is not with the government. The problem is with the opposition. Many times I have seen the press point out how ineffective it is. That ineffectiveness is showing right now.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 1.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should regulate the testing, under Sections 11(1) and (3) of the Immigration Act, of all applicants for immigration to Canada for H.I.V., and that a positive result of an H.I.V. screening be included, under the terms of Section 19(1) of the Immigration Act, as grounds for the inadmissibility to Canada of the applicant for landing.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House and address my hon. colleagues to argue this issue, although I do not think there is much of an argument in this case.

This motion to require the regulation of HIV testing for all applicants for immigration and the barring of those who test positive for HIV and AIDS from immigration to Canada is really only common sense. However, often common sense gets lost where immigration is concerned.

Let me briefly provide some background on this issue so that all members of this House can understand the importance of this issue and the importance of passing this motion. I do not need to tell anyone in this House that HIV and AIDS, and I use those terms interchangeably for obvious reasons, is a plague whose potential for death while having been intolerable and heartbreaking has yet to reach its terrible potential.

Thousands of Canadians have been afflicted with this condition. Thousands more may be. As tragic and devastating as this disease has been in Canada, AIDS in Canada has not reached the terrible scope that it has in many other nations, primarily developing nations around the world. There are nations in Africa where estimates put the rate of HIV infection at 20 per cent or more. That is a statistic that should sadden and terrify us all.

There is no question that the prevention of AIDS has been a priority for Canadians. We have engaged in education campaigns, campaigns to clean up our blood supply, efforts to prevent those with the disease from spreading it any further. However, there is one area of control, an obvious area, that no government has made an effort to enforce, in immigration.

The Immigration Act is clear on a couple of points. First, the protection of Canadian health and safety must be the priority of our policy. Second, anyone who suffers from a condition that would place an excess demand on our social or health services should be considered inadmissible to Canada. The language in the Immigration Act is as simple and straightforward as that.

In order to fulfil the mandate of the Immigration Act the immigration department conducts routine testing of all immigrants and refugees who apply for landing in Canada. To the credit of our immigration medical regulations it is a rigorous test. Here are a few of the things that we currently test for: tuberculosis, hepatitis, diabetes, debilitating physical conditions and even syphilis. Sexually transmitted diseases are currently tested for. Those who have them are screened out with the exception of the most dangerous of all sexually transmitted diseases, the one transmitted disease that is 100 per cent fatal, AIDS.

Why? That is a good question. I have asked that question on many occasions. Here are some of the answers I have received from the department and from the minister. I have been told by high ranking members of the immigration department that HIV–AIDS is not a contagious disease.

I am not kidding. They have told me that AIDS is not contagious. Of course they went on to explain that in their terms contagious means something that you can catch in the air from someone's breath or from a touch. Apparently you cannot contract AIDS in those fashions but everyone knows that AIDS is a highly communicable disease. To say that we need not test immigrants for HIV because it is not contagious is either the height of semantic stupidity or is political correctness that could cost hundreds if not thousands of lives and untold millions of dollars.

• (1335)

I have asked the minister if his government advocates the testing of immigrants for AIDS. He told me that the discretion for testing and recommending inadmissibility lies with the doctors overseas.

He said that if doctors detect traces of AIDS then they can, if they want to, recommend that someone not be allowed into Canada. I am not sure what traces of AIDS means. I suspect that the minister meant symptoms.

Needless to say, there are no symptoms of HIV. There is no way other than through a quick, cheap and easy to administer blood test to determine whether someone is infected. I said cheap in my last statement because several people have approached me asking how much this will cost. The answer is not much, from what I understand.

The AIDS test is one of the most routinely performed of all blood screenings. Blood screenings are already performed on all immigrants and the cost of including the HIV screening would be negligible. Even if it were a significant cost, so what? We are literally talking about life and death.

Should someone come to Canada infected with HIV, we the taxpayers are looking at a minimum cost of $200,000. That is a minimum cost to treat each patient until death. That is a cost we cannot bear.

The risk of admitting immigrants with HIV who likely do not even know that they are infected is one we cannot tolerate. I have asked immigration officials who are currently working on a new set of immigration medical inadmissability guidelines if HIV infection will be reason enough to declare someone inadmissible if we somehow find out that they have the disease. The answer was no.

They told me the same sort of logic which only some bureaucrats are capable of that the new guidelines use a five year window of medical service consumption. If an immigrant is not expected to use more than the average of medical services within five years of coming to Canada, then they are admitted.

Thus, HIV is not on the list because someone with HIV could remain relatively healthy for up to five years despite the fact that after five years, whenever AIDS kicks in—it undoubtedly will—the costs will be enormous and the risk before that time of transmission is great.

Also, now that doctors around the world have recognized the existence of HIV–2, a new strain of the disease that often takes much longer than five years to develop into full blown AIDS, there is even more reason to conclude that the five year cost guidelines the ministry has come up with do not make sense, not for this disease. That is precisely why we need the government to take specific action on this specific disease.

Canada is currently not testing for HIV because one, it is not contagious; two, doctors need to look for symptoms even though there are not any; and three, it is not expensive to treat. That is the logic coming out of the immigration system currently.

Clearly we need to jump start the immigration department into exercising a little logic in looking after the best interests of Canadians. This motion, when implemented into the immigration regulations, will provide that jump start.

I simply do not understand why this government has held out on the implementation of this measure but on my cynical days I think there may be some special interests that have the ears of this minister and previous ministers of immigration and that have nixed this common sense measure.

In case my colleagues on either side of this House think that voting for this motion would cost them votes or would raise the ire of a significant number of people, let me reassure members that it will not.

Let me also assure members that voting against this measure would cost votes. Allow me to provide some evidence to back this up. The immigration association conducted a poll over the summer.

• (1340)

One of the questions that was asked of over 1,000 people nationwide was whether they think people with incurable, contagious diseases should be permitted to immigrate into Canada. The result was 77 per cent of the respondents said they should not. Anecdotally, a radio station poll was conducted in Calgary just before the summer asking the same question. This time it was dramatic, if unscientific. Ninety–four per cent said that those with HIV should not be permitted to immigrate into Canada.

When was the last time any issue received this kind of consensus? That is the point. There is consensus on this issue. Granted, I have received letters from one or two individuals with a radical agenda who opposed my calls for HIV testing. That means little when compared with these numbers.

I can assure my hon. colleagues this is a consensus issue. Canadians were shocked when I brought to light the fact that immigrants are not screened for AIDS. Now that they know, they do support the necessary changes.

However, there is more to this than simply acting on the will of the Canadian people. Of course, that is a significant reason in itself for us to act. There is also the matter of doing what is best, doing what is right and doing what makes sense.

Canadians, including the members of this House, want AIDS eliminated in Canada. There is no one who does not want to see this plague eliminated. Given that, why are we not taking the most basic, the most proactive, the most obvious measure possible to move ourselves down the road to doing away with AIDS in Canada, preventing those who carry this disease from coming into Canada?

It boggles the imagination. I do not know how many of my constituents and citizens all over the country have written to me or have personally asked me how we could as a nation be so stupid as to not test immigrants for HIV and screen them out. My answer has been that I do not know.

Why are we not doing it when virtually every other nation on earth is doing it, when countries like the United States have gone so far as to prevent those who admit to having the disease from even entering the country as visitors?

Let me note this is not the intent of my motion. There is no way to screen visitors for HIV. Nor would it be feasible to

consider doing so. This motion would only affect those who make an application either through the immigration or refugee streams for permanent landing in Canada to become permanent residents.

Let me speak a moment about the humanity of this motion. I have been criticized by one or two of my colleagues on the opposite side of the House for not being humanitarian, for not being sympathetic to the cause of those who want to immigrate into Canada and who carry HIV.

Refusing immigration to Canada to anyone for any reason is not a pleasant task. Canada is the greatest nation on earth and one of the most desired of destinations for those who seek a new and better life in another land.

For these reasons Canada receives more applications for immigration than we can accept, even though we are accepting far too many. Canada must say no to some. There is no way around that. We cannot take everyone who applies. Given this fact, we as Canadians and as a government have some hard choices to make.

We have to devise rules that will screen out some and allow residency to others. In order to write good rules, in order to devise a just and appropriate screening process we must establish priorities.

In my mind the priority that should overshadow all others is the protection of those who have already been admitted to Canada, or were born in Canada. There is no other way. We would be doing a grave injustice to our electorate if we were to hold any priority above its protection and the protection of the services that government administers for it.

• (1345)

When some people apply for immigration to Canada who have a disease that not only threatens the safety of Canadians but is guaranteed to place a burden on our already crumbling health care system that is nothing short of massive, we have no choice but to conclude that the acceptance in Canada of these people poses a serious safety and cost threat to Canadians. Such immigrants must be excluded so that a place can be opened up for someone else.

Canada has no moral burden to accept everyone who applies to come to the country. We only have a burden to provide a good home for those whom we accept.

We as legislators have a duty to ensure that only the best, only the most fit and only the most productive come to the country as immigrants. We have a duty to protect our constituents. We have a duty to enforce the preamble of the Immigration Act which charges us to protect the health, safety and good order of Canadian society.

Immigration policy of late has failed in that duty. People have become disillusioned with immigration policy and with the people who implement it. They do not think that the right people are being allowed in and they see too many examples of good people being excluded. That has to change.

The motion is a small step in restoring some legitimacy to the immigration program in Canada. This is a small step toward convincing Canadian people that their protection is really our top priority. This is a small step toward making the immigration program make sense.

Let us take that step. Let us pass the motion in a non–partisan manner and improve immigration. In the process let us take another step that is just as, if not more, important toward preventing the spread of AIDS in Canada.

When implemented the motion would be a significant step in the war on AIDS. No one loses. Everyone gains. The people of Canada gain increased safety and a lowering of the burden on our medical system. Legislators gain by voting yes on an overwhelmingly popular initiative. The government gains by being handed an order of the House to move on something that is long overdue. Immigrants gain by having the status of their health thoroughly checked.

It is a hard decision to bar someone on medical grounds from coming to Canada as an immigrant, but so many people infected with this disease do not know that they are infected with the disease. While we will stop them from coming to Canada as immigrants, at the same time we could very well be providing an invaluable test and invaluable information to hundreds or thousands of people who may not know they are infected.

We are not doing a disservice to those who are infected since their fate, I am afraid, is certain. However we could unintentionally be doing a service to those who are infected but do not know it.

Finally, regulation is long overdue. It should be passed and it must be passed. There is no good reason for it not to be passed. It should not matter that the motion originated on this side of the House. Just let it pass and we will know we have done our job for the day and have taken a significant step forward in the protection of our citizens and the rationalization of Canada's embattled immigration program.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it is clear from our discussions that there are still a number of misconceptions regarding persons who are HIV positive or have AIDS. Despite extensive efforts at public education it is clear that prejudices about this terrible disease and the virus associated with it remain entrenched. The motion before us reflects somewhat this unfortunate attitude.

Although I do not—and I want to make it very clear—question my hon. colleague's intentions, I do wonder if the motion is not based on certain mistaken and preconceived ideas. I would like to point out that it is incorrectly assumed by many that a positive result on an HIV test means that someone has AIDS. It

is also incorrectly assumed that AIDS can be transmitted by simple contact. What is even worse, it is sometimes incorrectly assumed that someone who is HIV positive has no further contribution to make to society. We all know that these ideas are false. Nevertheless they unfortunately continue to influence certain public perceptions.

• (1350)

Misperceptions about diseases, disabilities and afflictions are not new to Canada. All we have to do to find evidence of this is to examine the Immigration Act of 1952. If we examine it we will see that the question of obligatory HIV screening of immigration applicants has certain historical parallels.

Back in 1952 protecting public health and safety was a key objective of legislators concerned with immigration to Canada as it is today. This was before Canada adopted a system of universal health insurance. The issue at hand was not a concern over an excessive burden on the health care system. Nevertheless the act listed various diseases and deficiencies that in themselves constituted sufficient grounds to deny someone admission to Canada.

The act is far from subtle. It reflected the common prejudices of the time. It denied admission to Canada "to idiots, imbeciles and the feeble–minded, epileptics, lunatics and individuals who are mute, blind or otherwise deficient from a physical point of view". It denied access to Canada of "immigrants who are dumb, blind or otherwise physically defective". Attitudes about disabilities were different back then.

In 1952 they did not consider an individual's capacity to live normally with a medical condition. They did not consider the possibility of calling on medical science to control a medical condition.

Epilepsy, for example, was considered a ground for exclusion even when it was controlled. When a new Immigration Act was proclaimed in 1978 it offered, thank goodness, considerable progress over the old act, especially with respect to medical grounds for exclusion.

Two important changes were made. First, the criterion of excessive demand was added. This measure was intended to protect the universal health insurance system that had been created nine years earlier. It was designed to protect the system from becoming overrun by people who had not paid into the system.

Second, the list of illnesses and deficiencies that automatically made a person ineligible was eliminated. Inadmissibility was now decided by medical officers. These doctors now decided whether a person's condition represented a threat to public health or whether their condition would present an excessive demand on health or social services. For example, people with epilepsy could now be admitted to Canada if their condition was controllable.

We have made much progress since 1952 and I believe we should continue to progress. Unfortunately it is my belief that the motion before us today would take us back to the attitudes that prevailed in 1952.

The motion before us would specifically make a positive HIV test grounds for inadmissibility to Canada. This denies the progress in attitude toward diseases that has been made over the years. It denies the progress in medical attitudes and practice that has also changed. Above all, it denies the progress in our approach to AIDS that has also evolved.

Our laws and our institutions must reflect this progress. As legislators we must take care to dispassionately analyse and reflect on issues that are too often fraught with prejudice and discrimination.

As dedicated legislators we must take pains to avoid imposing our value judgments on others. We must take care to resist ill informed and preconceived ideas. We must be very careful to avoid being stampeded into adopting a policy that is more based on fear than it is on fact.

I want to make our position very clear. The facts are unambiguous. People who have tested positive for HIV can live for many years without developing AIDS. AIDS is not a disease that can be transmitted by simple contact. People who are HIV positive can make a significant contribution to our society. Many of us have worked relentlessly to destroy the myths surrounding AIDS. Any decision that marks a step backward threatens to compromise the considerable progress we have made over the past few years.

Our decision on this important issue has the potential to critically damage our international reputation for openness, fairness and justice. We must avoid this at all cost.

• (1355)

At the same time I appreciate the concern expressed about not imposing an excessive burden on our country's social and health services. This is a priority for the department of immigration and for the minister.

I am confident we can arrive at a decision that is both fair and economical. That is why the government is reviewing the extensive information we have on HIV. We will be announcing our decision soon.

I am sure my hon. colleague agrees this issue deserves our careful attention. The last time the medical provisions of the Immigration Act were reviewed was in 1978. That is why we are not about to rush into a hasty, ill conceived decision on this matter. We are devoting considerable care and attention to medical inadmissibility issues once again.

I assure the hon. member that our decisions will appropriately reflect the health care system, social justice and economic matters that concern us today. I know the hon. member, with his very great concern in this area, would not want us to act hastily. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, the House and the hon. member that we will not.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate on motion M–285 requesting mandatory HIV screening for immigrants and prescribed classes of visitors.

Section 11 of the Immigration Act states that every immigrant and every visitor of a prescribed class shall undergo a medical examination. The medical examination required under Section 11(1) is defined in Section 11 as including a mental examination, a physical examination as well as a medical assessment of records respecting the immigrant or visitor.

Section 19 lists the classes of inadmissible persons, from terrorists and war criminals to persons convicted of an offence committed in Canada or outside Canada and so on.

In its present form, the motion tabled by my colleague the Reform Party member for Calgary Northeast therefore intends to bar entry to immigrants and visitors who are HIV–positive or have AIDS. In his opinion, this medical condition should be listed in Section 19 of the Immigration Act.

The minister of immigration has already stated that it was currently possible for Canada to disqualify applicants who are H.I.V. positive or have AIDS. In 1993, 54 applications were rejected on those grounds. A medical officer needs only suspect such a condition for an AIDS test to be performed. If the diagnosis is positive, then two medical officers must agree to recommend that the application be rejected by government.

The minister told the press that the reason for refusing in such cases is not the danger for public health but the financial burden it would impose on Canada's health care system. This provision would also be used to refuse admission to people with other diseases that require very costly medical care, like some cancers, kidney or heart diseases.

The minister himself also pointed out that it would be important to ensure the reliability of tests in different countries before making the tests compulsory. As for refugee claimants, who must undergo a medical examination within 60 days of arriving in Canada, the minister surely considers it a sensitive issue, because he said that on one hand there are medical considerations and on the other a real fear of persecution.

• (1400)

This issue is also tied to human rights. The Department of Justice should look at this aspect of the issue before making a final decision on this.

Immigrant selection based on AIDS screening is a matter for public debate. One of the arguments put forward in this debate is that excluding HIV–positive immigrants would limit transmission of the virus and reduce health–care costs associated with the treatment of immigrants with AIDS.

To determine whether a specific minority of immigrants constitutes a financial burden on the public health–care system, we must look beyond the costs related to a particular disease. The economic burden for a given disease must be compared with that for other existing diseases on the basis of which immigrants are selected or rejected. This, of course, for the purpose of developing an immigration policy that is sensible, fair and, above all, free from any hint of discrimination.

A group of researchers at the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law in Montreal recently published a study comparing the cost of treating AIDS patients and the cost of treating coronary disease. In their study, the researchers used a model to project costs directly attributable to AIDS and coronary disease over the ten–year period following the arrival of immigrants who entered Canada in 1988.

The model has three components: first, estimating the cost of screening immigrants for AIDS; second, estimating the cost of treating immigrants with AIDS; and third, estimating the cost of treating immigrants suffering from coronary disease.

The results of the study may come as a surprise to some people. It is estimated that after ten years, the total direct cost of HIV–related health care would be $18.5 million. Over the same ten–year period, the total cost of treating immigrants suffering from coronary disease would be $21.6 million.

[*English*]

There is no effective screening method for detecting an increasing risk of developing clinical coronary heart disease. However, excluding all immigrants over the age of 50 years old would potentially save $14 million of the expected $21.6 million in cost attributable to coronary heart disease.

With regard to the reliability of the testing itself, we know it is not 100 per cent sure. In fact, three consecutive tests are needed to confirm positive HIV infection in a person. This process, time consuming and costly, will fail to detect close to 10 per cent of HIV carriers.

The study I am talking about assumed the testing to be done in Canada so that the false results could be reduced. How could the Canadian government possibly control the quality of testing in other countries? A similar problem produced itself in 1981 when

costly testing for intestinal parasites in prospective immigrants were abolished partly because of the inability to control the quality of testing in overseas laboratories.

All of these facts speak clearly against the introduction of AIDS testing of prospective immigrants and refugees. I have not even spoken about ethical considerations, which would seem just as important in the discussion. After all, applying a criterion for one disease and not for another is simply discriminatory. Testing for AIDS would also reinforce stereotyping and discrimination for prospective immigrants or refugees, whether it be in this country or the country they would be forced to return to.

• (1405)

The spreading of AIDS must not be labelled as originating from visitors or new residents to this country, but must rather be seen in its global context. In other words, if the Canadian government were to impose obligatory AIDS testing, how could it justify not spending an equal amount of tax dollars on educational programs aimed at preventing the spreading of this disease? Prevention is the only way to control AIDS, which is surely better than spending millions on a testing which gives absolutely no concrete results.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons, the Bloc Quebecois will vote against this motion.

[*English*]

For all these reasons the Bloc Quebecois will vote against this motion.

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, thank you for your kind consideration. I am pleased to debate the private member's motion put forward by the member for Calgary Northeast which in essence asks the government to make it mandatory to test applicants for immigration to Canada for the AIDS virus, also known as HIV.

Because of its severity, its infectious pandemic nature, the lack of a preventive vaccine and an effective treatment, AIDS had in the past engendered a great deal of fear among the general public, employers, insurance companies, schools and even health care workers.

Today the very mention of the term AIDS which once struck fear into the hearts of almost all still frightens some. Fear can elicit two opposite behaviours. It can compel one to take preventive measures, which is laudable, or it can drive out the compassion one would normally feel for those living with the disease, which would be a tragedy.

Fear of AIDS was often based on misunderstanding or misinformation. But as research adds to our knowledge and understanding of HIV and as public education dispels the myths which surround it, much of that fear has now subsided. Compassion for the patients and the victims of the virus has returned. I am therefore concerned that the motion before us and the action it proposes play upon the unfounded fears of the past.

The motion could resurrect public misunderstanding about HIV and cause undue panic and unnecessary suffering without serving any public health good. This misunderstanding could be directed toward immigrants even though immigrants now in Canada are no more likely to test positive for HIV than are Canadians born in this country.

I am concerned that we might unwittingly or wittingly stir up resentment against immigrants without achieving any benefit to public health and safety or to our health care system. We need to keep things in perspective.

Medical experts do not consider HIV to be a threat to public health or safety in the same way tuberculosis is or smallpox once was. I have more reason to fear being in the same room with someone who has a common cold virus than I do being near someone who is HIV positive.

HIV cannot be transmitted through casual contact as a cold can be. Even close contact as happens with health care workers and their patients is a very low risk activity. I certainly will not be infected by a chance contact with an immigrant or foreign visitor who has HIV.

Canada's public education campaign has been successful. I would like to think that the times when innocent children born with HIV were barred from schools are far behind us.

The private member's motion now before us which calls for mandatory testing of immigrants for HIV and the automatic inadmissibility for those who test positive is truly a regressive move. This motion would be a throwback to those dark days of the early eighties when our understanding of AIDS was still in its infancy.

• (1410)

Does the action the member proposes make more sense than barring those living with HIV from schools, from the workplace, from public transportation? Does the action make more sense than simply testing the 28 million citizens of Canada today? I submit it does not.

If the entrance of HIV positive individuals into Canada would pose a threat to Canadians, would the member then take the next step and propose mandatory testing as part of the criteria for obtaining a visitor's visa to the country? What of the open border that separates the United States from Canada? Is the member also proposing HIV testing at the United States–Canada border starting today?

Is the member willing to go on record today as suggesting that all those who enter Canada, including pilots on every return trip, diplomats, tourists, returning Canadians, will need to obtain an HIV clearance card first? Has the member considered the

consequences of false positive screening tests in which healthy individuals without the virus have been deemed possessing it? Has the member imagined the emotional toll this would take on those healthy individuals?

What about false negative tests in which actually infected individuals show negative test results because of the lag period it takes to develop the antibodies? Has the member imagined the false sense of security that would result from this situation?

I wonder if the member has imagined the enormous cost it would entail to test everyone. This is a member of the party that pontificates daily in this House about cutting government costs. Has the hon. member imagined the message we would be sending our tourists and the international community if this motion were to be adopted?

If the member's chief motive is to protect the health and safety of Canadians his proposed course of action would fall flat because it is not based on knowledge of how HIV is transmitted from person to person. If the motive behind this motion is to prevent unnecessary strain on our health care system, the hon. member should recognize that this should be viewed in the light of our overall medical admissibility criteria that already exists.

We would have to ask one fundamental question: Are people carrying the AIDS virus but without the disease not different from those suffering from the disease or any other chronic health condition in relation to cost to the health care system? There is a mountain of difference.

This government is not dismissing the concerns Canadians have about AIDS, its virus or HIV testing of applicants for immigration. It is addressing them in the most constructive and progressive way possible, by conducting a thorough review of all medical testing for applicants for immigration with the benefit of the best expert advice and consultations. When that review is complete the government will take whatever action is necessary to protect the health and safety of Canadians and to preserve the integrity of our health care system.

However, until the review is complete any action of the sort proposed by the hon. member would be premature and unwarranted. Unfounded debate and an uninformed decision by this House would merely foster the kind of misunderstanding and fear about HIV that we should be working to overcome. We must refuse to assist wittingly or unwittingly in perpetrating the myths and fears that too often harden people's hearts and make outcasts of those who most need our human compassion and understanding. We should formulate public policy based on fact not fear, on evidence not speculation, on reason not political propaganda.

I know the hon. member opposite who introduced this motion would like to share the sentiment of this government and that of this member for Winnipeg North.

In conclusion, I would request that the member in all sincerity withdraw his motion until such time as we have all the scientific evidence we need to make a reasoned public health policy that Canadians want.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell this House about one of my heroes. This hero is Joseph Lister. Joseph Lister was the founder of antiseptic surgery and a pioneer in preventive medicine. He was a surgeon of some note in Edinburgh. Lister noted that in his surgical suite 50 per cent of the people on whom he performed amputations died. They passed on of an illness called sepsis. Sepsis was something that Lister did not understand.

• (1415)

Lister noted that carbolic acid seemed to make a difference in the cleanliness of the wound after he was done. That carbolic acid and Lister's thoughts about microbes, the brand new microscope that was just available and Louis Pasteur's work on pasteurization went together to form the basis of scientific medicine.

In a very short period of time in his life, the mortality from amputations went from 45 to 50 per cent down to 5 per cent. It is very interesting that Lister had his thoughts and ideas denigrated by much of the medical community when he first presented them.

This surgeon who is now looked on as the benchmark of surgical treatment was laughed at. During his lifetime he was able to see matters change and he became the founder of modern antiseptic surgery.

I also would like to say that modern medicine can be criticized. Modern medicine has had an effect on another type of mortality, infant mortality. Statistics show that in 1930 in Canada 89 of 1,000 babies died. In 1991 but six of 1,000 babies died.

The reason I brought this up is that modern medicine undergoes evolution and change. Thought processes alter and move. I have listened today to rather eloquent arguments for how we should ignore medical information. I stand here to say that we do so at our peril.

My good associate for Calgary Northeast believes that immigrants with AIDS should be inadmissible to Canada. I want to talk about the other medical reasons we do not admit immigrants to Canada.

I am going to compare the diseases that we do not allow people in for to HIV. One is venereal disease, which is discovered by a blood test. It is not contagious. It is infectious by sexual contact. It is treatable and is seldom fatal if treated. It is

not visible except in advanced stages. It is cheap to treat with two medicines, amoxicyllin and probenecid. But you do not come into Canada if you have VD.

Another disease is hepatitis. It is found by a blood test. It is infectious by blood to blood contact. That is, the nurse who happens to be pricked in the finger when she has taken blood from a person with hepatitis can get hepatitis. It is not visible unless the person is jaundiced or yellow. It can be fatal in some cases. It is difficult to treat at moderate cost.

Another disease is tuberculosis. It is discovered by a Mantoux test or a scratch on the skin. It is infectious. In the true sense of word it is contagious by cough or sputum. It is treatable, rarely fatal. It is fairly inexpensive to treat as well.

• (1420)

If an immigrant has any one of these diseases he or she is inadmissible. I am sorry, they cannot be admitted to Canada. What other diseases would cause denial of entry into Canada? Parasites, leprosy, and the list goes on.

I would like to quote the parliamentary secretary to the minister from *Hansard* some time ago. This is an interesting quotation on the same subject. "I also want to talk about something the hon. member raised with regard to the fact that people coming into Canada are not tested for HIV and that the minister promised to do something about it four weeks ago. The hon. member should know—I thought he knew, maybe he does not know that the enabling legislation and regulation on medical matters under this department's aegis has remained unchanged for 40 years". She went on to say: "There should not be precipitous moves on an issue like this. Be careful. Go at it slowly. Do not move quickly".

In my view if this member had not brought this issue forward it probably would have been hidden under another 40 years of deadwood and backwoods thinking.

Where is HIV if we compare it to the other illnesses that do not allow people to enter Canada? How does it stack up in terms of the criteria I mentioned before? It is found by a blood test. It is contagious by blood to blood contact. Notice that I said blood to blood contact. It is not visible except in very advanced cases. It is fatal and has no cure. It is very expensive to treat. Various comments have been made here today about the cost. The best estimates I have are costs that range between $50,000 and $250,000 for an individual who has the disease advanced enough to require direct medical care.

How much does venereal disease cost to treat? About $25 for the test, $50 for the medicine, $100 for a doctor's visit, $25 for a retest, $50 for the clinic and the pharmacy, in total about $250. TB is estimated at $1,105. Not a good comparison there.

Why is HIV different from other diseases? I want to be very frank about this. HIV is different because the medical issue has been pushed aside by the human rights issue. This disease is not being treated strictly as a medical issue, it is being treated as a human rights issue.

When the disease was first discovered medical people called it gay men's disease. Why? Because it was discovered to be primarily a disease of gay men. There was an outcry that would not allow the medical profession to call it what it was. Change the name. As the disease became better known and better understood it was found to be more common in the Haitian community. There was an outcry from the Haitian community. "You cannot discriminate against the Haitian community because it is more common in our citizens. You cannot mention that". But medical practitioners must mention that. How could they hide their heads in the sand and say that it does not exist?

We know that intravenous drug users often end up with HIV. We know that the sad and sorry hemophiliacs who must have blood products given to them often end up with the disease. We know that those poor unfortunates who contact it in surgery and other blood to blood contact also get the disease.

Lister would have looked at this issue and thought that Canadians had gone mad. We understand the source. We understand the mechanism. We understand the diagnosis. We know the cost and we know the risk.

• (1425)

I have treated people for illness all my adult life. Common sense tells me to deny entrance to those who have the other diseases. Common sense tells me to deny entrance to Canada for those who have AIDS.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House today says that the Immigration Act should require all prospective immigrants to be tested for HIV and include a positive result as grounds for inadmissibility.

The motion seems quite straightforward, but it raises a multitude of questions, and as we analyze these questions, the subject becomes very complex indeed. The first question is why in some cases, as you know, we already screen prospective immigrants for HIV, in accordance with existing guidelines. Applicants who test positive may be considered inadmissible on medical grounds. We must therefore ask ourselves why our current practice is not acceptable, if such is the case.

At the very least, we should take a good look at the current policy on inadmissibility on medical grounds. By law, all immigrants and certain visitors shall produce their medical records and undergo a medical examination. The legislation does not list diseases that justify inadmissibility on medical grounds. The simple fact of having a disease does not in itself constitute grounds for refusal under the Act.

Grounds for refusal tend to be based on the consequences, that admitting an individual would have on Canada, whatever the nature of his medical problems.

[*English*]

The act requires medical officers to determine inadmissible those applicants who would likely pose a threat to public health or safety or create excessive demands on Canada's health or social services.

While there is much that we do not know or understand about HIV, expert medical opinion does agree on one thing: A person with HIV does not represent a threat to public health or safety merely because of the infection. I would hope that most Canadians understand by now that one does not get HIV or AIDS just by being around someone who tests HIV positive.

Refusing admission to applicants with HIV would have to be based on any excessive demand they might place on health or social services. This requires a judgment to be made in each individual case. It seems to me that the question of whether or not a person with any specific illness could create an excessive demand depends on many factors: the severity of the illness, how far it has advanced, prognosis for recovery or deterioration, the standard treatment, and so on. Making that kind of assessment requires a great deal of expertise applied on a case by case basis.

Members of this House should recognize that the motion we are looking at today calls for a significant departure from current policy and practice. It singles out a specific disease. It asks that we name that disease in the act and it suggests that the act should automatically exclude people with that disease without any reference to an expert medical assessment of consequences.

[*Translation*]

For the time being, I will not ask whether we know enough about HIV to adopt such measures. I merely want to point out that it would be unprecedented in the recent history of Canadian immigration. This measure should not be adopted without serious study and it should not be adopted until its potential benefits, if any, can be properly evaluated.

The physician is not obliged to test for HIV, either by the Act or the regulations, but he may do so if he has reason to believe that the virus may be present.

If an applicant's medical records or a medical examination point to the possibility of HIV infection or even a health condition that causes the physician some concern, the latter may order further testing to make a better assessment of the individual's condition.

[*English*]

As things stand now, testing for HIV does take place when there is reason to do so. Under current guidelines immigrant applicants found to be HIV positive are usually considered to represent an excessive demand on our health and social services. They are deemed inadmissible.

The point I want to make is not to denigrate the motion. The point is we do have an ability now to look at this and we should examine whether our current legislation is satisfactory. If it is not, we should examine this further.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

It being 2.30 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2.30 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 26, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

WITNESS PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from May 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C–206, an Act to provide for the relocation and protection of witnesses, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, before I speak to Bill C–206, I would like to remind this House that this is the twenty–sixth anniversary of the death of Daniel Johnson senior, the premier of Quebec, whose politics transcended partisanship and who left a valuable legacy for the Quebec we know today.

I have read Bill C–206, introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Scarborough West, to whom I have listened attentively, both during his presentation before the Sub–Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, when he so eloquently argued to have his bill put to a vote in this House, and when he reached a stage not many reach, because many are called but few are chosen. The hon. member for Scarborough West may congratulate himself on having raised the awareness of the Sub–Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and that of this House regarding the protection and relocation of witnesses.

The hon. member's concern for this particular issue is to his credit and will advance law in Canada, because, as we would have to agree, we have lagged behind our neighbours to the south, who have already, for close to 25 years now, had legislation in 50 states of the union with respect to witness protection that is known to the public and that sets out their rights.

Here in Canada we have, of course, certain more or less well–known provisions for the protection and relocation of witnesses, which are applied in turn, piecemeal and sporadically by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Ontario Provincial Police or the Sûreté du Québec.

However, I do not believe that in a democratic state we should be satisfied with piecemeal measures and decisions taken arbitrarily by those who are called upon to make such decisions, often behind closed doors. I think that the idea of having legislation that will apply throughout Canada is one that will improve the situation of witnesses, particularly in a criminal context and especially with respect to serious crimes. I therefore think that we can put an end to a sort of bona fide application of procedures, which could be sequential, without controls and without witnesses really being informed of the applicable policies.

• (1105)

As I said earlier, a standard procedure must be established. The public must know what the future standards will be and how to have access to the protection and relocation program.

How will it work? Should the judiciary be involved in the protection of witnesses? The hon. member for Scarborough West suggests it should not be involved, to prevent excessive media coverage, but perhaps a parliamentary committee could be an alternative. This is an excellent idea, to have a sub–committee such as the justice sub–committee look, as discreetly as possible, at how witnesses are being protected. I think this is a fine job for the justice sub–committee which is already looking into allegation concerning the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. This new responsibility could be added to the mandate of the sub–committee.

In the case of serious crimes like drug trafficking or organized crime, the very survival of the witnesses is often at stake. But in our legal system, the entire case for the Crown usually rests much more on witnesses than on the admission of guilt on the part of the accused, which puts the Crown in a precarious position when introducing evidence. Crown attorneys never know, throughout the bail hearing, the preliminary investigation and finally the trial per se—a three–stage process that can stretch over several months—if their witnesses will see them through. They often wonder: can I be sure I will still have witnesses to call by the time we go to trial? And when I call them to the stand, will I be able to ask them the questions and, more importantly, get the honest answers I have every right to expect from them?

At present, there certainly is no guarantee, because witnesses often have failing memories in such cases. The hon. members who were in legal practice or even watched movies about certain trials or television broadcasts of trials have noticed witnesses who cannot recall anything at the time of the trial. Their

memories fail them. I think we must provide assistance to these witnesses who need our help.

Help is required both before the trial and, of course, after it. Before the trial, we must ensure their physical safety, which involves providing them with some form of protection. At times, this will mean literally hiding them for their own protection, and with their consent I hope, so that they can give adequate evidence to enable a court of law to appreciate the value of the evidence and determine whether the Crown has proven its case beyond any reasonable doubt. Bear in mind that, in our legal system, an enormous onus rests with the Crown and the slightest error in that area will automatically lead to an acquittal. With regard to foul crimes—I mentioned drug trafficking and organized crime—the simple fact that witnesses vanished could be enough to raise a reasonable doubt because the jury or the judge, if the accused has asked for a trial without jury, will not have the benefit of their testimonies.

But there is also the aftermath, them time after the trial, after the sentencing. Sometimes, the presumption of innocence—which I in no way question—and its offshoot, the reasonable doubt principle, can also lead to an acquittal and a witness can be in grave danger. We must therefore provide for the social reintegration of a witness who had someone put way or may even have failed to do so on the assessment of the evidence.

• (1110)

What this generally means is getting a new identity, new papers and often a new job for the witness. In extreme cases of course, the State must be able to provide replacement income to witnesses who have put their lives on the line for the law of the land to prevail.

In that sense, I fully agree with the principle of the bill introduced by the hon. member for Scarborough West. In short, based on what was said in the comprehensive speeches made so far on the subject, let me just indicate that at the time of the vote, scheduled for later on, or in a deferred vote, I will gladly support the bill put forward by the hon. member.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in support of this private member's bill and the initiative taken by the hon. member. One of the most amazing things to me is having had the opportunity now to take a look at this, I would suggest to all members that they probably have a number of people currently in their constituencies falling through the cracks relative to this issue.

Most of us are involved with people in our society who are supposedly the law–abiding people, the upstanding citizens, the people we never hear about in the courts. Certainly we never read about them in the paper. As we are all aware with criminal justice there are situations in our constituencies that require the attention of the police and the courts and of course all of us want to see justice done correctly.

Part of the justice system are the witnesses who come before the courts. They are a very important part, at the risk of stating the obvious, to getting the convictions we would like to have in our criminal justice system for those who are guilty of a crime.

The information these witnesses provide is absolutely invaluable to crack the case. Unfortunately, however, it is very obvious that we would end up in a situation of tremendous fear on the part of some individuals when they are confronted with a situation of facing the accused in a court or coming forward with information. They have tremendous fear and very understandable fear.

I happened to notice in the Edmonton *Journal* this last weekend that there was a case of an individual who on September 6, 1988 got four months in custody for uttering threats, carrying a concealed weapon, failing to comply. On February 10, 1989 this person was sentenced for six months open custody for forcible confinement and assault with a weapon. On September 20, 1989 this person was sentenced for two months open custody for solicitation, and on and on. There are four more cases on top of the first three I have outlined. Then on September 9, 1992 this person was sentenced to 30 days in jail and fined $400 for uttering threats against a woman police believed might implicate this person in a murder.

We have seen particularly in western Canada very successful so–called crime stopper programs in which crimes are brought forward on television. People are encouraged to come forward and act as witnesses but the difficulty is that even if they come forward in confidence, even if they come forward in secrecy, even if they provide the information in such a way that it will result in a conviction, it is not infrequent that mistakes will occur in the investigation or mistakes can occur in the court where the name of that person who has come forward as a good responsible Canadian citizen suddenly is applied in court. Then the accused person at that point, particularly if it leads to a conviction, is fully aware of where the information came from. Fear is an absolute factor in this equation.

• (1115)

Right at the moment this is a police responsibility, and as the member from Quebec stated, this leads to a patchwork, very spasmodic kind of a system. It leads to inconsistency from jurisdiction to jurisdiction because there will be different attitudes on the part of different police departments even throughout our constituencies. There will also be different budget constraints and respective police forces will have different attitudes toward the issue of budgets.

Another problem that currently exists is what I call the 97 per cent factor. I have been led to believe on the basis of research I did before speaking to this issue that 97 per cent of the people who would be protected by the witness protection act are people who were involved in some kind of criminal activity with respect to the issue that would be before the court.

It becomes part of the plea bargain or it becomes part of the "if you will give us this evidence in court to lead to this conviction, although you were involved" and this bargaining goes back and forth.

I suggest with police being human beings they would undoubtedly have an attitude problem from time to time with some of the people they would be using in an attempt to gain convictions because the people they are dealing with as far as they are concerned do not fall into the responsible citizen category.

This legislation would lead to a specific protection department. I support it because it would be separate from the police force for the reasons I have just outlined. This protection department for witnesses would also, in my judgment, be best served by getting people who are trained in counselling.

Can we imagine the stress on individuals of coming forward as a witness, particularly in very serious crimes or crimes where there are tremendous numbers of people involved? I see the witness protection department as having counsellors who are trained.

By having a department separate from the police forces, we would not only gain uniformity of application across the country, but it would give us an opportunity to develop some kind of standard policy across Canada.

The Reform Party, of course, is noted for always talking about how much it is going to cost. With the current incarceration and rehabilitation programs for people who are convicted of criminal offences we are currently looking at an expenditure of about $2 billion. In the area of enforcement under federal jurisdiction alone we are looking at a cost, I believe, of about $1.7 billion.

What we should be doing with the $1.7 billion is looking at the cost effectiveness of using dollars where people would have confidence in a witness protection plan to be able to come forward. I cannot help but think that this would have a direct impact on being able to roll back the cost of some investigations, where the investigations would not have to go forward at continuing cost because people would feel comfortable in coming forward.

The relocation of a witness is an issue. Again I suggest that within the $2 billion which we are currently spending on incarceration and rehabilitation, we should be able with some ease to find some dollars for the issue of relocation of witnesses.

In conclusion, the sentence that a criminal receives for his or her criminal activity is measured in months and years. I suggest that the sentence that a witness gets is a life sentence, particularly in situations where the person who is convicted of a crime makes it very clear that he or she is going to continue to pursue the witness. We must set up retraining for these people to get them from the field that they are currently working into another field. This would help to isolate them from their previous situation. We must set up documents, set up protection for the people who we are asking to be witnesses in these criminal cases.

• (1120)

I look forward to the thoughtful support of all members to move this bill forward to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: Under Standing Order 44, the hon. member for Scarborough West will close the debate.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to stand today to close the debate on my Bill C–206, the protection of witnesses in Canada.

I want to begin by thanking the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada who was kind enough to second my bill when debate began on April 20, 1994.

Throughout the three hours that the bill has been debated, eight of my Liberal colleagues, two members of the Official Opposition and four members of the Reform Party have spoken. Each and every one of them has spoken in favour of the principle of the bill.

Many good points have been raised. Many suggestions have been made. I am the first to acknowledge that the bill, since it was written by me, is certainly not perfect and that it can be improved. Should the House decide to pass the bill at second reading and send it to a committee, I look forward to discussing the suggestions that my colleagues have made to help make this a better bill so that witnesses can be protected and thereby strengthen the justice system.

I am particularly thankful that the Official Opposition has so clearly and unequivocally come out both on April 20 and today and stated that it would support the bill, as have my friends in the Reform Party.

I want to briefly remind everybody in the House and those watching that this is an area which has been left alone, which is quite unusual. In fact there is no legislative basis anywhere in Canada for the protection of witnesses. Although there is no law, there are approximately 21 individual witness protection plans across the country, as we heard from the hon. member for Kootenay East, all being run by various departments under different rules.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police plan, which has no legislative basis, has expanded. In 1986, for example, $569,000 was spent by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for witness protection programs. In 1993, a few years later, $3,800,000 was spent. What for? This is under the rubric of drug enforcement.

Under the rubric of drug enforcement it is clear that over the years it has become useful in the capturing and convicting of criminals to help witnesses who would otherwise fear for their lives to be relocated.

This bill, the protection of witnesses, will help to convict criminals and get them off the street by encouraging people to come forward and testify, knowing that they will not be subject to further reprisal.

There were 1,455 unsolved murders in this country between the years 1980 and 1992, almost 1,500 unsolved murders. I hope that this bill will help to solve some of those tragedies.

I got a call from a number of people in hiding over the course of debate of this bill but one in particular struck me. It was a mother with a number of children who is currently in her third province of residence because of this hodge–podge of protection plans. She was a witness testifying against her husband in a murder trial. As a result of that her husband was convicted. Her husband is looking for her, as are her husband's associates. She was relocated to the province of Ontario with her children, living in fear and hiding.

Unfortunately because of the fact that there is no legislative basis it is not that easy to get new passports. It is not that easy to get a new social insurance number. It is not that easy to invent a new identity. Her husband's associates, even though he is in prison, have been able to trace her in two provinces and now she is running to her third. We do not want to see that happen to families and to victims. I hope this bill will help to alleviate that.

In closing, I want to remind the House that should members be of the view that this bill merits passage at this time, it means the principle of the bill is accepted and the matter proceeds to committee where it will be studied carefully. There we will be able to look at the experience in the United States. We know that our friends in Australia have just this year introduced a very similar bill to this one. They are struggling with that as well.

I am sure the committee will be able to carefully examine the good points made in the debate and to examine the experiences in the United States and Australia. We should able to come up with a plan that will protect victims and their families, witnesses and their families, and will help to convict those who deserve to be convicted.

I thank everybody in the House and I ask for thoughtful consideration in the passage of my bill at this time.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

Mrs. Bakopanos: I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask the House to suspend the proceedings until noon.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the wish of the House to suspend the sitting to the call of the bell?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11.27 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 11.59 a.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY ACT

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (for the Minister of Industry) moved that Bill C–46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Industry I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the occasion of second reading of the legislation that gives official recognition to the Department of Industry.

I will begin by explaining to Canadians that this legislation provides a streamlined, organized and comprehensive approach to all those various instruments the government has had spread over several departments. It is an effort to bring them all under one ministerial roof.

Under this bill the minister is responsible in Canada for industry and technology, trade and commerce, science, consumer affairs, corporations and securities, competition and restraint of trade including mergers and monopolies, bankruptcy and insolvency, patents, copyrights, trademarks, industrial designs, and integrated circuit topographies.

Also included in the minister's responsibilities are standards of identity, packaging and performance in relation to consumer products and services, except in relation to the safety of consumer goods; legal metrology; telecommunications, except in relation to the planning and co–ordination of telecommunications services for departments, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada; and broadcasting, other than in relation to spectrum management and the technical aspects of broadcast-

ing; the development and utilization generally of communications undertakings, facilities, systems and services for Canada; investment; small business; and tourism.

Never before has there been such a comprehensive revamping. As I mentioned earlier we have put four departments into one. The purpose is to allow the government and all members of the House of Commons to work at creating a very tight focus. This will create an environment for stimulating entrepreneurs and thus will get people back to work.

In these times of a very tough fiscal framework, the debts and deficits at all levels of government are very high. It is therefore incumbent upon all members in this House and all public servants across Canada to do their very best to maximize the use of taxpayers' dollars. By undertaking this massive and comprehensive reorganization the Government of Canada is living up to a commitment made during the campaign and which is contained in the red book. Speaking on the red book for a minute, it has become our compass in the past 10 months as a government. I refer members and Canadians to page 47 where we stated:

> A Liberal government will focus on small and medium–sized businesses because they can and must be the determining factor in turning around what has so far been a jobless recovery.
>
> Small and medium–sized businesses are primarily Canadian owned. They are found in all sectors of the economy: manufacturing, services, retail, high technology, low technology, fishing, and farming. Supporting small and medium–sized businesses will benefit all Canadians, but particularly certain demographic groups.

• (1205)

This bill will allow us to put a very special focus on that sector of our economy we believe will ultimately pull this country out of its very difficult economic and fiscal framework.

One thing members opposite have been talking constructively about over the last few months is that we have to reduce overlap and duplication. This bill addresses that point which opposition members have made.

Another thing opposition members have put forward from time to time is that by having many departments sometimes the message becomes scattered and the focus is not as tight as it should be. This is a very large department. We are talking about a department with 6,000 employees all across Canada. Of those employees, 2,500 are beyond the national capital region. In terms of public service, we are talking about 140 access points.

It is important that all our public servants be in tune with this new government thrust. It is important that all members get behind this bill because it essentially meets the request, some thoughts and ideas that opposition members have put forward.

Another important point we have to deal with is that because of our very difficult fiscal framework, government no longer has the resources to put money into program support. Funding support is very tight right now.

As a national institution Industry Canada must have a different presence in the community. It must have the type of presence where it will be like a facilitator. We will lever the government's resources and do many more joint ventures with the private sector. We will be funding less in terms of special projects.

Of course the minister has made some very special exceptions in the last few months. Those special cases involve important issues relating to science and technology and research and development. There are a couple that the House and Canadians should be aware of.

The minister made the commitment to the space station. That was a commitment in excess of $2 billion over time but it is an area where Canada has great brain power. By participating in this program with the United States not only will we be partners but we will be allowing the best and brightest in that sector to grow. We also continue to fund the very special centres of excellence, the 10 of them across the country.

We can see that the minister has not in any way shape or form retreated from the government's commitment to research and development. Research and development is an integral component of any national industrial strategy.

Another very important feature of this bill is clause 5(a):

> The minister shall exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions assigned by section 4(1) in a manner that will
>
> (a) strengthen the national economy and promote sustainable development.

This particular clause is something the minister, when an opposition member, fought aggressively to be included in previous legislation but was unable to achieve it. This is a very special feature of the bill. We salute the minister, the drafters and the officials that this is now a part of our national industrial strategy, that this is all going to be done in the light of sustainable development.

• (1210)

In order to make sure there is a discipline on the department we have incorporated the old Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The interests and protection of Canadian consumers is within the same department. This means that as we are advancing and developing policy we are going to have consumer protection and interest right there in the room during the evolution and debate on this policy. That will go a long way in making sure that the objective of sustainable development is maintained.

I would like to touch on a couple of other very important areas of responsibility within the Department of Industry. Throughout the day many of my colleagues will talk about this bill and how it impacts on their various regions and communities in Canada.

I would like to highlight the commitment of this government to the tourism sector. Those who watched the Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Commerce last Sunday will have noted that he highlighted tourism as being a sector of our economy to which this government will make a very special

commitment. As that sector is part of Industry Canada I can happily say we are excited that we are going to rebuild Tourism Canada.

I cannot imagine a member of Parliament in this House not supporting that particular sector. In terms of job creation, after the automotive and forestry sectors tourism creates more jobs than any other sector in our economy. Right now there is close to a $7 billion deficit in that sector.

I hope all members of Parliament will support the government's initiatives. The Minister of Industry will be making an announcement in about three weeks' time on how we can rebuild that sector of our economy.

Another area of responsibility within the Department of Industry is the Federal Business Development Bank. We are happy that this particular government instrument is in the Department of Industry and we are especially happy with the support from the opposition parties on the whole issue of access to capital for small business.

The presence of the Federal Business Development Bank will be reinforced. We will put a tighter focus on that institution and its responsibilities to complement existing financial institutions and target small business operators. By doing this we will fire up the Canadian entrepreneurial spirit, especially with businesses that have 50 or fewer employees. The access to capital problem all members of this House hear about from their constituents is something to which the Department of Industry is sensitive.

As a member of the industry committee I can tell Canadians that probably in two or three weeks our all–party study will be tabled in the House. Most of the things we have been working on will address and support this current revamping and restructuring in Industry Canada.

• (1215)

We would like to think that the Department of Industry is not just listening to members of the opposition parties but that in this particular piece of legislation we are showing we are acting on some of those recommendations and following through on some of the commitments that we made in our red book.

There are so many different aspects within the Department of Industry that I could go on all day. I would like to talk about a couple of other areas where the minister has given very special emphasis and energy during the last few months. It is important for Canadians to know about all the work that has been done on reducing interprovincial trade barriers. The interprovincial trade barriers that exist in this country cost industry close to $11 billion a year.

I am happy to report that the Minister of Industry at the end of June successfully reached an agreement that will reduce many of these tariff barriers in about 10 different sectors. This will go a long way in creating a more efficient economy in Canada. We are not saying at this point that the interprovincial trade barrier document is the end of the pathway, it is just the beginning of the pathway. It is a very tough issue which the minister started on early in this mandate and he was able to achieve a good round of successes in phase one. We state clearly that it is only phase one and we have a tremendous amount of work to do yet. We seek the co–operation and ideas of all members of Parliament in that area.

Another area where the minister has given very special focus and attention is the information highway. The information highway will give Canadians an opportunity to re–establish ourselves as the communications country, the communications state par excellence of any country in the world.

Along with the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development we are working not just with the information highway advisory group but we are working in partnership with various community groups, with the private sector, and we are working very hard now in creating an environment in which we can pave the information highway.

Last week I attended on behalf of the minister a demonstration. The Queen's masters of business program began the new master of business program which is on interactive television. Now you can be sitting in the Northwest Territories or some place in B.C., or Toronto or Newfoundland and through the technology that has been developed with various corporations you can now get your MBA without going to Queen's in Kingston. This is the first of its kind in Canada but it is a concrete example of how this information highway is turning from theory into real hard reality. This is the type of thing that will make us a more educated country, and a more educated country is a more competitive country.

The other thing we are doing in the Department of Industry is working very hard to encourage our small and medium size operators to become more export oriented. We are doing this through our advice in policy development with the Federal Business Development Bank. We are doing this through Industry Canada officials who are dedicated to helping small and medium size entrepreneurs to shift their marketing strategies from the North American marketing thrust to the Asian thrust, and other parts of the world.

We are doing our best to move this whole restructuring and streamlining of government forward in a way that we believe will show Canadians that we are serious in eliminating waste, that we are serious in developing a co–ordinated approach, a focused approach that will allow the business community of

Canada to develop a renewed faith in dealing with the Government of Canada.

• (1220)

One of the real frustrations entrepreneurs have in dealing with government is that they will go to a department asking for a particular type of advice. The official will say for this particular part of your program you come to Industry Canada but for this other part you have to go to consumer affairs, for this other part you go to the Federal Business Development Bank.

By the time the entrepreneur is finished with the experience he feels that he would much rather avoid dealing with the government.

We are hoping that through this bill, through this streamlining, by putting all of these services—emphasis on the word services—under one roof, we are not only going to become more streamlined but by eliminating duplication we are going to make the experience of business men and women in dealing with their government a much more productive one. That will ultimately rebuild confidence and trust in this institution.

I want to once again say that we are moving quickly in the area of reorganization. We are hoping this bill will receive the support of all members of this House so we can get on with meeting the objective that all of us in this House want, putting Canadians back to work.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I will comment on—not to say respond to—the speech by my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, who rose today on behalf of the Minister of Industry to present Bill C-46, an Act to establish the Department of Industry, not to say the new Department of Industry, because it must be said that this bill simply confirms after the fact what was planned by the former government then led by Ms. Campbell. Under this bill, certain institutions such as Investment Canada, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, part of the Department of Communications and Science and Technology will now come under the same concept, the same minister and the same department, namely Industry Canada.

Briefing sessions, to use the federal public service's new terminology, can be very enlightening in that we meet with public servants who can fill us in on the government's approach. That is how we learned, for example, the guidelines behind Bill C-46, which can be found in a government document prepared by the minister's officials. The guidelines are as follows: Bill C-46 is aimed at, among other things, maintaining the status quo between the mandates of the departments affected; preserving the provisions in the old laws as much as possible; and finally, making the minor amendments that are needed but not substantial.

That is characteristic of how this government elected on October 25, 1993 has operated since the beginning of the session on January 19. It is there but not making any headway. It is simply marking time. It holds debates without making any real progress, without promoting advances in science—since we are talking about science and technology.

It is simply marking time, and that is becoming more and more obvious as weeks and months go by without any real savings recorded as a result of their amendments. Three or four structures are combined under one head; they are now headed by one person instead of two or three, but nothing is really saved in the day-to-day running of things; we think it is purely a cosmetic operation, it is grandstanding, it is a way to say that instead of 30 or 32 ministers as before, there are now 20, but with the same responsibilities.

• (1225)

I refer to a government document given out at another briefing session we had for people in the Official Opposition who are concerned with the Department of Industry; it is contrary to the action needed, in their words, to make the machinery of government simpler and more efficient and to provide better services to users. So nothing is being simplified and nothing is more efficient with this change in structure, which is purely cosmetic.

These are not just words; this is the mandate of the minister of the newly structured Department of Industry. It is worth reading it.

My colleague, the parliamentary secretary, read it in English; I shall read it in French: "Powers, Duties and Functions of the Minister. The powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, board or agency of the Government of Canada, relating to industry and technology in Canada; trade and commerce in Canada; science in Canada; consumer affairs; corporations and corporate securities; competition and restraint of trade, including mergers and monopolies; bankruptcy and insolvency; patents, copyrights, trade-marks, industrial designs and integrated circuit topographies; standards of identity, packaging and performance in relation to consumer products and services, except in relation to the safety of consumer goods; legal metrology; telecommunications, except in relation to the planning and coordination of telecommunication services for departments, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada, and broadcasting, other than in relation to spectrum management and the technical aspects of broadcasting; the development and utilization generally of communication undertakings, facilities, systems and services for Canada; investment; small businesses; and tourism."

So, Mr. Speaker, 15 fields of action, 15 fields of responsibility, which make the Department of Industry today a huge giant. We may wonder how one individual, as well supported as he may be by the bureaucracy, can really do an effective job! I for one, anyway, am very sceptical that anyone can really govern with such a broad mandate, when you realize that the industry minister's responsibility, in addition to what I just read, extends from Statistics Canada, for example, to the Canadian Space Agency to the Competition Tribunal and includes the Federal Business Development Bank, to name only these.

So I think that this excessively large field, which on the very face of it leaves us sceptical—

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Superman.

Mr. Rocheleau: Superman. Yes, the parliamentary secretary has taken the words out of my mouth. It takes a superman and the voters will have to decide in due course whether the minister is superman.

Mr. Speaker, one aspect of the bill that I read particularly interested me. With respect to the minister's powers, clause 5 says, "The Minister shall exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions assigned by clause 4", as we saw before, "in a manner that will (*a*) strengthen the national economy and promote sustainable development; (*c*) increase"—and this is very important—"the international competitiveness of Canadian industry, goods and services and assist in the adjustment to changing domestic and international conditions."

• (1230)

When I read this section, I immediately think of two Quebec industries affected by the defence industry conversion which show the government's negligence immediately—and there are certainly more in other parts of Canada. On paper, this government has every power to take action, but it lacks the political will to deal with the very harrowing issue of defence industry conversion, thus letting the situation get worse from week to week.

Take the case of Expro where, in the last few weeks, the situation has become dramatic. Indeed, the workers, the union and the management are faced with the unbearable choice of having to decide who and how many, will be laid off. I can understand why union leaders opposed this measure since there is no alternative.

There is no alternative of course because the global situation is difficult. As we know, now that the cold war is a thing of the past, everything that has to do with military production is being reevaluated. In fact, the military industry worldwide is conducting such an exercise. But what distinguishes Canada is the government's negligence compared, for example, to the American government's initiatives to concretely support that industry and make sure that it will improve. The situation of Expro is getting worse, while MIL Davie, in Lévis, has still not received any support from this totally apathetic government—in spite of strong public and political pressure.

Thankfully, we heard some good news for the Quebec City region when the leader of the Parti Quebecois, who is being sworn in today as the province's new premier, pledged—and we hope that he will have the means and the political will to fulfill that commitment—to find a solution in the case of MIL Davie, with or without the help of the federal government. Mr. Parizeau must be congratulated for displaying this kind of political courage to ensure that the problems of the number one private company in the Quebec City region are resolved—indeed, this is no small venture: it is the largest company in the region. The projects regarding the ferry to the Madgalen islands and the smart ship, which have been the subject of much discussion and which the federal government is very familiar with, should get the green light so as to at least give some time to MIL Davie.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all our elected colleagues from the Parti Quebecois, and particularly Mr. Parizeau. I also want to congratulate the PQ members who were elected in my region, namely Mr. Guy Julien and Mr. Rémi Désilets, who will respectively represent Trois–Rivières and Maskinongé at the legislative assembly. Some may find those results strange but the fact is that, for the first time ever, Maskinongé voted for the Parti Quebecois, and so did the riding of Charlevoix if I am not mistaken. This is a sign of the times and it shows how coherent Quebecers have been in their thinking since the failure of Meech. Indeed, Quebecers first said "no"to the Charlottetown accord, then "yes" to the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois, and they will say "yes" to sovereignty in a few months.

We are pleased that the Parti Quebecois is now in office and we were glad to see that Quebec's premier, Mr. Parizeau, wasted no time in announcing at his first press conference a policy which will better anything ever done by the federal government regarding regional housing—even if those federal measures were not necessarily constitutional—by setting up a new structure whereby parliamentary assistants, who will be directly accountable to the premier, will each be responsible for one region of Quebec.

• (1235)

I think Quebec has scored some major points as far as its future is concerned, and we can only commend the Government of Quebec, and encourage and support it in its new approach to regional development, which is entirely in line with the findings of the Bélanger–Campeau Commission on the concerns of the regions.

Earlier, I read to the House what the department's responsibilities were, but there is more. That was only Part I. The powers, duties and functions of the minister also extend and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, board or agency of the

Government of Canada, relating to regional economic development in Ontario and Quebec. This brings us to the Federal Office of Regional Development which comes under the Department of Industry but, politically, is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance.

Incidentally, the office, and this is perhaps something many people were unaware of, was established by order in council, while its counterparts the Department of Western Economic Diversification and ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency—were legislated into existence. The fact that western Canada has a department, the Maritimes an agency and Quebec an office probably says much about the federal government's perception of Quebec's economic development. It may be symbolic that besides having an office that is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance, we have an order in council instead of legislation.

If we take a closer look at all this, we should realize that the institution itself, which is called the Federal Office of Regional Development, merely duplicates what already exists, even at the federal level. I know what I am talking about. I live in a region where we have regional development, and I can tell you that federally, the office is competing with the NRC, which has its own regional branches staffed by one or two that get in touch with small businesses, inquire about their technological requirements and are then able to meet those requirements, which is not the case with the office. The Federal Office of Regional Development is therefore competing with at least one federal agency and, in Quebec, with the Quebec Department of Industry and Commerce, which promotes regional development for the benefit of small businesses, and with the entire network of industrial commissioners Quebec has established with municipal funding plus the support of the provincial government.

The Federal Office of Regional Development merely creates a lot of overlap and duplication, and that is its sole mandate. When we take a good look at the section on regional economic development, we see in section 8*(c)*: "focus on small and medium–sized enterprises and the development and enhancement of entrepreneurial talent".

There are already quite a few players in the field. In Quebec; they are talking quite openly about streamlining all this, and now the federal government gets involved, for historical reasons, as we all know. This Parliament has always wanted to do the right thing. It has always wanted to do what is best for Quebec, but Quebecers are pretty smart, and we can expect some action on this issue very shortly. Furthermore, the federal government has made cuts in the Federal Office of Regional Development, so that any potential it had for being effective is about to disappear altogether.

• (1240)

From what I have heard recently throughout my riding and also from other sources, cuts amounting to $70 million over the next three years will make an empty shell out of the Federal Office of Regional Development. It is an empty shell which meets the needs of small and medium–sized businesses only when they are involved in high–tech projects. But unfortunately, this is not often the case—herein lies the problem—and one must remember that, by and large, the office is of very little assistance to small and medium–sized businesses.

As for its involvement in tourism mentioned earlier by the parliamentary secretary, it seems to me that we are talking about provincial jurisdiction and, in this particular case, Quebec jurisdiction. The federal government must thread very carefully if it wants to get involved in this area. We have seen examples of such involvement in remote areas where the federal government stepped in to support projects sometimes turned down by Quebec resulting in a lot of confusion, duplication and overlapping, and a tremendous waste of money and efforts. Unfortunately, this lack of cohesion is too often the rule instead of jointly planned regional development.

We believe that regional development is, first and foremost, a provincial matter and that Quebec should have exclusive authority in this area, especially now that we have the resources and the structure to do it. With the new government, we will be in an even better position to take matters into our own hands. We cannot allow the federal government to continue interfering in such a field of competence, especially since we know that the Quebec government is working in co–operation with the various stakeholders and elected representatives in every municipality and region of the province. Regional municipalities and unified regional municipalities provide Quebec with the appropriate structure to meet people's needs in an increasingly articulated manner.

We cannot support such an empty bill. It is just window–dressing. It comes after the fact to sanction a decision made by this government hopefully with a view to streamlining its operation. It is only skin deep. As a consequence, we cannot support this bill and for this reason I move, seconded by the member for Charlesbourg, the following amendment:

That all the words following "that" be deleted and replaced by:

"this House refuse to give second reading to Bill C–46, an Act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other Acts, because the principle of the bill does not put an end to duplication and overlapping by not recognizing that Quebec has exclusive authority over regional economic development".

The Deputy Speaker: I will say that since this bill has already been reviewed, this motion which is similar to the previous one is acceptable.

[*English*]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me this morning to enter the debate on Bill C–46. I am particularly pleased to see the minister's parliamentary secretary here but very disappointed the minister himself is not here to enter the debate on Bill C–46.

• (1245)

I wish to enter into the debate by indicating that the bill which apparently is simply to streamline and to create jobs, as has been indicated by the parliamentary secretary, is nothing of the kind.

There was an opportunity in presenting the bill to the House to show some leadership in this vast and extremely powerful economic arm of the government. Based on the content of the bill that leadership opportunity has been ignored. I hope to show that there is a need in Canada as never before for the portfolio of the minister of industry to provide the leadership and direction from which Canada could benefit so much.

In so doing, I wish to draw attention very briefly to the development of the particular department. C. D. Howe ran much of the former department of trade and commerce during the fifties essentially as minister of defence production. Much of the development in the fifties and in his direction to that particular department was as a result of the contacts he had made with various industries during World War II.

Walter Gordon followed C. D. Howe. He wanted to create a department of industry in the early sixties. Eventually he was successful in doing it. Mr. Gordon was an interventionist and a protectionist and he wanted the department of industry to further those goals. His proposal received a rough ride in cabinet at that time and from the existing department of trade and commerce. Eventually the department was established but had no clear direction or vision of what it was supposed to do partly because according to some observers Mr. Gordon really wanted to be the minister of finance and did not want any advice from the Economic Council of Canada which was trying to develop a strategy for the economic development of Canada.

In 1968 industry, trade and commerce was established as a merger of industry and trade and commerce under Jean–Luc Pepin. It is also worthy to note that at that time a parallel development took place, the development of regional economic expansion. These were years of difficulty involved in integrating industry on the one hand, trade and commerce on the other, and DREE on the other side. Organizations and reorganizations occurred within industry over the following decade, always searching for a focus and cohesion that seemed to elude them.

In 1978 the ministry of state for economic development was created, another new name. Out of the government's desire to co–ordinate economic and industrial strategy which had always been eluding it under the efforts of ITC it noticed the only thing that changed was the name. It was the ministry of state for economic development.

In 1982 the industry, trade and commerce department was scrapped under the reorganization of government initiated by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The trade commissioner service was moved to external affairs and the remainder of industry, trade and commerce was merged with DREE, the department of regional economic expansion. Out of that department the new name was generated, the department of regional industrial expansion. The ministry of state for economic development was renamed the ministry of state for regional economic development and was given responsibilities for that area.

Almost all officials involved in the reorganization undertaken under a veil of great secrecy were from the privy council office. Even some of the ministers and deputy ministers directly involved in the reorganization were not involved in the discussions with privy council establishing a new department. Again, confusion and turf wars among the various component entities of DRIE prevailed.

In 1987 the government announced the creation of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and soon after western economic diversification. The rest of DRIE became over the next three years the department of industry, science and technology. During that three–year period the privy council office provided no direction or very little direction for the creation of the mandate for the ISTC and the department was left to find its own direction. While the ministers did attend some of the meetings they did not provide any particular direction.

• (1250)

The election of 1988 and the following free trade agreement negotiations interfered with the further development of the mandate so the department wandered for three years before it was officially created in 1990.

In review, the core of the department of industry has been a long history or succession of organizational changes and name changes. Each has been without focus, lacking in vision or coherent strategy, and producing interior confusion and strife for the various entities. Attempts at meshing the different philosophies have produced a department which attempts to implement mutually exclusive mandates: that of national industrial development on the one hand and that of regional, economic and industrial strategy on the other.

That history continues in the bill. The incompatible strategies of regional and national economic expansion continue without change.

Shortly after the minister took on his portfolio he said that he had four goals he wanted to pursue while he carried out his mandate: small business, tourism, the information highway and the promotion of exports. In his first major piece of legislation the minister does not articulate a clear vision of the department in any of these areas. Neither does he solve the incompatibility between regional and national strategies.

The minister had the opportunity to make a difference, to provide a direction, to determine and clearly set goals for his department, to re–establish confidence in government and politicians which the parliamentary secretary so ably said he was doing and he did not, to provide a fresh new voice for the people fiscally and democratically, and to set out a vision for the department of industry in Bill C–46, an act to establish the department of industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts.

What did the minister do? The minister has missed the opportunity to act, accepted the Tory leadership in re–organization, essentially changed nothing major, accepted their direction, accepted their philosophy and accepted their goals. He changed nothing of consequence. The minister accepted the principles that guided the writing of the act. This represents more of the same. There will probably be no more confidence in the government than there was in the previous one if that is the kind of leadership we are to get.

What are the two big themes the minister could have effected? The first is quality of treatment: treat all the regions the same way with no special considerations for any one part of Canada over another. The second is the intrusion of government: get government out of the economy as much as possible and let the market preside.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): That is what we are doing.

Mr. Schmidt: Let me quote clause 13 and members will know how much intervention there is. I am convinced the Liberal idea of leadership is to govern in the truest sense of the word, to make decisions on behalf of everyone but never face the people or listen to them. I want to illustrate clearly that the parliamentary secretary to the minister of state for science and technology is at least making an effort to listen to the public.

How do I show this? Bill C–46 in subclause 13(1) referring to cabinet, the most central part of government, clearly states:

> Where the Governor in Council is of the opinion that it is in the national interest to do so, the Minister may, in exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions assigned by subsection 4(1)—

These have been detailed by the parliamentary secretary and my colleague from the Bloc so I will not take time to read them. It continues:

> —develop and implement programs and projects of special assistance to industries, particular industrial or commercial establishments, organizations, persons who are members of a particular category of persons defined by order of the Governor in Council or particular persons to aid economic development, whether through the restructuring, adjusting, rationalizing, establishing or re–establishing, modernizing, expanding or contracting of an industry or particular industrial or commercial establishment or organization in Canada, or otherwise.

If that is not intervention in the sense of allowing cabinet rather than the enterprise system or the individuals to make decisions, what is it? As the government intervenes, government decides who wins and who loses. The marketplace is not permitted to function as it should. Of course there should be some guidelines but it is not allowed to function without undue restriction.

• (1255)

The Tories did that. The Liberals before them did that and the Liberals of today say that they will do it too. It is not new. It is not more efficient. It is more of the same. I submit that nothing has changed. If anything, the government is likely to make a bad situation worse.

The bill perpetuates the philosophy that has so debilitated Canada throughout successive governments. If we look at the deficit today we recognize only too clearly that is precisely what happened. Do we remember C. D. Howe's cavalier statement: "What's a million?" That embodies what the department has done throughout its history.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): This saves $26 million.

Mr. Schmidt: Yes, $26 million out of a $3 billion budget. I submit it is a minuscule amount. I agree it is the right direction but it is not enough.

There is no leadership. There is empowerment, though. There is entrenchment of bureaucracy through repositioning people and cost centres. They are in different places. There are new people with new titles who make the same decisions under the same philosophy, the same principles and the same policies of those who preceded them, in this case the Conservatives.

To be able to distribute money without accountability or demanding accountability is to encourage dependence, irresponsibility, the possibility of misappropriation of funds, political patronage, the abuse of power and the corruption of officials and politicians.

It is no wonder the people of Canada say that governments come and go, politicians come and go and nothing changes. With the bill we see no plan for change. To administer change is difficult. It requires a goal. It requires a vision. It requires a plan to get there. It requires a strategy and tactics to achieve it. In short it requires leadership. The bill does not provide that.

The bill concentrates on centralized planning, an interventionist strategy and the preference of one region over another. It denies the equality of persons, entrepreneurs and provinces. It is deceptive in its presentation. It purports to be a housekeeping piece of legislation but it displays no leadership or change in direction which the department so desperately needs and which was promised to Canadians in the red book.

Let me become a little more specific. The government is simply following the changes as instituted by the Tories. The Tories did nothing to fix some of the more glaring difficulties with the department as it existed in its previous form. The bill only perpetuates centralized power, more interventionism in the marketplace and in individual lives, and the government knows best attitude: the government will decide what is in the national interest. It divides and subjects.

Regional development in the two largest provinces of the country, Ontario and Quebec, is lumped together and as a consequence separated from the rest of Canada. Under existing law an order in council gives the minister of finance responsibility for FORD–Q, the Federal Office of Regional Development, Quebec. We are told there is about to be the same kind of order in council under the new changes in the new act. Nevertheless the act empowers the minister of industry to be the special minister for the economic development of Ontario and Quebec.

How can the minister of industry have a national overview and responsibility, or the minister of finance for that matter who has the same kind of overview? How can these people exercise their duties as minister for the whole of Canada and balance the special interest? It seems to me there is an obvious conflict of interest when he is responsible for all of Canada and then pays special attention to a particular region of a province. It maintains the inequalities that exist at the present time. There is no attempt at level and fair treatment for all whether individuals, industries or regions.

I submit this is wimpy and kindergarten style tampering with government structure. Very far reaching effects are taking place. They have wasted a lot of time and what has it achieved? We have been told in our briefing sessions that they have reduced by 230 people the staff of 6,000 and they have reduced the $3 billion budget by $26 million. That is in the right direction. I commend the government for that but it is not good enough.

There is no evidence of them realizing the efficiencies necessary in putting together these four government departments.

• (1300)

If that is all that can be done to save $26 million and reduce staff by 230, is it worth the effort, the dislocation, the stresses that will be involved for the people who are going to be relocated?

It was like getting a parcel beautifully wrapped in nice red paper, the colour of the red book. As we unwrapped it we found that this big box had four smaller boxes in it. On the big box one could still see the Tory label in spite of the fact that it had been changed to read Liberal. It is nothing new, just new packaging and a new label. Our hopes were dashed, our expectations frustrated and our anticipation ignored.

Enough of criticism. Do we have any alternatives? Yes, we do. We believe that the Department of Industry like all of government needs a set of guiding principles and policies, a mission statement, if you will. Reform proposes to bring its philosophy and principles to this department as it would to all others. Here are some of those.

We believe in the value of enterprise and initiative and that governments have a responsibility to foster and protect an environment in which initiative and enterprise can be exercised by individuals and groups.

We believe that the creation of wealth and productive jobs for Canadians is best achieved through the operations of a responsible, broadly based free enterprise economy in which private property, freedom of contract and the operations of free markets are encouraged and respected.

We believe that public money should be regarded by government as a sacred trust or of funds held in trust and that government should practice fiscal responsibility, in particular the responsibility to balance expenditures and revenues.

I notice the parliamentary secretary is nodding his head. I certainly hope the Minister of Finance will see that and that the Prime Minister will agree to that and that they will change their goal which says 3 per cent of the GDP will be the deficit in perpetuity or that it will continue. It is time we recognized the principle that we need to balance our budget.

Reform also supports the depoliticizing of economic decision making in Canada through the gradual elimination of grants, subsidies and the pricing policies and all federal taxes direct or indirect on the natural resources of the provinces other than income tax of general application.

Reform also supports the gradual removal of all measures which are designed to insulate industries, businesses, financial institutions, professions and trade unions from domestic and foreign competition.

We support a vigorous measure to ensure the successful operation of the marketplace through such means as promotion of competition and vigorous enforcement of competition and anti–combines legislation with severe penalties for collusion and price fixing.

We support orienting federal government activities toward the maturing of human and physical infrastructure and to support giving greater priority to the development of skills, particularly those that provide future job flexibility.

As well, such training should be made flexible in terms of the type of institutions providing the training. We would encourage co–operative training in industry. To that end my colleagues and I have developed a statement for this department we think we should all observe. The role of the Department of Industry should be to establish and maintain a culture which rewards entrepreneurship, innovation and research and ensures a level, competitive and honest marketplace.

To that end there are many opportunities for improvement in this bill which we would seize on: to curtail the centralized control that is proposed in this bill; to emphasize reducing the ability to interfere in the marketplace; to emphasize improving the ability of the marketplace to self–regulate. Serious intervention in the marketplace should be in emergency or extreme cases only.

The national interest must be clearly defined by the people of Canada through Parliament, not by cabinet; in extraordinary circumstances by referendum. It should not be in the hands of cabinet where it can be made to mean anything it wants it to.

• (1305)

With regard to regional development, some fundamental problems exist with this form of government intervention in the economy. Many scholars and former senior mandarins in this department and other departments of government have noted that a national industrial strategy and regional development strategy are mutually incompatible. They often work at cross purposes to one another and become self–defeating.

We believe that the federal government should treat all regions of this country fairly and as a result should do away with all regional development programs. Fair treatment would eliminate the need for a minister to decide between the national interest on the one hand and the regional interest on the other.

Regional political patronage and, just as important, the temptation to engage in it would be removed to a great extent if the instrument of regional development were done away with. Better efficiency within the department should then be realized and other areas would benefit as well.

I note with satisfaction, as I referred to earlier, the review that is taking place on science and technology policy by the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development. I commend him for that and wish him well. I hope that he will question the presence of the many and varied scientific bureaucracies and funding agencies that fall under his purview. They need to be the subject of rigorous and continuing scrutiny. It appears that much of their work duplicates that being done by universities and various research enterprises. The fewer the hands that research funding passes through the better. I hope his review is complete and thorough.

We need to expand private sector partnerships with direct profitable spinoffs which would strengthen the research and development establishment. We need research and development as never before. In that regard we need to be efficient, cost effective, profitable and domestically and internationally competitive.

In conclusion, when we look at the history of the department and couple it with the proposed reorganization it is clear that the minister has chosen not to exercise the leadership that was his in this instance. He has only chosen to perpetuate the confusion and the lack of solid and visionary direction that have been the hallmark of the industry department throughout all of its history and all of its reincarnations and incarnations since the fifties.

We hope that the minister would have taken this opportunity to enunciate a comprehensive national industrial economic strategy and reorganize his department accordingly. It is clear that is not the case. What we have is a clear demonstration that this government has no vision for Canada's economy, a vision from which it could so clearly benefit.

The opportunity to regain public confidence has been squandered. The government could have done away with the pork barrel of regional development and the odious spectre of its centralized economic planning. It did not. This bill perpetuates the status quo. The system needs to be changed to let the market function freely within a framework and direction that reflect the democratic will of the people.

Because this bill is elitist, centralist and interventionist I cannot support it.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would it be possible to have the opportunity on second reading for me to put a short question to the member of the Reform Party?

The Deputy Speaker: The parliamentary secretary may not be aware of the fact that the first three speakers for the three recognized parties have a 40–minute maximum and there is no

period for questions or comments when each speaker has concluded the first three speeches.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the debate on this bill today is of historical importance for its significance and also because it coincides almost to the day with the seventh anniversary of the presentation of the Brundtland report, *Our Common Future*, to the United Nations General Assembly where it was extensively discussed and received unanimous support.

• (1310)

The words sustainable development re–emerged as a result of that event. It is very heartening to see that the Minister of Industry has inserted the term sustainable development in clause 5 of his bill. It is also heartening because when the minister was in opposition he urged the government of the day to use the term sustainable development when a bill was introduced at that time for the formation of the previous ministry. Unfortunately those pressures fell on deaf ears.

In this respect the minister has shown that he has carried out in government what he had spoken about while in the opposition. That is very reassuring for anyone who believes that our political system is alive and kicking and in good health.

What does the term sustainable development mean? It is the key phrase in clause 5 of this bill. Does it mean a growth in which the environment and the economy are seen in conflict? Does it mean a philosophy of imposing limits to growth? Does it mean returning the planet to a hypothetical natural state? Evidently the answer to these questions is no.

Sustainable development means integrating the economy with the environment. This is not a relationship of conflict. The environment and the economy are mutually reinforcing. The terminology recognizes this fact.

Sustainable development means learning to recognize and live within the limits of physical impact beyond which degradation of the ecosystems, of resources and of human condition becomes inevitable and progressive.

Some limits are imposed by the impact of existing technologies and social organization and by the size of the planet but many limiting factors can be expanded through technological changes, modes of decision making, changes in domestic and international policies, and through investment in human capital.

Since the 1987 Brundtland report there has been a lively debate over the specific conditions of sustainability. At this point we can say that sustainability is as much a social goal as it is an economic and environmental goal. It resembles other worldly, widely accepted and conceptually difficult social goals such as democracy, justice and public health.

Since the 1992 earth summit in Rio the global community finds itself in a state of transition from unsustainable to the search for sustainable forms of development. With this bill we are now beginning to come around the corner, so to speak. The fact that the Minister of Industry decided to insert sustainable development as a main objective of his department is very heartening. He should be congratulated.

What are the principles that the officials in this new department should adopt in order to reach the objective of sustainable development? One, as I mentioned briefly, it is the fact that the environment and the economy must be integrated in the decision making process. This is probably the most important condition for sustainable development and also the most challenging.

Too often policies are directly against the requirements of sustainability.

• (1315)

The environment is introduced into the decision making only after a problem has developed. At that late date options are usually limited to investments for end of pipe technologies to recapture emissions from waste streams and put them somewhere else.

This leads to the still dominant mentality that a conflict exists between a healthy environment and a healthy economy. It is a false perception of course. We must make both mutually reinforcing, namely a healthy environment with a healthy economy. Integrated decisions have to be made at the front end of the development when goals and policies are being set, not at the end where costs are staggering, as in the case of acid rain abatement and as in the case of a number of other issues. However now is not the proper time or place to list these. Therefore, to conclude this point a fundamental reorganization of economic policies and priorities is needed.

Second, energy. In North America and in most OECD countries conventional energy sources, namely coal, oil, nuclear, gas, attract large subsidies. Total energy subsidies in the United States alone have been estimated at more than $40 billion annually. In Canada the last time we conducted an estimate on this item the figure came close to almost $5 billion in subsidies.

End of pipe technologies to improve the safety and reduce emissions where available cannot even begin to compete with the opposite efforts of these huge and indirect subsidies. Energy is a key policy field in order to achieve sustainable development.

Third, agriculture. Taxpayers and consumers of OECD countries spend well over $250 billion a year on agricultural subsidies. They not only encourage farmers to expend their basic farm capital; namely soil, water, trees, they also promote over production. This gives rise to demands for trade protection and export subsidies to enable those food products to be dumped in developing countries, thus in turn undermining their agriculture

as well. Here again end of pipe measures for soil and water conservation programs are too weak to compete with these subsidies.

Fourth, the nature of production. If high rates of growth are to be achieved and maintained a significant and rapid reduction in the energy and raw materials content of every unit of production is necessary. A healthy economy will no longer be one that uses increasing amounts of energy, materials, and resources to produce more goods, more jobs, more income.

This assumption still dominates policies in energy, agriculture, and other resource sectors unfortunately. It is a leftover from the mass economy of the industrial age marked by a steady expansion in the production of energy, depletion of resources and degradation of the environment.

The link between growth and its impact on the environment can be severed. The sustainable development economy, the new economy, is more efficient, uses less energy, less resources for every unit of production, uses more information, uses more intelligence.

Industry, if driven by the principles of sustainable development, is discovering a number of things. For instance it can redesign industrial processes which require less and more flexible capital plant. It can recycle and reuse by–products. It can invent products that use lighter and more durable materials and that require less energy to produce.

Industry is discovering that with reduced energy and material content, it can save an overall cost per unit of production and reduce environmental emissions and wastes. This is a far more effective way of reducing emissions than expensive end of pipe technologies that serve no other purpose. In addition resource reduction and recycling lead back to the beginning of the production cycle. They result in decreased mining and mining wastes, decreased water consumption and pollution, decreased deforestation and erosion.

• (1320)

Moving from unsustainable to sustainable development requires a shift in the government's agenda, a shift not only in the Department of Industry but also in the Department of Natural Resources, of trade, transport, agriculture, public works, external affairs, in our procurement policies, in the production of energy.

The Minister of Industry is leading in this respect but he cannot do it alone. A clear indication of whether a government is shifting its agenda to address sustainability seriously is its budget.

A budget establishes economic and fiscal incentives, as we all know, and also the disincentives, including forms of taxes within which farmers, consumers and business make their decisions. A budget is the most important environmental policy statement because it determines how the nation's environment will be degraded or enhanced, how its stock of ecological capital will be increased or reduced. Actually the budget should be regarded as an environmental statement.

It was with these considerations in mind, with a clear intent of keeping an election promise, with a commitment to the need to shift to sustainability that in May of this year the committee on the environment and sustainable development recommended to the government the creation of a commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. This individual would report to Parliament. He would report on progress made in the shift from unsustainable to sustainable policies, on programs, on budgets. We did this drawing from chapter IV of the election campaign red book. We were motivated at the same time by the conclusions of the earth summit in Rio, namely the understanding and belief that Canada must move toward a sustainable development agenda for the 21st century.

The minister and his department are off to a good start by making sustainable development the main goal of this new department in clause 5. The minister is saying that economic development is dependent and goes hand in hand with ecological capital; that the depletion of one leads to the weakening and depletion of the other.

The wording in this bill is a milestone toward establishing in law the interdependence between two values of tremendous importance to humanity. Already the recognition of sustainable development has clearly emerged in the policies of the minister of fisheries through the conservation he has introduced. This was somehow imposed on us by circumstances that have developed over the last 20 years.

Another positive development on this road toward sustainable development is the appointment in early July of a task force to study the baseline expenditures of government that may be in conflict with sustainability and environmental protection. This task force will report to the Minister of Finance next November and is keeping a promise made in the campaign red book.

Another positive development came last Thursday when both the Minister of Industry and the Minister of the Environment announced a strategy for the Canadian environmental industry. It is the realization at the political level, the highest level, that there is an enormous potential, enormous scope for the development of a new industry that draws its strength from the realization that we are entering a new phase in growth, a new phase in development and the linking of the two concepts of the economy and the environment being integrated in a rational manner.

• (1325)

Yet to come are the changes in other departments. We still have a long way to go but the beginning is good and promising. I want to applaud the minister for his initiative.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I listened with attention to the hon. member for Davenport, who I see as a man full of fine qualities who spends a great deal of energy protecting the blue planet. I have no doubt that the hon. member for Davenport made his allegations in good faith, but I have serious reservations about his party.

You know, when I look at a government that revels in big words such as sustainable development and plays on people's emotions by talking about global development and mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren, I am puzzled.

When I see, for example, a ship that has been lying at the bottom of the Gulf of St. Lawrence for 24 years and that is still leaking part of its cargo every day; when I see a government that leaves thousands of lights on 24 hours a day when the offices are empty; when I see overheated rooms; when I see the lawn in front of the Parliament Buildings being watered right after it rains or a few hours before heavy rains are forecast; when I see the quality of the water in the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes get increasingly worse; when I see that the $5.8 million that was to be spent on cleaning up the St. Lawrence in Phase I of the St. Lawrence Action Plan was actually invested in Miramichi, New Brunswick, several hundreds of kilometres away from the St. Lawrence River, these denunciations raise questions in my mind about the seriousness of the Liberal Party now governing Canada.

The question I could ask the hon. member for Davenport is this: Can you, sir, who show very good judgment particularly on environmental matters, guarantee that the party of which you are an active member will be as serious as yourself in the years to come, when you know as well as I do that time flies and that we are falling behind with regard to sustainable development?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member for Frontenac that the best guarantee is the fact that the minister has included in Clause 5 of his bill, about his new department's objectives, two very important key words for the first time, and that is a good start, a good promise, if you will.

Of course, the law must be enforced and the purpose of today's debate is, I think, to provide the minister and his department with the guidelines needed to promote the two key words "sustainable development". I hope that, as we are doing today in this House, the new government elected in Quebec City will also pass legislation aimed at promoting sustainable development. I am sure that the hon. member for Frontenac, given his influence with his colleagues in Quebec's National Assembly, will lobby, make representations to his provincial colleagues. The state of the St. Lawrence River is the result of past policies but today here in this House we are discussing the future. We are talking about the new behaviour for the industry of the future.

• (1330)

I am sure that if the Government of Quebec does the same thing, sets the same goal for provincially–regulated industries, we will see considerable changes in the St. Lawrence River and in all other rivers in the country. But we must exert pressure, we must say that solutions exist and we must, of course, finds ways to demonstrate that the economy and the environment can be integrated.

[*English*]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 43(2), I wish to advise Your Honour that henceforth the members speaking on the government side will divide their time into two 10–minute periods with five minutes for questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being allowed to speak today on the government's Bill C–46. At first glance, this bill only confirms the organizational changes made by the previous government in the summer of 1993. Caution, however, teaches us to read between the lines, and it is precisely between the lines that we see the reasons for opposing this bill.

In fact, the government should have put a stop to duplication and overlap by giving Quebec exclusive control over its economic development. Instead, the government is giving the Department of Industry authority over regional development in Quebec and in Ontario, contrary to what is happening in the West and in the Maritimes.

The Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec is a Quebec regional development agency and is not created under the specific legislation. It on took an order in council to transfer the regional development responsibilities of the Minister of Industry to the Minister of Finance. Nothing, however, guarantees that this order in council will be issued. It worries me that one day Quebec's regional development will fall into the hands of a minister from another province, as happened in 1991. Regional development could become lost in the administrative structure of the Department of Industry, and, I repeat, this worries me.

Bill C–46, Mr. Speaker, is the result of the previous government's wish to rationalize the machinery of government. In going ahead and implementing it, the Liberal government must give proof that it will effectively reduce government waste. And this will be far from conclusive, when one looks at the unnecessary and costly expenditures resulting from duplication and

overlap within the federal government and between the Canadian and Quebec governments.

Since the study by Germain Julien and Marcel Proulx, who made public the overlapping of federal programs with certain provincial programs, just from the point of view of co–ordination, civil servants must meet close to 1,000 times a year to see if they are not offering the same services, to harmonize program objectives and to ensure that they are not incompatible.

• (1335)

The Bélanger–Campeau Commission was clear on this point. If Quebec took charge of existing federal programs and provided the same services, we would save $233 millions in transportation and communication expenditures, $250 million in labour expenditures and $289 million in expenses associated with the collection of duties and taxes.

How efficient are measures implemented by two levels of government? More often than not, they cancel each other out because of competition and even conflict arising between the federal and provincial government. Program co–ordination is made difficult since neither government is prepared to make serious concessions on objectives or priorities. Even the famous infrastructure program had some hiccups. Did the former Minister of Municipal Affairs in Quebec not receive a letter of reprimand from the minister responsible for the program?

Just to know what services and financial assistance programs are available and to comply with laws and regulations, our constituents are forced to make multiple inquiries to keep abreast of programs and services. This is quite a burden, even more so when the programs and services are overlapping. Businesses have to assign employees to gathering this information and eventually taxpayers and consumers are affected.

In addition, there are people who do not use certain services because they do not know about them and program duplication does nothing to help. In fact, it even complicates the matter further. The people have little control over the way they are governed because of the confusion caused by overlapping. Such fragmentation of action makes it impossible for any one level of government to influence the course of things and, to make things even worse, they pass the puck to each other.

The provinces do have the right to opt out of federal programs. They do get financial compensation, but only for joint programs, which account for only five per cent of all overlapping. For these reasons, I seriously question the capacity of the Department of Industry to prevent such squandering. The bill before us provides rather for the status quo with regards to the mandate of the amalgamated departments. Is this another instance of semblance of change? Divisions are indeed changing names, but are we merging and blending the players? Nothing in this bill points that way. Nevertheless, the people gave a mandate to reduce waste in the federal government.

The Liberal government talks about "one–stop shopping" as a way to rationalize its internal operations. We all agree that this is a step in the right direction. But be careful: a mere merger that increases the size of an organization also reduces its productivity and efficiency. As a result, the bureaucracy is even more cumbersome. The Liberals have not yet shown that savings will be made with this "single window" concept.

The one in Montreal for business people saves the government no money. Customer service is improved, but what about the promised streamlining? We are entitled to demand that the Liberal government carry out all the restructuring of the federal machinery presented in this House in various bills that were intended to save money. The Bloc Quebecois demands it on behalf of all Canadians and Quebecers.

This bill also confirms existing overlap in regional development. Why let the Department of Industry meddle in our territory? For years Quebec has demanded control in this area. We have a very particular view of our requirements in this field. The decentralization of funding and authority begun by the new government in Quebec is the response which the regions were waiting for to take charge of their own communities.

• (1340)

The federal government would be well advised to do away with its centralizing attitude and instead implement this democratic vision of regional development. To say that regional development is neglected in Quebec is stating the obvious. Let me just mention the much publicised federal–provincial agreements on regional development in 1987 and 1988. I will admit that these agreements work very well in the western provinces and in the Maritimes. Indeed, since these agreements were signed, $1.2 billion was spent in Atlantic Canada, $630 million in the western provinces, and $165 million in Quebec.

Our regions suffer from the multiple interventions in regional development and from a lack of consistency of government policies. Let me give you an example. Would you believe that the government subsidizes an industry through the Federal Office of Regional Development, the only Canadian industry in its sector, while also allowing one of its departments to buy equipment from a competing American company? Yet this is what is happening to an industry in my riding.

This is unacceptable. If you believe in a product and subsidize the related research and development efforts, should you not also promote its marketing? Not so with this government, it seems. That situation should be corrected as soon as possible.

In its report, the interdepartmental work group on regional development set up by the Quebec government in 1991 looked at the issue of multiple interventions in regional development and concluded that: "In the present context, we can see the following negative results linked to the interventions of the two levels of government: confusion in terms of the regional sense of belonging, since the federal regions do not correspond to the administrative regions in Quebec; duplication of structures, regional consulting organizations and economic development agencies, as well as setting up of management committees and programs to reconcile various types of interventions; duplication of activities which results in high operation costs, given the actual budgets invested in regional development; too many government stakeholders, a situation which frequently results in confusion at the regional level".

May I remind hon. members that these comments were taken from the final report of the interdepartmental task force on regional development, published by the Government of Quebec in 1991. Quebecers are sick and tired of seeing their money used for the regional development of other provinces. This money should go to help small businesses and create small businesses and jobs in Quebec. Quebec does not want regional development that is based on the strictly industrial vision of the Minister of Industry in Ottawa. Quebec has had enough of the federal government's meddling and inconsistencies. Long ago, Quebec realized that only regional players understood the real needs of their environment. Enough of these projects, one–shot interventions and political decisions that siphon off funding from projects that are working perfectly well.

This bill is unlikely to end the uncertainty that is rife within the regional development agency. The Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec may be very anxious to harmonize its activities with Quebec's, but so far, it has not been successful. According to the Minister of Finance responsible for the office, it has not yet been able to harmonize its mandate with that of the Quebec government's business development centres, which means the centres are still at the mercy of unilateral decisions by Ottawa. For instance, the federal government is planning to merge the BDCs and CFCs, which are now the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources Development, and have a single agency that would come under the Federal Office of Regional Development. Representatives of these agencies in my region talked to me about their concerns. The very future of the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec is in jeopardy. Despite all the promises in the red book that regional development could be a high priority, the office's budget is shrinking.

• (1345)

In 1993–94, the office's budget was $232 million, which is expected to drop by $70 million over the next three years. After these cuts, the budget for the Federal Office of Regional Development will be down to $162 million, compared with $200 million for the West and $214 million for the Maritimes.

The concerns of the agencies responsible for regional development are quite understandable, considering the way the Federal Office of Regional Development operates. The office has failed to harmonize its activities with the comprehensive vision of local development established by the BDCs and the CFCs.

Programs designed in Ottawa and implemented in our regions do not always respond to the real needs of the people. The money is spread around without any real input from the community. The federal government should consider the strategic planning priorities of Quebec's regional municipalities and regions, in order to maximize the impact of activities by regional agencies responsible for local development.

As long as decision–making and budgeting remain centralized in Ottawa, the regions will not be able to establish the base they need for continuing development. Geographic isolation is one thing, but it is nothing compared with the remoteness of the decision–making process.

The Bélanger–Campeau Commission realized that the future of regional development in Quebec depended on the regions controlling the levers of development. I wish the government would do something and admit it is not on the right track with regional development in Quebec. The fact is that the economic base is foundering, the social fabric is disintegrating, the rural exodus has not been stemmed and young people are still the first ones to leave.

Remote areas are crying out for help and with good reason. Federal funding to Quebec regions has increased by 50 per cent since 1983, whereas during the same period it has increased by 300 per cent in western Canada and by 250 per cent in the Maritimes.

On a per capita basis, the results are even more catastrophic. In 1987, per capita federal spending was $431 in the Maritimes, $259 in western Canada and $64 in Quebec.

How can we bring some balance back? The federal government must reduce expenditures, eliminate tax breaks for family trusts as well as waste resulting from overlapping and duplication due mainly to infringement upon provincial jurisdictions. The billions of dollars saved this way could be used to bring some fairness back into federal funding of Quebec regional development.

In the last budget speech, the federal government announced that it would not renew subsidiary agreements respecting forestry and mining. And yet it is in these two areas that subsidiary agreements have been the most beneficial for Quebec. The Eastern Quebec Development Plan, which will no longer be funded, is a case in point. Close to 6,000 woodlot owners are extremely worried. In other areas, the government is reluctant to renew its agreements. Federal subsidies to farming amount to $225 million, $25.5 million of which, only 10 per cent of the envelope, goes to Quebec. For transportation, Quebec gets only $165 million, or 13 per cent, out of a total of $1.1 billion, slim pickings indeed.

Let us settle the matter once and for all by repatriating this money—in the form of tax points—so that it can be managed by Quebec. Regional development will be a winner. This is what we are all hoping for.

All kinds of small steps can help us get out of this mess. Nowhere in the red book is it suggested that investors be allowed to pump federally guaranteed venture capital into local businesses. And yet, this is the kind of solution people are offering to help their region.

• (1350)

The new Quebec government has developed a real regional development policy. The Parti Quebecois wants to promote in that respect the assumption of responsibility by the stakeholders, in a context of freer trade which eliminates some trade barriers and opens the regional economy up to stiff competition.

Let me quote some of the objectives of this positive policy which could serve as a model: high level of employment, competitive export–oriented economy based on sustainable development, continuity and high added value, better quality of life in large communities, viable land use and many more.

No consensus can be achieved at the federal level regarding regional development because priorities vary from province to province and from region to region. That is why we are stressing the need to decentralize budgets and decision–making powers. The future calls for a decentralization of powers towards decision–making units, that is to say the regions, these being in a better position to assess their own situation. This bill should be rejected because it does not provide Quebec with exclusive control over regional development.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's discourse regarding this bill.

Of particular interest was the concern about overlap. It is a concern many members on all sides of the House share based on the concept that we should get as many efficiencies into government as we possibly can.

My question for the hon. member would follow that if we were to simply remove the federal government from this debate, we would be left with the provincial governments which would then have an overlap problem with the municipalities. Would it not be better for us, as a national government, to set priorities nationally? Then to the best degree possible we could devolve responsibility for managing these programs to that order of government closest to the people being served.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Landry: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to answer this question because I know that, like us, our colleagues from the other party on this side are here to cut public spending and also to try and put some degree of order back in our fiscal house.

To answer my hon. colleague's question, with respect to duplication and overlapping, let me tell you that when we look at the statistics, precise figures—not my own but rather extremely precise figures provided by economists—and see a government reducing its activities and hear people say: "Look, we might as well let the federal government run it all", I for one cannot believe my ears.

When a problem arises in a community, a province or a country, I have a rule of thumb that goes like this: who is in the best position to resolve the problem? It may be the municipal, provincial or federal government. I think this is the basis for taking our problems in our own hands because we are the ones who are in the best position to assess the problem. Look, we know that savings would be achieved. We know that. It was established beyond any doubt.

These savings could be used, as I said repeatedly, to create jobs and put Canada back to work. Then we would be truly entitled to tell the people watching us and listening to us: "We have done something for the people of Canada and Quebec". And that is what I strive to do in this House to work and plead so that something is really done for all Canadians and Quebecers.

• (1355)

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from Lotbinière for his speech on Bill C–46. I would also like to comment on the remarks of my Reform colleague whose question seems very relevant in the political and economic debate Quebecers and Canadians are now engaged in, because he presents the problem in appropriate terms.

Regional development is one of the main reasons why there are sovereignists in Quebec. Some Quebecers want Quebec to take its destiny into its own hands because the federal government's priorities will never coincide with those of Quebecers and their government. That is not necessarily the case in the rest of Canada as such. Given Canadians' sense of belonging compared with that of Quebecers, we know that Canada can develop its own internal logic in terms of development because there seems to be a strong consensus.

As my colleague just said, the federal government can set Canadian standards from the Pacific to some point in the East, but the Government of Quebec and Quebecers themselves will always be opposed to Canadian standards that would apply to Quebec.

Therefore, I congratulate the hon. member for asking a relevant question that is at the heart of the constitutional debate that concerns us and keeps us busy, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Landry: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add something. The relationship between the federal and provincial governments reminds me a little of a family where, one day, the son tells his father: "Dad, I would like to start a business." So the father answers: "No, son, stay with me, am I not taking good care of you?" The father stands in the way of the son's development, prevents him from spreading his wings instead of saying, "Look, son, you are old enough to leave the nest." That is what we are asking for. We want to leave the nest so we can take control of our own destiny and continue to negotiate the same thing.

We keep on explaining that we do not want borders and barriers. What we want is good communications but we must get back what we are entitled to. For example, when we were talking about manpower training earlier, they said they wanted to save $250 million. If you want to throw away that $250 million, go ahead, but I myself would like to save it because money is important to me and I would like to re–invest it in my province, in small businesses and all that.

The Speaker: It being 2 p.m., the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

CASTLE KILBRIDE

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the opening of Castle Kilbride, Canada's newest heritage site.

On Sunday, September 25, thousands of local citizens gathered to commemorate this important occasion. It was my honour to present the certificate on behalf of the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada to the mayor of Wilmot to be placed in a time capsule. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage did an excellent job in representing the minister on this occasion.

Castle Kilbride, situated in Baden, Ontario, was built in 1877 as a showpiece of the Livingstone family. This stately home, Italianate in design, incorporates many unique features, including fresco paintings on the ceiling which are unrivalled in Canada, as well as many other beautiful original fixtures.

Most important, it provides us and generations to come with a fascinating look at the past. None of this would have been possible without the co–operation of all levels of government, as well as the tireless efforts of the mayor and the council of the township of Wilmot, supported by an army of volunteers from Wilmot township in Waterloo county.

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[*Translation*]

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert): Mr. Speaker, on hearing what some Liberal members are saying, I wonder if the Minister of Justice is not giving in to pressure from the gun lobby. The great majority of Canadians and Quebecers favour stricter gun control, especially for military weapons and handguns.

Given the consensus on this issue in Quebec, I would like to remind the minister that if the (Quebec) National Assembly had exclusive jurisdiction over the Criminal Code, effective gun control legislation would have been passed long ago. How many lives would have been saved if Quebec already had such legislation in force?

Representatives of associations of women, victims of violent crime, emergency physicians and big–city police from Quebec and Canada are all in favour of better gun control. Is the Minister of Justice listening to the people?

* * *

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday in Coquitlam, British Columbia, a march and rally were held to display the public's dissatisfaction with the current Young Offenders Act. This rally was the largest anti–crime rally ever staged in British Columbia, with over 3,000 residents attending.

The Reform member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who was a catalyst behind the rally, remarked that the most frequently heard phrase was that the Young Offenders Act is a joke. Another comment often heard from the crowd was that the courts are more concerned with the rights and protection of the offender as opposed to the rights and protection of the victim.

Those at the rally presented several clear messages: lower the age of the young offender, instil harsher penalties and publicize the names of offenders in order that the community will be better protected.

The clearest message of all was for the Minister of Justice to step out of his glass office and respect the pleas of the majority

of Canadians who want an act that represents mainstream Canadian values, and they do not mean Bill C–37.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, this weekend I had the privilege of attending the annual general assembly of the Canadian Environmental Network. I commend this organization for once again bringing together Canada's most active environmentalists for several days of thought provoking discussion.

I listened carefully during the weekend and in addition to the sharing of information I heard the general frustration expressed with regard to how the Liberal government is responding to critical environmental issues.

For example, the government has been in office almost 12 months and still has not proclaimed Bill C–13, the Environmental Assessment Act. Second, the government is responsible for the environmental assessment of low level military flight training in Labrador and has been most unfair to the Innu during this assessment process.

The federal government is considering funding cuts to the so–called interest groups such as the Canadian Environmental Network, the very groups that by their efforts have the ability to save governments money in the long run.

My congratulations to CEN on this year's annual general assembly.

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ELITE SEED FARM

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the P.E.I potato industry on the implementation of its five–year plan aimed at expanding the facilities and services at the Elite Seed Farm on Fox Island, P.E.I.

This newly renovated facility which is owned by the primary producers now has the distinction of being the only one of its kind in Canada. The facility's new laboratory gives it the capacity to produce disease free plantlets. The new production and handling equipment will provide more efficient and environmentally safe services to producers and consumers.

It will also play a significant role in marketing P.E.I. potatoes through the use of its conference facilities that will attract trade missions from around the world. This concept of attracting trade missions and on site explanations to the industry has been used by the CIGI in Winnipeg for years.

I congratulate the government and the industry on the co–operative approach taken.

LABOUR TRAINING

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the matter of labour training adjustment boards and how important it is to retrain our workforce so that Canada can compete in the international environment. This is the best way to deal with structural unemployment.

Labour force adjustment boards are staffed by local stakeholders in the training process. Since many of these recipients are on unemployment insurance it is important there there be some form of co–operation between Canada Employment and the boards. This is the only sensible course since it will ensure proper program delivery.

Training must have both a local and a national component to ensure the portability of newly acquired skills. We need to work together to increase the technical skills of all our labour force from sea to sea to sea.

* * *

REBUILT RESOURCES SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INCORPORATED

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, the North Bay area is celebrating the grand opening of Rebuilt Resources Skills Development Incorporated, another example of how Environment Canada's environmental citizenship initiative is helping Canadians work together to improve the environment.

Environment Canada has invested $56,000 in this partnership through the environmental partners fund. To date this partnership has resulted in over 340 tonnes of material being diverted from the local landfill.

• (1405)

The collected materials are reused and recycled where possible. Other items are used to furnish homes for low income families. Often the items are repaired and sold at the warehouse, resulting in a contribution to the local economy.

As a result of the centre's effort the project is now self–sustaining. Rebuild Resources currently employs four full time staff, three part time staff, and depends on its numerous volunteers.

This project could not have been possible without the support of community partners such as the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Sands Motor Inn, the Shell Environmental Fund, the Callander Lion's Club, and Employment and Immigration Canada.

Through the environmental citizenship initiative these Canadians were able to translate these environmental concerns into tangible action.

S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie): Mr. Speaker, last week the Canadian Council on Social Development published its latest report on the alarming increase of poverty in Canada.

According to the council's report, social programs are working, but the labour market is very sluggish and is responsible for the problems of unemployment and poverty that we are experiencing. The Bloc Quebecois has been repeating this message since the minister launched his reform of social programs. The federal government should first and foremost concentrate its energy on an active employment policy.

The Liberals, however, have identified social programs as the main disincentive to work and have decided to cut them as a way to encourage beneficiaries to return to work. The government is working on the consequences of the problem and not on its causes. The minister will find plenty in the council's report to redirect his approach and give hope to all those who are excluded from the labour market.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, yesterday a thousand law enforcement officers marched on Parliament Hill in the memorial for the 10 officers who were killed in the line of duty last year.

Today 51 names of prison guards, conservation officers and customs officials killed since 1967 were added.

Though all occupational deaths are tragic, the deaths of peace officers are even more so because they frequently come at the hands of someone else.

Many of these deaths could be prevented but they will only be prevented if we do our job in this House and pass the legislation necessary to get dangerous criminals off the streets of Canada.

We need an efficient removal system for our immigration department. We need gun control legislation that targets criminals and not the law–abiding Canadian public. We need to immediately revoke section 745 of the Criminal Code so that those individuals who murder police officers will have to serve the minimum 25 years that they were sentenced.

I join with the Solicitor General in calling for a memorial service next year when no new names are added to that list. Let us not forget that the decisions we make in this House may make a difference in attaining that goal.

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE DISTRIBUTION ALLIANCE INCORPORATED

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg's future as an air transportation hub for all of North America got a much needed shot in the arm this month. Northern Hemisphere Distribution Alliance Incorporated will receive up to $620,000 in federal government funding to research opportunities and develop action plans to realize its goal.

Local firms have come together with the Winnipeg airport to develop a multimodal transportation centre to act as a transfer point for cargo between the markets of the Pacific rim, Europe and North America.

This initiative has strong potential to create 6,000 new jobs in Manitoba, generate $105 million in tax revenue for the three levels of government and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of economic activity. It shows the benefits of co–operation between the private sector and government to foster growth in Manitoba and all of Canada.

I commend the Minister of Human Resources Development for his leadership in bringing this dream closer to reality.

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THE UNITED WAY

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, the United Way touches the lives of many Canadians. The United Way in Guelph—Wellington provides benefits throughout our community.

This organization cannot survive without our generosity. Donations ensure that many agencies provide valuable service to thousands in need.

This year the United Way has set a target of $1,115,000 in Guelph—Wellington. Besides the needed financial support United Way agencies are supported by volunteers and devoted staff such as Morris Twist, executive director of the social planning council.

I urge the residents of Guelph—Wellington to continue the good work of the United Way. Our dollars go to ensuring improved social well–being for our neighbours and friends. This agency truly does care.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, the city of Waterloo has been experiencing a major problem with the deterioration of sewer lines in part of the city where black pipe has been used.

• (1410)

This is a common problem in many Canadian municipalities. To replace underground service the usual practice has been to dig a trench for the main pipe located below the road to the

residence, a practice that is expensive, unsightly and restricts traffic flow.

This problem is being met by the creation of the Centre for Advancement of Trenchless Technologies at the University of Waterloo, with initial sponsorship provided by NRC, Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology Advancement, the city of Waterloo and private industry.

Trenchless technology holds the key to effective future maintenance and rehabilitational below ground infrastructure in Canada.

I would like to congratulate all the parties involved in this most important innovation that will benefit all Canadians.

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[*Translation*]

CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Health announced that centres of excellence for women's health would be created very shortly. What do we know about these centres? Not much, except that they will be geared to the particular needs of women. This is a rather vague federal initiative, where the provinces seem to have been left out of the implementation process.

Are these centres for excellence another empty shell, without authority or resources, stuck in a consultative role and remote from the decision–making centres? Medical research on women's health care needs to be re–evaluated. Considering the alarming number of women suffering from breast and lung cancer, it is a question that all women in Quebec and Canada are asking, prior to the final announcement.

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[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, the national debt of $530 billion–plus and the interest costs to service this debt are the single biggest problem facing Canada today.

Despite this fact, this government still spends $110 million more per day than it brings in. I challenge the team in red to stop hiding its head in its little red playbook, get off its benches, off the sidelines and make a real play for Canadians.

I ask the coach of the Liberal team: Who is prepared to stand up and take responsibility for this fiscal mismanagement? What serious actions is it willing to take? Where is the accountability and the spending cuts promised by the finance minister? When can Canadians expect tax relief from this government rather than tax grief? Why will no one on the other side do something about balancing the budget rather than consulting for another year?

The national debt clock today stands at $531,946,016,332.04. This Liberal government is adding to our debt at the rate of $1,473 per second. This amount keeps on ticking while the government just keeps on talking.

* * *

VILLA MARCONI

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the fund raising committee of the Villa Marconi on its very successful golf tournament held to raise funds for a seniors residence for Canadians of Italian extraction.

I want to especially congratulate the winning foursome headed by the one and only unbeatable Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. While the minister may have temporarily harmed my political popularity by walking away with all the best prizes, I want to thank him for his important contribution to this great event.

It is good to know that a member of Parliament can come to this community, become part of it and participate in this kind of event to the benefit of the Italian Canadian community in the national capital.

* * *

PEACE OFFICERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House of the peace officers memorial service conducted earlier today on Parliament Hill. This service honoured those persons who put their lives on the line every day, our correctional and police officers.

As the member for Kingston and the Islands, I have had the opportunity to see many of these courageous men and women in action. Our justice system relies on these people to make Canada a safe and secure place.

Today a commemorative plaque was unveiled in honour of the 51 peace officers killed in the line of duty since Confederation.

This plaque, however, should not be looked upon as a monument dedicated only to those who have lost their lives. It should be a reminder to all Canadians of the sacrifices and hard work of our peace officers that they perform on a daily basis.

On behalf of all members I applaud and thank the efforts of each and every one of Canada's peace officers. We are truly grateful.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

REFORM OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the CBC has obtained a copy of the proposed reform of our social programs that was submitted to cabinet last week by the Minister of Human Resources Development. The document says that the minister wants to centralize unemployment insurance, make enrolment in training courses compulsory for unemployment insurance recipients and make the spouse's income a factor in establishing eligibility for benefits.

• (1415)

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Would he confirm that his government intends to centralize the administration of social programs, which today is a provincial responsibility under the Constitution?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I realize that these documents, whose existence was alleged and reported by the CBC, are not official documents, but I think the public is starting to question the government's intentions, considering that the newspapers have documents which are said to have been submitted to cabinet.

I want to ask the Prime Minister if, in its proposed reform, the government intends to oblige the unemployed to take training courses, in order to be eligible for benefits?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we will have an official document next week, and if the hon. member wishes to make the usual comments under the circumstances, he will have to wait until the document is released. A week from now he will get all the answers to the questions he is asking now.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this document, whose existence is alleged by the CBC, exists. It is not a forgery. It is a document from a government source. So this document is disturbing, on the face of it, and I want to ask the government to tell us whether, as the document indicates, it intends to come down hard on women by making the income of the spouse an obstacle to their being eligible for their own benefits?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we will have an officially authorized document, not one obtained by a third party, at the beginning of next week, and the Leader of the Opposition will be able to make the usual comments at that time.

HAITI

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, one week after the intervention of American forces in Port-au-Prince, U.S. President Bill Clinton announced this morning before the UN General Assembly the immediate lifting of American trade sanctions against Haiti. President Clinton also urged other nations to do the same.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he tell us if Canada intends to lift its trade sanctions against Haiti today, as requested by the U.S. President?

[*English*]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, it is correct that President Clinton announced this morning that he would lift commercial flight sanctions as well as financial transactions that were imposed against Haiti as long as it did not apply to the military in Haiti.

Canada is willing to follow suit but first we want to see President Aristide's request for this which was made yesterday. It must be recognized that we cannot lift our own sanctions except by order in council.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Prime Minister. Will he tell us when air connections between Canada and Haiti will be resumed?

[*English*]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, as I just stated, Canada is willing to look at lifting this particular sanction against Haiti but it will have to be pursued through an order in council. I expect that will be pursued as soon as possible.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has refused to rule out new taxes on RRSPs. On Friday further alarm bells rang right across Canada when the Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions also refused to rule out taxes on private sector and public service pension plans.

It is time to clear the air, so I ask the Minister of Finance for clarification. Has he ruled out new taxes on private sector and public service pension plans?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear that the essence of the consultation process requires debate with

Canadians as to the tradeoffs and as to the measures they eventually expect the government to take. It would be to preclude that process for me to engage in individual comment on any suggestion at this time.

• (1420)

We look forward to the contributions of the members of the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois throughout that process on the finance committee. Members of the Reform Party simply do not understand the importance of this initiative by the government.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, certainly we understand consultation but we must have something to consult about. That is why we are asking the government some questions; we are asking questions because we need some answers.

From the minister's reply we can only conclude—and it is the only conclusion we can draw—that the government is considering a tax rate not only on RRSPs but on company pension plans and public service pensions. Millions of Canadians count on them for their retirement.

Why is the minister contemplating punishing Canadians for the irresponsible spending of his government?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we are not contemplating punishing Canadians. If there was irresponsible spending it was by the previous government. A great number of them were supported by members of the Reform Party.

We are about to embark upon the most comprehensive consultation process in terms of prebudget discussion that has ever been held. I do not understand why the members of the Reform Party are so anti–democratic that they fail to understand Canadians deserve to have their voices heard.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, no party worked harder to remove the previous administration because of its fiscal mismanagement than the Reform Party. No party will work harder to remove the Liberal government if it continues to spend $100 billion more than it takes in revenue in its term.

Canadians are concerned. They suspect the new pension plan taxes are somehow related to the long delayed social policy review.

Why is the minister contemplating robbing Peter to pay Paul, or should I say robbing Lloyd to pay Paul? Why is the government making Canadians more dependent on underfunded programs such as the old age security or the Canada pension plan by taking away their personal retirement savings?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, during Wednesday's question period the member for Calgary West stated that it was in the interest of his party and should be in the interest of the government to get the views of all Canadians on the unity of the country. He then went on to say: "I am surprised the Prime Minister does not want that".

I am surprised, indeed astonished, that the member does not want us to consult with Canadians on the economic future of our country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, Quebec paid all the costs of the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord in that province and also absorbed 25 per cent of the costs related to that same referendum in the other Canadian provinces. Last Thursday, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said to the media that the federal government owes nothing to Quebec, since he had no confirmation of an agreement between the Prime Minister and Premier of the time, Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Bourassa.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he tell us if he instructed his staff to check with former Prime Minister Mulroney whether such an agreement existed, as claimed by Mr. Bourassa?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister be kind enough to inform this House and all Quebecers of the results of this exercise, so that we know whether or not to expect payment of this $26–million debt owed to Quebec by the federal government?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not expect to have a definite answer for several days yet.

* * *

[*English*]

SALMON FISHERY

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, returns of early Stuart sockeye plummeted this year to the disastrous lows of 1992.

A leaked DFO document clearly lays the blame on the government for mismanagement and on a severely reduced enforcement effort on the Fraser River.

• (1425)

Will the minister commit to an independent review of management and enforcement practices on the Fraser River before our stocks reach the disastrous levels of those on the east coast?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, absolutely.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, I understand that to mean an independent review.

As a result of the leaked document reliable sources within the department report that in an effort to cover up mismanagement on the Fraser River this year, reports are being shredded and departmental personnel are being moved and transferred.

Will the minister assure the House that the witch–hunt in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will cease immediately and that no one will be penalized for releasing documents that will lead to the truth about the missing fish?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest we should be more concerned given that question with a sense of missing balance, fairness and reason in the House.

The fact of the matter is—

Mr. Hermanson: You don't know the answer.

Mr. Tobin: My colleague from the Reform Party doing politics a new way interrupts my attempt to give a complete answer.

The fact of the matter is that DFO will be announcing a completely independent review of the circumstances regarding the situation with respect to sockeye on the Fraser River. The review will involve four individuals, none of whom is involved with DFO, all of whom are experts in their fields outside the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

All the facts will be out. The chips will fall where they may. The attempt at paranoia, smear and accusation launched today will fail.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

For the past year, the minister has been going after middle income earners and the poorest members of society to replenish the government's coffers. The odious cuts in the unemployment insurance program and age credit announced in the last budget are cases in point. The minister is relentless in his attacks and is now considering taxing pension plan contributions.

Can the Minister of Finance confirm whether or not he intends to tax pension plan contributions?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered this question. What we are really seeking is a consultation process that is as open as possible. It is not for me to talk about or comment on particular suggestions as long as the finance committee has not presented its report. I am certain that the hon. member does not want to interfere with the process we have set in motion.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase my question: is the minister going to go on attacking middle income earners and ordinary taxpayers by taxing RRSPs and pension plans or is he going to go after the 2,000 taxpayers who last year did not pay a cent in taxes, rich Canadian individuals and companies who, more often than not, are defrauding Revenue Canada? This is the real question, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, clearly, in our last budget, we closed some of the loopholes which allowed some Canadians to not pay any taxes, namely by eliminating the $100,000 capital gain exemption which was by far the main reason for this.

It is very clear that what the member really wants is to do away with the consultation process. I would like to quote what the Reform member for Lethbridge had to say about our consultation process. "It is the most open budget process I ever was involved in. Efforts to open up the budget process and to take into account pre–budget consultations are a welcome innovation".

Could it be that the Bloc Quebecois is less democratic than the Reform Party?

* * *

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, many native communities in Canada have squalid conditions.

• (1430)

The health minister today announced a $243 million program to alleviate some of the squalid conditions. The Canadian Medical Association has other solutions: clean water, more aboriginal physicians.

I wonder if the minister could comment on whether her program addresses those fundamental problems of our natives.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the announcement this morning had to do with the health of aboriginal communities, helping them heal themselves. It is meant to

deal with the very real problems of aboriginal suicide, solvent abuse and nursing problems.

That is my responsibility and I am very committed to it. I think we have made a great step forward in helping aboriginal communities help themselves.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has identified $85 million in inefficiencies in the non–insured native health care plan.

Can the minister tell us today what mechanisms there are in this program to address accountability and inefficiency?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we have taken some steps to address the concerns of the Auditor General. In this particular program we are working with aboriginals so they administer their own programs.

When a person takes responsibility of his own actions then the dollars spent are spent far more wisely.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LOBBYISTS

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, lobbyists have just shown how effective they are. According to documents obtained under the Access to Information Act, they have apparently managed to influence the very legislation that was to limit their influence.

Does the Prime Minister admit that, once again, lobbyists have demonstrated their effectiveness by extensively watering down the red book's commitment to limit their sphere of influence?

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the member's attention that this bill is before the parliamentary committee right now. We will be listening to all recommendations.

At this point there is opportunity for amendments. If those amendments make sense then the government will look at them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I consider the reply to be a negation of my statement, and I ask the Prime Minister again, in light of this reply, how he can say that this bill has not been influenced by lobbyists, given the noticeable absence of provisions to force lobbyists to divulge their fees as well as provisions to eliminate the tax deduction for expenses incurred by businesses to engage the services of lobbyists, provisions they were demanding when they formed the opposition.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, we have taken all of the recommendations that the previous parliamentary committee put forward during the last session of Parliament.

As I stated earlier in my answer, it is before committee right now and work is just beginning. Our second session is this afternoon. We fully expect that members of the opposition will bring ideas forward. We will debate these. If they are in the best interests of making the bill better then we are prepared to amend the bill.

* * *

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader. I have obtained a draft of the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario recommending that the riding of Cochrane—Superior be abolished and annexed to existing ridings.

[*Translation*]

My question is for the government House leader. What can the eleven members of Northern Ontario ridings and their constituents do to ensure that we may continue to be represented by eleven members in this House instead of ten, as recommended by the commission?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised an important point. As the House knows, the House committee on procedure and elections is currently holding hearings with a view to making recommendations for new legislation on redistribution. I understand it may be completing its work in the next month or so.

• (1435)

The government will take that report seriously when presenting new legislation. If that legislation is adopted before next June then the process which has so concerned the hon. member and his colleagues will not go into effect. Instead the redistribution will be based on the new legislation.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday two Manitoba farmers had their homes searched by Canada customs officials and RCMP to confiscate documents related to the export of wheat to the U.S. One of these farmers was not even given the opportunity to be at home when three special customs agents and six RCMP approached his wife and family with search warrants.

My question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. Is this the Liberal government's approach to dealing with hard working farmers who are trying to make a decent living?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, it would not be appropriate for any member of the House of Commons to comment on an RCMP investigation. The question should be directed to the Solicitor General or to the Minister of National Revenue.

On the policy issue that is involved there are obviously laws in place in Canada today dealing with the appropriate procedure by which grain may be exported. In a civilized and democratic society it is important that all of the laws be obeyed, not just those with which we may selectively agree or disagree.

.Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, one of the farmers my colleague referred to is Andy McMechan who took advantage of the open borders guaranteed under the free trade agreement to avert foreclosure by the Farm Credit Corporation.

Why is the Prime Minister and his cabinet treating these farmers like drug dealers with these heavy–handed tactics?

An hon. member: They are breaking the law.

Mr. Benoit: Why do they not instead do the right thing and allow farmers to elect a board of directors to give them control over their organization, the Canadian Wheat Board?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question in the House last week pertaining to marketing systems for Canadian wheat, I indicated that I would be providing a forum later on this fall at which the differing views on the subject can be expressed.

It is true to say that there are farmers in western Canada who hold profoundly different opinions on the question of the appropriate marketing system to have in place for their grain. I think it is appropriate that they should be provided with a forum within which the different sides of that particular debate can be aired so that when any future decisions are made they are based on facts and solid information and not merely on innuendo.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FISHING QUOTAS

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, last July, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans refused to grant Quebec fishermen turbot fishing quotas after having encouraged them in the spring to gear up for this type of operation.

Considering that it was at his suggestion that they equipped themselves for turbot fishing, does the fisheries minister undertake today to fully compensate Gaspesian fishermen, who have invested one million dollars to be able to fish the quotas the minister subsequently refused them?

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely surprised at this question, given that on at least three or four occasions the member asked me for private discussions just outside that door about this matter. On each of those occasions I explained to the member that the scientific evidence with respect to turbot was very bad. He agreed. I told the member that it was extremely unlikely that there would be new licences.

The member knows it is absolutely false to suggest that the federal government encouraged people either in Quebec or in Newfoundland, because this occurred in both places, to gear up for a fishery that was not going to take place.

The member should also know that on Monday past the wisdom of the federal position in Ottawa in taking a conservationists stance was confirmed when the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization and all of the member states from around the world in that organization slashed international quotas by over 50 per cent and for the first time regulated the turbot catch because of the critical condition of these stocks.

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, my question is in the public domain. Informal discussions—I would also like to remind the hon. minister that, on July 25, he publicly stated that he had encouraged the fishermen to do so. I will give him another chance and phrase my question differently.

How can the minister reconcile refusing turbot quotas to Gaspesian fishermen with offering the major part of the remaining turbot quota to a single company, namely Seafreez, a company located in his riding and one that used Russian trawlers?

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, what the member is not saying—and this is regrettable, and may I say to the member personally, surprising—is that the Seafreez operation he is talking about is up in the Davis Strait in area O. It is an area so far north that no Canadian vessel of any sort is operating there or has ever operated there, and no vessel in Quebec or Newfoundland or anywhere in Atlantic Canada has the technological ability to be up there.

With the exception of the offshore shrimp fleet, what the hon. member is not saying is that Seafreez has been up there for the last five or six years and had developed this fishery in the day when the previous administration and a minister on the other side of the House made those decisions.

To somehow give the impression as had been left, that this is a new decision and a new allocation by the current minister is false. Not a pound of the turbot is processed in Newfoundland, let alone my riding. It is processed in Canso, Nova Scotia.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, on February 4 I asked the justice minister to take action to review the Patrick Kelly case.

Despite the fact the minister said he would act on this matter, seven months have passed and still Mr. Kelly's lawyer has not received the complete police files necessary to prepare for the review.

Will the minister commit to the House that he will release the complete set of police files immediately?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in the last analysis, because this is an application under section 690 of the Criminal Code, I am personally responsible for dealing with the merits of Mr. Kelly's application for the crown's mercy.

It is a responsibility I take very seriously. The process that has been in place since the day we received the application in early 1994 has been monitored on a regular basis.

The member makes reference to police records. Representatives on my behalf attended at the police headquarters in Toronto to review the entire police file. We have taken the position with counsel for Mr. Kelly that we will disclose to him all of those records that are relevant to the issues raised in the application, and that will be done.

I can tell the hon. member that day by day and week by week I am monitoring this investigation. It is being conducted thoroughly and is entirely in accordance with reasonable time limits.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that there is not an independent inquiry in this case as suggested by the Marshall commission and, more important, that the key witness who said that she lied has never been interviewed.

Where is the justice in this case?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the justice in this as in all other cases will come from a thorough, methodical and objective analysis of the facts.

It is easy to suggest, if one's only point of reference is reports in the media, that the witness who allegedly recanted her testimony should by now have been interviewed. However, an acquaintance with the facts of this case would also lead one to conclude that before any such interview is carried out the persons doing it should examine all the documents, be conversant with the entire record, and know exactly what questions to ask.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Canadian environmental industries today employ over 150,000 people with annual sales of $11 billion.

• (1445)

Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell this House what the government intends to do to ensure this growing and important part of our economy has the necessary tools to compete tomorrow and into the 21st century?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I will not take the time of this House to read the announcement we made on Thursday. I will however repeat that this government intends to aggressively make sure that Canada's green jobs become the green jobs not only by government procurement but also for export around the world.

As a matter of fact, the Minister for the Environment of the Philippines is in the gallery today. I met with him to talk about how Canada could sell our water technology and our solid waste technology internationally. We intend to turn that trade deficit into a green surplus for Canadian jobs.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BLOOD SUPPLY SYSTEM

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

On September 12, the Minister of Health announced at a press conference that she would set up an advisory committee of experts whose role would be, among other things, to determine whether some of the information on the blood supply system should be disclosed or not. She said that given the current level of interest in this matter, she had to decide whether not releasing some of the information was still in the public interest.

How can the minister claim to act openly when she asked a committee of experts to tell her what she should hide from the public on the deficiencies of the blood supply system?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, what I announced is that I would ask an advisory committee of

experts to review the ethical and legal issues related to opening up the whole process. As was seen from the confusion that spread throughout the country when the FDA report was made public, it is certain that one must always be very careful in these areas.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that by putting in place a policy to hide information the public has a right to know, she has made Canadians distrustful of a blood supply system already hurt by the tainted-blood tragedy?

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that all members of this august Chamber would behave very responsibly when it comes to the health of Canadians. I certainly intend to do so. Yes, I am very interested in being open and transparent but we must always balance questions of ethics with legal considerations.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, the debates which took place in this House last week on the issues of immigration and crime were the same as ones which took place this summer in my riding.

A magazine article dubbed "Nanaimo—Heroin city" identified the Vietnamese community as a major player in the drug trade. As a result the Vietnamese community asked me to set up a meeting with the RCMP and all levels of government to discuss the issue, which we did.

Is the minister of immigration prepared to accept an invitation to meet with the Vietnamese Canadian community in my riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan to hear firsthand their proposals for changes to our immigration laws?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in the last eight months we have been meeting with Canadians not only in the gentleman's riding but also right across the country.

I applaud the member for having held a public forum in his riding. I hope at some point he will provide me and my officials with the results of that forum.

* * *

• (1450)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I will provide the minister with that and I renew the invitation.

My supplementary question is for the Solicitor General. Nanaimo has been promised extra drug enforcement officers to help address this problem, yet to date his ministry has failed to fulfil that promise.

Why has the minister not undertaken a redeployment of resources to Nanaimo when the commanding officer of the RCMP in British Columbia has clearly stated there is a great need?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, matters of deployment of RCMP officers around the country are handled by the commissioner and not directly by the Solicitor General. However I will be happy to inquire of the commissioner and get back to the hon. member about this matter.

* * *

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. It concerns the proposal made last week by Canadian Pacific to purchase that part of Canadian National Railways which exists east of Winnipeg.

Could the minister tell this House today what the position of the government is with respect to this proposal? Is the minister prepared today to reject not just the proposal but the idea out of hand? If he is not, can he tell the House what process he has in mind for consulting the shareholders, who are basically the Canadian people, as to what the position of the government should be with respect to this proposal?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member obviously this proposal submitted by CP is an unsolicited bid, as the hon. member would know. As I have indicated, we do not propose to respond to that bid in any hasty way. We are going to have it analysed very carefully.

The whole question the hon. member raises with respect to the CP bid is one of government policy. Obviously we will want to have a lot of input because it would be a major decision if we were to change the fundamental rail policy in this country as this bid would have that effect.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Transport could guarantee today that in whatever process the government undertakes to consider this proposal, the employees who might be affected, the communities that might be affected, and the regions that might be affected, that all these stakeholders will be consulted appropriately and their views will be taken into account.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member would know, a number of steps would have to be taken. However, I do not want to give any indication as to how the government is going to respond to an unsolicited bid.

If we were to entertain this kind of change in the rail system in Canada it would be one that would involve the levels of government, employees and communities that would be affected. It would be a major policy decision. Nothing of that nature would be undertaken hastily.

I do want to reassure the hon. member that the Government of Canada is undertaking and has been working actively at reviewing a national rail policy. Obviously with the merger talks that went on between CN and CP there was a need to address that entire question and we are going to continue to actively pursue that.

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[*Translation*]

TROIS–RIVIÈRES AIRPORT

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In December 1992, the Minister of Transport gave his written agreement in principle to pay a grant to the city of Trois–Rivières for renovating and expanding its airport. On April 24, 1993, his colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, announced his government's commitment to pay $3 million to the city of Trois–Rivières for this purpose. Despite these government commitments—

The Speaker: Order! Will the hon. member please put his question?

Mr. Rocheleau: Now, despite these commitments and 17 months later, the federal government is still dragging its feet.

Can the Prime Minister explain why, 17 months later, his government still refuses to honour the previous government's commitment?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, of course, for nine years, a member of Parliament represented that riding. The commitments to which my hon. colleague refers were an agreement in principle, as he said in his question. Even in Trois–Rivières, it takes money to meet such commitments.

• (1455)

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières): Are we to understand from the government's attitude that it intends to go back once again on commitments made by the previous government?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows very well, I met with him on this subject and explained to him that no air service is planned for Trois–Rivières—that fact remains. Coming up with a solution is particularly difficult, especially for the runway. I promised the hon. member that I would look into the matter. I asked him to contact the man who represented that riding in Parliament for nine years. I will do what I can so that the people of Trois–Rivières have an effective service that fits in with the new airport management system in this country.

[*English*]

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GUN CONTROL

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice knows that the merit of gun control legislation cannot be determined by the claims over reduced homicides made by one side and the arguments about money and time costs by the other side. Rational social policy is made by scientific estimates of the expected benefits in relation to costs.

Can the minister assure us that he will have for debate in this House and consideration by all Canadians scientific estimates of the benefits and costs for each gun control measure proposed by the government?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the process I am following in putting together proposals for this House involves looking at the record, the statistics of crime in Canada, the effectiveness of laws already in place, and consulting broadly with Canadians interested on a wide variety of these subjects.

I fully expect the proposals we bring forward will be well grounded in fact and in experience.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Atlantic fishing communities that depend on the turbot fishery, such as Canso in my riding, were encouraged to learn that at the meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization in Dartmouth. The European members agreed to important conservation measures to protect the turbot resource outside Canada's 200 mile zone.

Can the minister inform this House how these important commitments will be enforced?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the member has had a strong interest in the whole question of turbot for a great deal of time. The plant in Canso is the major beneficiary of the turbot fishery conducted in area O which my friend from the Bloc Quebecois was so concerned about a moment ago.

I want to assure my colleague and through him the people of Canso whose cause he has raised so eloquently and so frequently with me and other ministers, that because of the regulation of the turbot catch and the reduction in the catch from 62,000 tonnes to 27,000 tonnes, Canada will have for the first time the right to

board and to inspect the vessels catching turbot and to ensure that the proper rules are being followed to conserve this important stock.

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[*Translation*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The CRTC approved a Bell Canada request to increase the fee for its basic telephone service, as of January 1, 1995.

Will the minister tell us if he intends to ask the CRTC to review this approval, considering that this new increase will directly affect the family budget of low–income Quebecers and Canadians?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is responsible for communications, not telecommunications. The issue raised by the hon. member comes under the legislation on telecommunications.

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[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period in refusing to rule out new taxes on RRSPs and private pension plans, the Minister of Finance referred to the necessity to consult Canadians on this issue.

Will the minister tell the House precisely which Canadians have been demanding new taxes on their RRSPs and private pension plans? Is it not true in fact that only this government and this minister want to see these new taxes?

• (1500)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, in the consultation process that is about to ensue we are going to set out all areas of government spending. We are going to set out all areas of government tax expenditures.

It is through that process that we will indeed obtain the views of Canadians.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of Mr. Bertie Ahern, Finance Minister of Ireland.

I also draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of Mr. Angelalcala, Minister of the Environment for the Philippines.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that under the provisions of the Parliament of Canada Act, chapter 42, first supplement of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, the membership of the Board of Internal Economy is now as follows: Mr. Gray (Windsor West) and Mr. Gagliano, members of the Queen's Privy Council; Mr. Boudria and Mr. Hopkins, representatives of the government caucus; Mr. Duceppe and Mr. Gauthier (Roberval), representatives of the Bloc Quebecois caucus and Mr. Harper, representative of the Reform caucus.

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ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, and pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), the government's response to 16 petitions.

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EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table in the House today the report on a contract administered on behalf of the Government of Canada by the Export Development Corporation for the fiscal year 1992–93.

The report explains the objective and the purpose of financial services provided under the Canada account. It describes the administration of the account and the transaction approval process.

The tabling of this report is not required by statute nor by the standing orders. It is tabled based on a recommendation made by the Auditor General in his 1988–89 annual report.

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, as parliamentarians I do not believe we have the authority to deny the rights of petitioners even if their personal beliefs contradict our own. MPs should present any and all petitions from their constituents.

Therefore I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Mrs. Kathleen Morck who, along with 31 other Calgary Centre constituents, does not support any government legislation that would give special favours or rights to homosexuals.

At the beginning of my term I took an oath to represent the wishes of all constituents to Ottawa and not the wishes of Ottawa to them.

I thank Mrs. Morck and encourage all concerned Calgarians to continue to petition this House on concerns that directly affect their lives so that legislation is drafted from the bottom up and not the top down.

• (1505)

ABORTION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions today. The first one is from the people of my riding who pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is from people in my riding who pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my third petition is from some good people in town of Frankford, Ontario, who have asked me to present this petition on their behalf and I am pleased to do so.

They pray and request that Parliament not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the Human Rights Act to include in the prohibitive grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

ABORTION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present this petition bearing 181 signatures from my constituents of Calgary Northeast.

These petitioners pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

NATIONAL UNITY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I present a petition signed by some of the residents of Etobicoke—Lakeshore asking that Parliament inform the Leader of the Official Opposition that he is not supporting the majority view of the residents of Etobicoke—Lakeshore when he is travelling to permit and promote the separation of Quebec from Canada.

ABORTION

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty today to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. The petition is signed by residents of my constituency, primarily from the communities of Paradise Hill and St. Walburg in northwest Saskatchewan

The petitioners note to Parliament that the majority of Canadians respect the sanctity of human life and state that human life at the preborn stage is not protected by Canadian society. Therefore the petitioners call upon Parliament to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, today I have three petitions. The first deals with prescription drugs. The petitioners indicate that the cost of prescription drugs is excessive and they therefore call upon Parliament to ensure that lower priced generic drugs are made available.

PAROLE

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, these two petitions deal with section 745 of the Criminal Code which allows for applications for parole after 15 years for first degree murder.

The petitioners request that section be repealed. There are in excess of 300 signatures on these two petitions.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present this petition containing 2,541 signatures on behalf of the constituents of Wild Rose.

These petitioners pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal of Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I present 25 signatures from people in the Ottawa area, six from my city of Nepean.

These petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

• (1510)

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the honour to present on behalf of constituents of Vegreville two petitions.

These petitions request Parliament to ensure present provisions to the Criminal Code prohibiting physician assisted suicide are enforced and not to make changes to the law which would allow the aiding or abetting of active or passive euthanasia.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have two petitions representing the views of over 600 Erie constituents which I wish to present to the House.

The first petition calls on the government to enforce the existing provisions of Criminal Code prohibiting assisted suicide. It asks that no change be made which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

ABORTION

Mr. John Maloney (Erie): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on the issue of abortion. The petitioners request the government to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the privilege of presenting three petitions.

The first petition has five pages. The majority of Canadians respect the sanctity of human life and whereas human life at the preborn stage is not protected in Canadian society, therefore your petitioners pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, the second petition reads whereas societal approval including extension of societal privileges would be given to same sex relationships if any amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act were to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation as a grounds of discrimination, therefore your petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act, or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, the third petition reads the majority of Canadians respect the sanctity of human life and whereas the majority of Canadians believe that physicians in Canada should be working to save lives, not end them, therefore your petitioners pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously, and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

I would like my constituents to know that I support all three of these petitions.

VIOLENCE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues will know that violence and abuse on radio and television have become major concerns of the Canadian population.

These petitioners want government to ensure that the CRTC regulate the amount of violence and abuse on radio and television. They point out that very often what occurs in terms of violence and abuse counteracts the efforts they make in raising their families.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions with a total of 156 signatures, both dealing with the same subject, which I would like to table pursuant to Standing Order 36.

These petitions come from the town of Maple Creek in my riding and from the towns of Burstall and Leader in my riding.

The petitions are very similar: whereas a majority of Canadians believe that privileges which society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships, and whereas societal approval including the extension of—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps the member would be kind enough to summarize the petition, as we cannot have everybody reading petitions; it would take forever.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are praying and requesting that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

I would like my constituents to know that I do endorse these petitions.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition to Parliament duly certified by the clerk of petitions and signed by 87 residents of my constituency of Okanagan—Shuswap.

This petition raises the concerns shared by many Canadians of all religious faiths, namely that the government has been rumoured to be considering amendments to various pieces of human rights legislation regarding the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

This petition asks Parliament to take no such action.

* * *

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 38, in the name of the hon. member for Mercier, could be made an order for return, that return would be tabled immediately.

I must say that the hon. member showed a great deal of patience, but when she sees the answer which I will table today, she will understand why it took so long.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that question No. 38 be deemed to have been made an order for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 38—Mrs. Lalonde:

What organizations and businesses received a grant under the national literacy program or any other literacy program, (*a*) how large were those grants and (*b*) where are these organizations and businesses located?

Return tabled.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand in the House to speak to Bill C–46 respecting the Department of Industry Act.

In the past few years the world economy has been undergoing tremendous change. This has resulted in tumultuous conditions for the Canadian economy and for Canadian workers. For too long Canadians have watched the industries that have underpinned our economy eroding while nothing has been growing in their place.

Today 1.5 million Canadian workers are without jobs, 46 per cent of our citizens fear for the security of the jobs they hold, and for the first time in memory parents believe their children will have a lower standard of living than they themselves have enjoyed.

Over the last six years I have met with far too many of my constituents from Nepean concerned about their future. They call me desperately seeking advice on where to find jobs and what to do to retrain themselves for the evolving information based economy.

I have also received calls from entrepreneurs of small and medium sized businesses complaining about the lack of willingness on the part of banks to provide them with access to the capital they require to finance their enterprises. Let us not forget that small and medium sized businesses are the engines of growth in our economy.

One key to success in the changing world economy will be our emphasis on research and development. The track records of previous governments in this regard have been dismal and we must reverse that trend.

Nepean is the high tech capital of Canada. Research and development are particularly important to my Nepean riding which represents more than 100 high tech industries. Nepean is the home of Canada's largest research and development organization called Bell Northern Research. Others such as Northern Telecom, Computing Devices Canada and Gandalf are only four of a hundred companies working in the technological field and employing over 6,000 people.

Co–operation and assistance from the federal government have been integral parts of their success. The continuation of their growth and the birth of innovative enterprises in the high tech field will hinge on the continuation and improvement of the assistance offered by the government.

Canadians are looking to our government, not as a place to fall back on when they hit hard times but for leadership and direction, leadership predicated on development policies to lead Canadian workers, small and medium sized business and the high tech sector through these tough and changing times.

This means getting our house in order and getting expenditures and deficits under control. It means seeking consensus from Canadians on our economic and social goals and aspirations. More important, it means the ability to encourage partnerships in a spirit of co–operation among industrialists, entrepreneurs, educators, scientists and all levels of government to meet those goals and aspirations.

Bill C–46 is one of several steps taken by the government to chart a clear vision toward a renewed economy capable of providing wealth and prosperity for all Canadians into the 21st century. It recognizes that to achieve the goal of economic renewal the appropriate resources and energies of government must be marshalled in a coherent, efficient and effective way.

• (1520)

The bill places in one organization under one minister the key functions necessary for economic renewal. The Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Department of Communications, Investment Canada and the Department of Industry, Science and Technology now become the Ministry of Industry.

This will establish one minister, one deputy minister and one departmental team, all dedicated to the achievement of an innovative economy in Canada. At the same time it will provide a single forum, a single listening post and a single gathering place to collect all expressed interests and ideas from all parties concerned with creating a strong, vibrant economy.

There is much greater opportunity under the organization provided by the bill to take the interests of various groups into account during the policy development stage. For example, by placing the responsibility for consumer and corporate affairs in the Department of Industry we have guaranteed that consumer voices will have a place around the table when policies are established affecting the Canadian marketplace. This way consumer protection efforts can be focused on preventing problems rather than correcting them after the fact.

As with consumer interests so it is with science and technology, with regional development and with small and medium sized business. All necessary voices will be heard as policies are being developed, as agreements are being negotiated and as decisions are being taken.

This organization not only brings effectiveness and cohesion to government operations. It also seeks to bring about cost efficiency to government departments. In this era where every attempt must be made to reduce costs and maximize the efficiency of our resource utilization we cannot afford the waste that accompanies duplication and overlap in government functions.

Bill C–46 reduces the numbers of teams from four to one. Overhead and support costs are reduced by eliminating the duplication involved in running four separate organizations. Internal communications are simplified. Direction and supervision are made more effective. Finally fewer committees are necessary.

These kinds of streamlining and cost savings are what Canadians have been asking for. Under Bill C–46 small and medium sized business remain at the focal point of policy development. For example, with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce the government is exploring the feasibility of developing a business network strategy to set up some 30 business networks to foster co–operation and collaboration among small and medium sized firms with common interests.

This is good news for aspiring entrepreneurs in Canada and in my riding of Nepean. Underpinning our economic renewal efforts the government has recognized the importance of science and technology. This is good news for the city of Nepean and the high tech industry in Nepean.

A major science and technology review is under way. This will ensure the $6 billion we spend in this area every year is producing maximum value in our efforts to institute an innovative economy.

The government is listening to Canadians. It is prepared to take tough decisions to reduce or cut funding in programs that are not essential to economic renewal. We are interested in setting our house in order and reducing the burden of debt on Canadian taxpayers.

The government will not try to force economic growth by fertilizing it with massive sums of money we do not have. Instead Canadians can expect leadership and co–operation among the federal government and all interested groups necessary for the achievement of our reachable objective: the development of sustained growth and prosperity for all Canadians.

Bill C–46 is merely one of many steps being proposed and followed by the government in achieving its number one goal of job creation. I commend the Minister of Industry for taking these steps. I support his steps. I wish him well and offer him my assistance in this and all future economic endeavours for this wonderful country of Canada.

• (1525)

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Nepean for her reasoned discourse this afternoon.

I have a question concerning the program reviews currently under way. Why would we have the reorganization and the consolidation and then have a program review? Would it not make more sense to do the program review first and then consolidate on the basis of the review?

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

That is probably a method that could be used, but I believe it was the government's and the Prime Minister's plan that when he formed the new Government of Canada it would be much easier for him to carry on with the reduction. It had already been put under way by the previous government and a lot of it was already in place. It was much easier for him to carry on with that reduction to the degree he has.

Is it much easier for a government to continue on a plan of reduction if it starts out the term of its mandate not up here with 40–some cabinet ministers but down here with 22 cabinet ministers and 22 government departments? Then if the need is there to build upon it, is it not a bit easier to build upon it if the need is there rather than start at the top and then have to start chopping back? The chopping back had already started before we ever took office as the Government of Canada.

I believe it was the appropriate way to do it and I guess only time will tell.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in the debate on the reorganization of the department of industry, Bill C–46.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the nature of my riding of London—Middlesex and illustrate just how important the activities of the department are to my constituents.

This area of small and medium sized business is a part of Ontario which is a leader in southwestern Ontario in that economic activity. Whether it is a business that is a spinoff of the automotive industry or whether it is the agri–food industry, London—Middlesex is one of the busiest areas of southwestern Ontario. It is a satellite of the agri–food industry in Middlesex county, one of the most productive agricultural counties in our part of Canada.

There is a very wide variety of small and medium size business activities in the riding of London—Middlesex so the constituents are very interested in the proposed reorganization.

As well I am pleased to represent a number of major corporations of national and international repute: General Motors Diesel of Canada, 3M Corporation and Cuddy Foods, to mention only three. In mentioning these three corporations one can easily recognize the scope of activities which take place in the riding of London—Middlesex. I say again it is with great interest my constituents hear of the proposed changes and await the reorganization of the department of industry.

It is all too obvious that we have had an erosion of the Canadian economy. We know that on all sides of the House. We hear it daily. As well we should, because Canadians have a right to expect these important issues will be aired.

The so–called corporate downsizing that has been taking place as part of global reorganization has caused a job crisis of major proportions in the country. Frankly my constituents feel the previous government was the government of the big corporations. It put all its eggs in that basket and now Canadians have paid the price in the last few years for that foolish approach to government.

All too often small and medium sized businesses were ignored. This is simply the wrong way to go if we are going to pull out of this economic crisis.

People well know the unemployment numbers and all too often we can disregard them as statistics. Day after day in my riding office like hon. members in all parts of the House I have seen the human face of unemployment, men and women young and old alike, highly educated and well trained, and those untrained and unskilled. Day after day the human face of unemployment has come into my riding office crying for some kind of help from the government. As a member of Parliament you wish you had a magic phone that you could pick up and instantly produce a job.

• (1530)

This contact has served to reinforce the real need to concentrate on small and medium sized business. That is how we will get Canadians working again, not by following the agenda of the previous Tory government which all too often ignored these sectors of the economy and simply focused on corporate Canada.

Canadians well know that we have been living beyond our means and that certainly includes government. Government has been part of the problem and it is high time we became part of the solution.

No party in the House has a monopoly on knowing that the debt and deficit are major preoccupations of the citizens of Canada. If anyone listens even a little bit to the concerns of Canadians he or she knows it is right at the top of the list of

concerns. Indeed it dominated, as well it should, much of the debate in the last federal election a year ago.

One problem that needs to be addressed is the fact that so much of our debt is in the hands of foreigners. I was amazed in the campaign to not have this recognized by some of the opposition candidates. They simply felt debt was debt and that was all there was to it. Would that it were that simple, but it simply is not. It is a grave concern that so much of our indebtedness as a nation is to foreign nationals.

The Liberal commitment in the red book and during the election campaign, endorsed from coast to coast to coast by Canadians, was a sensible, gradual approach to the reduction of the deficit to no more than 3 per cent of GDP by the end of our first term and then total elimination is the ultimate goal of the government.

I heard a member opposite—I do not recall exactly who now—propose that somehow the government was going to lock in 3 per cent as its overall target and that simply is incorrect. My colleagues and I have heard time and again the hon. Minister of Finance speak to the fact that this is the interim goal of the Liberal government and that the ultimate goal would be to completely pull out of an indebtedness situation.

How will we achieve such a goal? Obviously the first step is to reduce government spending. The right hon. Prime Minister has shown outstanding leadership in that regard in the few short months he has been the Prime Minister. He started with the size of the cabinet and scaled it away back from what was the situation previously. He also scaled back the size of ministerial offices.

Perhaps huge amounts of money have not been saved but they are not insignificant millions either. However they set a tone that the government is prepared to lead by example in reducing spending.

Concomitant with that is the need to encourage new jobs. If we are really going to pull out of the economic problems we face as a country we must get Canadians back to work. We must get them off the tax rolls and change them into taxpayers because they now have a meaningful and well–paying job.

This two–pronged approach of the Liberal government was endorsed nationally in the last federal election campaign. I am proud to be a member who is helping to advance that agenda.

It was no mean consideration recently when London, Ontario was awarded the Institute of Advanced Manufacturing Technology. This will be a very important organization to London and to southwestern Ontario. It will help co–ordinate the activities of the private sector, of the University of Western Ontario in London, of the city council and indeed of the surrounding areas of southwestern Ontario with the federal government. This is the kind of partnership that is necessary if we are to move forward into the new economy and start to get Canadians working again.

The question needs to be posed: What is the proper role of government in this new economy? One only needs to reflect to know that there are several shades of opinion on this question. From some parts of the House we hear the socialist point of view that the government should do everything. The government should run the economy, it should own it, and there is no place for the private sector because all it will do is hoard the profits. I reject that view. Liberals reject that view.

• (1535)

Equally we have the view at the far right which says that governments should do nothing, that there is no place for government. It is the other extreme. I equally and even more forcefully reject that view. One might say that in this House today we have perhaps the most conservative of the conservatives with the view that there really is no role to be played by government.

I hope that no one party embraces that philosophy but I hear that view from certain members opposite so often I have become concerned. Surely they cannot feel there is no role for government in running the economy of this nation. To the contrary the Liberal view is that there must be a balanced approach.

There must be and there is a role for government to play in partnership with the private sector. The private sector is the engine, as it must be, but there will be a positive role for government to play in creating the proper environment for the private sector to succeed. Only a balanced common sense approach best enunciated by the Liberal Party throughout the history of this country will ensure fair and equitable treatment in our economy.

I see that my time is coming to an end. I would simply say that as a member of the Liberal Party it will be my pleasure to do everything possible to help advance a balanced approach to this economic situation.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, when I spoke last week on the criminal justice Bill C–41, I suggested that perhaps some of the Liberal members of the frontbench required some Q–tips because they were having a little difficulty hearing. I can see that the problem extends past the front bench.

I would like to know when the member ever heard somebody from my party suggest that the government should do nothing? That is a very gross misunderstanding of what seemed to be a very clear way of expressing ourselves.

Because social spending in Canada currently consumes $53 billion a year which is over 50 per cent of our current expenditures, would he agree that the direction the Reform Party wants to go, which is to focus social spending on those who are most in need to make sure that those in our society who are the most

dependent on that kind of support, are in fact expounding the correct way to go which is to focus social spending?

Mr. O'Brien: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to receive a question from the hon. member. I would say in response to his first comment that I am reminded of the statement that if the shoe fits, wear it. I challenge my friend to find in *Hansard* or even in the "blues" which will be out shortly that I named the Reform Party as saying that governments should do nothing.

What I said was that some hon. members opposite—there are at least four political philosophies opposite—quite often espouse the idea that government must get out of the way, that it has no role to play. However, if my friend finds that my comments were appropriate to the philosophy of the Reform Party, I will not disagree with him.

On his question of the focus of spending and social services, I agree that we need to focus spending on social services. Where I differ with my friend and his party, as I understand their philosophy, is we will never eliminate the universality of our programs. The minute you start to say that targeting means we will eliminate universality we will start to fool with the other underpinnings of our social security system and the whole thing is in risk of collapsing. We have to focus it and keep it fair and available to all Canadians who need it without going to the far extreme.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the hon. member responsible for regional development in Ontario and Quebec. I would have liked to hear him, because this is a section where, in my opinion, we could have avoided some overlapping.

Regarding subclause 8(a) in Part II, I would like to ask the hon. member why the government did not give exclusive authority, either in Quebec or in Ontario, over regional economic development to already existing structures such as the FORD?

[*English*]

Mr. O'Brien: Mr. Speaker, I was not elected to come to this House to speak exclusively for the views of Ontario, let alone the views of the province of Quebec. That may be the agenda of my friend and his colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois but it is not the agenda of the only truly national party in the House of Commons.

While I understand my colleague's concerns for the people of Quebec and while I understand his preoccupation with manpower training, I can only assure him that the government is equally concerned in making sure that all Quebecers understand. We did not get to be the best country in the world by not addressing all the concerns of Canadians. We will continue to do that, including all the people of Quebec.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is up. Resuming debate. It is one of the hon. member's own members who is going to speak on debate. I am sure he does not want to deprive him of that opportunity.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on this bill to create the Department of Industry.

I would like to open with a brief outline of Reform's position on economic reform, industrial development and diversification, and how this bill measures up to our vision of the role to be played by the government as well as to comment on the potential for reducing government size and increasing efficiency.

Dealing first with the objective of reduced cost in improved efficiency, if these were objectives, I do not see any significant measures to support any meaningful move in this direction.

When one looks at the figures quoted to us at the briefing for this bill, from a budget of some $3 billion and a staff of some 6,000, the government is only able to save some 230 jobs and $26 million. When one looks at these figures against the potential, it shows very clearly that efficiency and cost reduction were not achieved.

With the bringing together of four departments with some overlap in duties and responsibilities, the potential was there to reduce the payroll by a greater number and certainly save considerably more tax dollars.

When one compares this to what is going on in the private sector in the name of survival, nothing has been done. The message that the private sector heard three years ago about lowering costs and improving efficiency still apparently has not reached the federal government. I do not think that message will be lost on industry when this bill goes forward.

Let us look at the Reform vision of economic reform using some bold brush strokes. We believe an environment to encourage enterprise and initiative should be created by government. There should be productive jobs and prosperity. It is best achieved by a responsible, broadly based, free enterprise economy in which private property, freedom of contract and the operating of free markets are encouraged and respected.

We want to minimize politics in economic decision making by the phasing out of grants, subsidies and lending programs. Let us break down the barriers designed to insulate our businesses and industry from domestic and foreign competition. Competition is healthy and should be encouraged. Of course, we should

come down hard on enforcement of competition and anti–combines legislation with severe penalties for price fixing, certainly the removal of interprovincial trade barriers so that we can maximize the benefits of free trade and NAFTA.

• (1545)

In examining this bill I decided to look at the Liberal red book and determine whether or not the act meets red book promises. One of the first statements made in the red book section on the economy is that the former Conservative government "failed to understand that government has an important role to play in setting the stage and enabling the private sector to adjust to changing circumstances. For this reason our competitive position and our standard of living have declined and jobs are lost".

Of course if this statement is true, then this Liberal government is doomed to fail as well because this act which sets the stage for the Liberal attempt at industrial central planning enshrines in law exactly the same department the Conservatives introduced under Kim Campbell. There is no excuse at this time for the government not to have come up with an act creating a smaller, leaner and more efficient department which would have set the economy on a new course. This government is almost a quarter of the way through its mandate, yet it is still relying on the failed Conservative policies of the past.

What else did the Liberals say in their red book? They said: "Any strategy to foster the growth of a small and medium sized business sector will fail if it does not recognize the negative impacts of excessive government debt, interprovincial trade barriers, and taxation". I agree 100 per cent, but I fail to see how this act to enshrine the industry department created by the former Conservative regime will help to achieve that goal.

It is clear the rationalization of the four agencies and departments into one should have achieved some efficiencies but it appears this did not happen. Staff levels fell less than 4 per cent and spending was cut less than 3 per cent.

As I said, I agree with the red book assertion that debt, trade barriers, and taxation are big negatives in our economy. The minister achieved some gains in his recent attempts to reduce interprovincial trade barriers but I would remind him that much work needs to be done to remove more barriers that are still remaining.

In a widely quoted study done by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, those interprovincial provincial trade barriers are costing us approximately $6.5 billion. The Macdonald commission of the mid–1980s estimated that Canadian incomes would rise some 1.5 per cent permanently if barriers were removed.

In my own riding of Simcoe Centre there is a brewery which can freely export to 50 American states yet cannot send its products to the provinces next door.

There is another major consideration that this government has failed to deal with. We have unprecedented deficit and debt levels yet this act, which reorganizes the department according to a Conservative plan, fails to achieve any meaningful saving of tax dollars.

Certainly taxes are too high. They discourage new domestic and foreign investment and they drive Canadian businesses to more reasonable tax jurisdictions. I realize that tax relief for Canadian businesses is still a long way off because of a deficit based on excessive government spending but I believe that long term tax relief should be a stated goal of any federal government industrial strategy.

Where could these efficiencies have been obtained? Are there areas of spending and staffing which are of no consequence in our new global economy?

Investment Canada is an organization whose consequence I would question as its mandate seems to have been to protect Canadian businesses from foreign control. What that threat from foreign control was, nobody seems to know. Foreign investment is clearly not perceived as a threat any more because even Investment Canada seems to approve every investment made. I question whether we need to continue to rubber stamp this rubber stamping body any further.

We need to encourage competition in our banking industry. Too much power is held by too few banks.

The defence industry productivity program is another area of spending which we should question. In the government's bid to centrally plan the economy this is an obvious attempt to favour one industry over others. To be clearer on this point it must be recognized that the funding for DIPP came from taxes imposed on other businesses and industries. I question whether the $158 million given away in 1994 under this program would have been better left in the pockets of the taxpayers who are currently financing this scheme.

I question the consequence of spending tax dollars to improve the image of high technology firms. Surely we are misguided if we believe that image is what sells Canadian high technology to Asia–Pacific countries. I believe the quality of our products is our greatest selling point. This is based on such fundamentals as research and development.

• (1550)

I also question why in 1994 the Department of Industry is still treating one group of Canadians as though it were different from all other Canadians. Why does this government continue to single out one group of Canadians for special treatment? This patronizing action should be reversed.

I question the consequences of the complicated university research granting process. Why do we need so many different granting councils with their different regulations and the attendant bureaucracy behind each one? Surely this is an area where

rationalization can occur and efficiencies indeed can result. This is an obvious area for the government to find savings of tax dollars.

We should examine the whole grants and contributions program. What real benefit does the Canadian economy derive from the $63,000 given to the Shoe Manufacturers Association? In favouring de Havilland by $10 million over McDonnell Douglas are we creating inequities in the aerospace industry? Is it not now time to embark on a new direction where we will treat all peoples, regions and industries equally?

Our starting point in making changes should be to place our top priority on reducing government spending while increasing government efficiency. When industries are asked what government can do to help them the response I have heard most often is: "Get off our backs and out of our pockets".

Bill C–46 is a small step, too small, on the road to reducing government spending so that taxes can be lowered, which will improve the ability of our industries to compete and grow in this global economy.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): I listened carefully to the member for Simcoe Centre. I appreciate the member has recognized this bill as a step in the right direction. He has also recognized the work which had to be done to date on interprovincial trade barriers as being a step in the right direction. What puzzles me about the hon. member's remarks is his failure to recognize the very special emphasis the government has given to small business and the tourism sector.

The member comes from one of the most beautiful communities in all of Canada. I know that riding depends heavily on a tourism thrust and attention to that sector. Is the member suggesting that area as one where we would further diminish our participation, or would he suggest that we reinvigorate that sector? I am trying to understand what the member is saying in the sense that we have gone in the right direction but not far enough. I happen to believe that we should reinvigorate an area like tourism because that is a way we can get people back to work right away.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Broadview—Greenwood for his question. I applaud some of the steps taken by the government because they were steps in the right direction, but I make the point that they are small steps and the time is long past for small steps.

This country is in serious difficulty today and it calls for big steps. It calls for action against the deficit and the debt. You cannot jump a huge crevasse in small steps; it takes one giant leap. That is what is lacking in what is coming forward from the other side.

Small business is not looking for government intervention. The best thing government can do for small business is to get out of their way. Get off their backs as they said and out of their pockets and the pockets of their customers. Then there will be more disposable income which will generate the business which will create the jobs, but that is not happening.

Small businessmen are being taxed to death. They are asking what is being done to get this tax load under control. The only way to do that is to get government spending under control. I was looking for some spending cuts in this bill but they are not there.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Tourism?

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Tourism is very important in my area. Anything that can be done in tourism is certainly going to be appreciated in Simcoe Centre. However the importance of doing something about reducing government spending and getting it under control is paramount to tourism, small business, large business. It is not being addressed in this bill, nor is it being addressed in many of the things the government is doing at this point.

• (1555)

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I believe I understood the hon. member correctly when he indicated if he had undertaken this legislation it would have ended up much smaller, much leaner and much less costly than it is. He gave as examples Investment Canada and the defence industry productivity program which he thought should have been looked at.

Is the member saying that Investment Canada and the defence industry productivity program would have been cut out along with the other examples he gave, or would he simply look at them? That is my first question.

Second, because he did state initially that it would have been much neater, much smaller, much less costly, could he give specifics? How much leaner? How much smaller? How much less costly? Could we have specifics please?

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, obviously government members do not have the answers and are coming to Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition for them.

If I were running a corporation of 6,000 employees with a budget of $3 billion and my back was to the wall and I had to effect some cost savings—and I suggest our backs are to the wall right now—230 employees out of 6,000 is a drop in the bucket. That is not really an attack, if it was intended to be an attack, at getting the spending and efficiencies under control. I would cut jobs. We would have to cut back.

An hon. member: What sector, small business, tourism?

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): No. It is called efficiency of operation. If that was the purpose of the exercise then it was not achieved. It is a long way from being achieved. The dollars and the jobs that are being saved will have no real impact on doing something about the deficit and the debt that everyone says they are concerned about but they do nothing about.

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on Bill C–46, the Department of Industry Act.

Bill C–46 creates a remarkable organization with wide ranging responsibilities and a far reaching mandate. There are many tasks in the government's agenda for growth and job creation that it will perform. Not the least of these is the slate of initiatives the Prime Minister announced to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Quebec City on September 18, namely: to improve the climate for entrepreneurship; to help business profit from new technologies; to seek expanding markets; and to promote the tourism industry that is so important in Halifax West and throughout the maritimes.

The successful pursuit of that agenda requires a concerted effort of all major players in the economic development game. The Department of Industry created by this bill is well designed to rally that kind of effort. Incorporating within one organization the very functions of industry, technology, science, communications, foreign investment, and consumer and corporate affairs permits a powerful focus of related interests in the formulation and implementation of our economic development strategies. Some may fear that this new department will not do as much in individual areas like communications, corporate affairs or consumer affairs as under the old setup. An impression of that sort is just that first and last, a mere impression.

While titles are important symbolically, they must not be mistaken for substance. Bill C–46 could not possibly include the names of all the functions in its title. In substance we do have a department of industry, science, technology, communications, investment, and consumer and corporate affairs. To include all of its concerns we would have to add small and medium sized enterprises, tourism, sustainable development and many other areas. These are all key functions in the pursuit of an innovative economy and in the pursuit of growth and job creation.

• (1600)

However the essence of the this new department is not found in the title. We have a Department of Industry. What does that name symbolize? Industry is not merely heavy industry nor manufacturing. Industry is whatever provides wealth and well–being in our society. Teachers, accountants and fishers are as much an essential part of industry in this country as employers, for example Litton, Pratt and Whitney, Farmers Co–operative Dairy and Dynatek in my riding.

[*Translation*]

We have to consider the interests of consumers as well. We want to give Canadian consumers the assurance that although the word "consumer" does not appear in the department's new title, their interests are still central to the concerns of the Department of Industry.

[*English*]

Many of us will recall when the federal government in the seventies decided to create the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Many will recall there was much concern that putting the affairs of consumers under the same roof as corporations was a bit like putting the chickens in with the foxes. Those fears proved groundless, as we well know.

In retrospect it was wise to incorporate the concern for consumer interests into policies and decisions affecting corporations. It is now recognized by governments and corporations more and more that attention to consumer interests must underpin sound corporate strategies. Increased consumer awareness, increasing competition and the relentless demand for ever higher quality of goods and services are leading businesses in the direction of more attention to consumer needs and consumer service.

This bill on the Department of Industry is built on that principle of common interest. The bill extends the same logic to the consideration of all economic development strategies.

[*Translation*]

By making the Department of Industry responsible for consumer policy, the government guarantees that the voice of consumers will be heard and considered when policies affecting the Canadian market are discussed in cabinet.

[*English*]

The Minister of Industry has a clear mandate to act as the advocate for consumer issues at the cabinet table. To do that effectively he has to seek input of consumers and advocacy groups across the country on all issues affecting growth. The Consumers Association of Canada for example plays a strong leadership role in consumer education and in raising concerns about products.

With advancing technology, consumer issues are becoming ever more complex. Issues like the access and cost for consumers to the information highway, the protection of privacy, electronic funds transfer, and biotechnology and genetic engineering are all new complex issues that require close examination from the point of view of consumer interest.

In the light of these complex issues an integrated process is needed to ensure that consumer concerns are incorporated as early as possible in policy development. In this way consumer protection efforts can focus on preventing problems before they happen instead of exposing them after the fact.

The government's priority is growth and job creation, but these goals must depend on efficiently functioning markets. Our consumers share with the business world a common interest in achieving that kind of efficiency. Both should welcome initiatives that help our businesses to be more efficient, effective and competitive.

The recently announced internal trade agreement which will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of trade in goods and services and the movement of people among provinces and territories will save businesses and governments millions of dollars. It is good for consumers.

All of us who take part in the economy have an interest in the actions of government directed toward consumer protection and promotion of competition. These actions not only right wrongs, they also enhance our overall economic performance.

We should all be glad the twin pillars of consumer and corporate affairs are under the same roof at Industry Canada. This bill in my view is well designed to help guide the efforts of Team Canada. I recommend its speedy approval.

• (1605)

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I again commend the member for Halifax West for his comments.

I recognize the hon. member for Halifax West did not make these comments, but being from the same party as the member who did earlier that member had difficulty finding the appropriate role of government in business. He did not like too little and of course did not like too much. What would the hon. member say is the appropriate role for government in the business affairs of the nation?

Mr. Regan: Mr. Speaker, it is a real challenge, as the hon. member knows, to define exactly in a few words or a few moments what the role of government is in our economy because it is a complex question. Certainly my view would probably be for a little bit more involvement than his view. My view would be that government has a very important role in terms of consumer protection. I do not know if he would put the same emphasis or as much effort in that regard as I would, but that is for him to answer I suppose. However, it seems to me that is an important consideration.

In Atlantic Canada there is a need for government involvement. There is a need for investment capital. There is a great problem in Atlantic Canada with the lack of that kind of capital. Many business people come to me with the problem of getting capital to expand their businesses. Those businesses are doing well but they cannot quite get to the next level and cannot find the capital in Atlantic Canada to expand.

That is why agencies like ACOA which provides about 40 per cent of the business financing in Atlantic Canada are so important. In fact overall it has been very successful. We do hear about the failures which are sensationalized by the media, but the large majority of its programs and efforts in creating jobs and assisting businesses to expand and create more jobs have been very successful.

I gather sometimes there is the impression in the rest of Canada that all we do in Atlantic Canada is fish or collect unemployment and that is a great myth. It certainly is untrue in my riding where there are many businesses and people are hard at work doing a variety of things. Things are being done for example in high technology at Dynatek which produces computer memory systems. Pratt and Whitney produces some of the best aircraft jet engines in the world. There are Litton Systems and Farmers Co–operative Dairy and many others. People are working hard.

I agree that government cannot be the one to create the jobs. It is absolutely true that we have to rely on the private sector to do the main job creation. I also agree we have to make efforts and we have to reduce our debts so we can get off their backs, but we cannot do it overnight.

At the same time there is still a role for government to assist those companies in areas like R and D and international information. We receive information from our embassies about what is happening overseas, what opportunities are available for our companies elsewhere. There are many roles government can play.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member a question concerning the role of government. He mentioned Pratt and Whitney in his constituency. Pratt and Whitney is also in my constituency. It received a loan guarantee of $50 million to come into the city of Lethbridge.

Would the member and the government support that kind of a government policy in terms of loan guarantees to encourage industries to locate in a variety of areas in Canada?

Mr. Regan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that I certainly prefer it to grants. I am concerned about that size of a guarantee. I think we should see companies locating where they think is best.

Companies are coming to Nova Scotia. People like the quality of life we provide. They do not like having to sit in traffic for four hours on the 401 into Toronto, or what have you. Companies are coming for reasons other than government assistance. In fact we are seeing that governments at all levels are finding it harder to provide that kind of incentive.

• (1610)

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C–46. I commend the member for Broadview—Greenwood for sitting here all day and listening to some of the great doomsday scenarios that have fallen on him from the opposition and also some of the points

which have been made from this side of the House and from Liberal members on the other side of the House.

Bill C–46 is one I have looked forward to debating. Anything that will streamline the operation of a government department and make it more clear to carry out its mandate is welcomed.

In particular I look at the improved business climate for entrepreneurs and the promotion of the tourism industry. The member for Broadview—Greenwood and I among other members have sat and talked in many long meetings about how to reinvent tourism in Canada. In the last 10 years the previous government almost eliminated tourism totally.

As a private individual I watched the bottom fall out of the real estate industry in Ontario, where a person's cottage all of a sudden was not worth anything or there was no market for it. I saw that and hoped that somewhere, some way this government I was elected to would take some initiative and try to re–establish some of the important sectors of our society. That is done with bills such as Bill C–46 which include provisions of the old act and yet become something new.

In the last 10 years there has certainly been a great decline in the initiative of entrepreneurs and people who are willing to come forward to finance small business, of which I was a part. I look at anything that will make that a clearer mandate or an easier path to follow, anything that will establish rules and say that yes, we do want to take a positive step in streamlining legislation. I speak to it for that reason and I look forward to the passage of the bill.

Victoria—Haliburton region has lost a tremendous number of jobs. Victoria—Haliburton is in Ontario; it is not in Victoria and it is not on the east coast. I do not speak as a person who has had the advantage of the financing of the east coast entrepreneurs. Ontario, particularly the central part where I am from, relies more on people in private industry to provide initiative.

In the last two years, for example, there has been almost 30 per cent constant unemployment in Haliburton county. The county is almost devastated. It swells the rolls of the number of people needed to administer the social assistance plan. It does not help anyone's self worth. It does not help anyone try to do anything.

I look at the tremendous loss since 1988 in Victoria county, the 2,400 jobs that were taken from there and I remember reading some of the articles by the member for Broadview—Greenwood at that time. He wrote about the things that could happen. He thought the branch plant economy was going to disappear, and it happened. Jobs were lost. This government has to take the initiative, has to go ahead and make the changes we need and that we believe will turn around that loss of jobs.

It will come through tourism in my riding. I hope it will come through other things and I will certainly work as hard as I can to bring industry and commerce to the most beautiful part of Ontario. I do not mean to speak disparagingly about any other part of Ontario; it just so happens that I do live in an area where the Kawartha Lakes depend on the rejuvenation of the tourism industry.

People ask how you service a riding of 10,460 square kilometres, 35 municipalities which take in a lot of Peterborough county and a lot of areas which should be in other ridings. Redistribution has given me areas of Brock township where I deal with boaters on Lake Simcoe, all the way through the Trent canal system right to the side of the city of Peterborough where that riding is looked after by another Liberal member. If you are in Ontario and you guess that anyone is a Liberal you are probably right 99 per cent of the time.

• (1615)

When we deal with the Haliburton County Lakes, the Kawartha Lakes and the Trent–Severn waterway, the Rideau system that connects to it, look at how that has been decimated. The Trent–Severn waterway and the Rideau waterway were even offered to the provincial governments to see if they would promote them and they turned it down. At one time the Government of Ontario did a large job in promoting tourism in Ontario and now its budget has gone the other way and it sees no benefits to tourism. It indicated that tourism is not something it wants to get involved in.

The federal government has to step in and provide some leadership in promoting tourism, not only in Ontario but in all of Canada as Canada is obviously the best country in the world to live in. It has been written. People all over the world have commented that they would love to live in Canada, as we can tell by the number of people who apply.

As I watch the vestiges of the last government being taken apart by this government in a slow orderly fashion to try to promote and better the lifestyle of people in Canada through the promotion of streamlining of government and changing the system, it is hard for me to listen to the opposition. I know it is paid well to oppose and I know its opposition sometimes is well–meaning and I know also that some of its members probably have some good ideas and I am very anxious to hear what they are.

None of them has come forward yet with the changes to any of this legislation that has been proposed. I was looking forward to seeing if there was some concrete results that would come out of the opposition's chance to change and refine and turn this

legislation into something it feels is better than what is being offered.

I feel what is being offered is once again a step in the right direction and will cause the rejuvenation of the department and in particular the slow and steady step of a government that is in control, that is going to turn the economy around. It is not going to do it by trying to jump over some huge gorge that has been mentioned. It is going to do it one step at a time, in an orderly fashion, looking at the various things affected by government change, taking into account all the municipalities that are involved, all of the various agencies affected by it and hopefully come out with a clear mandate for making this country the place we all want it to be, a better place to live.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent remarks and I would like to add a little to them and perhaps get a comment from him.

I wonder if he would agree that the incentives for tourism are something that apply to this country nationally and are as relevant and advantageous not only to the country at large but to the country in its parts, to the west, represented by the Reform Party opposite and also to Quebec, represented by the Bloc Quebecois.

Does my colleague not agree that this kind of incentive for national tourism is something that is very good for Canada and for national unity?

Mr. O'Reilly: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I find it hard to change from my thinking. Quebec is a province in my country and when I go to Quebec I try to speak French. I try to converse with the people there and I certainly hope that their culture will be maintained.

• (1620)

I see nothing wrong with that. That is commendable. I am of Irish Canadian heritage but I have to tell members that my mother was born in Birmingham, England. I also have an affection for the English. I have to be very careful with that, too.

I have travelled across Canada many times. I have been on the east coast and I have been on the west coast. There are some beautiful mountain ranges on the west coast, the fishing industry. Who could find anything more beautiful than Long Beach on the island, the beautiful Tofino and some of the places over there? The member obviously is from there and knows what I am talking about. I keep getting accused of being from Victoria.

As a government we have to promote all of Canada, Canada as a whole, as the best country in the world. When one goes into Quebec, one has to enjoy the cultural heritage and the beauty of Quebec as I do. There are no nicer regions to be in. There is skiing at beautiful Mont Ste. Anne, not to put down any other areas of Quebec.

One can go up the autoroute above Montreal and find some beautiful country. Even La Prairie as my friend has pointed out is also a beautiful area of the country.

When one promotes the prairies and shows tourists what is in the prairies, what is in the Northwest Territories, when one offers train packages from sea to sea to sea, when one takes this country as a whole and tries to sell it, being a salesman would be the easiest job in the world.

It is such an area, such a culture, such a diversity that I could expand upon that part and talk about our great country. I consider Quebec part of my country. I consider New Brunswick as part of my country along with Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. All that beautiful country is what makes Canada such a great place.

I am very proud to stand up and say that I am a Canadian. I am from Ontario but you cannot be perfect. It is as close as you can get.

As the Speaker has indicated, my time is almost up. I have complimented everyone in the House and that is what I meant to do. I want to fight for a promotion of tourism in Canada as a whole and each individual component has its own strength that draws from the promotion of Canada as a country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate as the member for Richmond—Wolfe and official critic for regional development. As such, it is my privilege to second the motion by my colleague from Trois–Rivières that we refrain from supporting second reading of the bill because it does not stop program duplication and overlap and fails to recognize that Quebec alone is responsible for its regional development.

Bill C–46, an act to establish the Department of Industry, does, I must admit, reflect some desire on the part of the government to rationalize its operations. It is also interesting to see that the Department of Industry is given a legislative mandate and that the legislation defining the former Department of Industry, Science and Technology and Investment Canada has been amalgamated with the legislation to establish the Department of Industry.

However, I was astonished to see that in Part II of the bill, the minister's powers also extend to regional development in Ontario and Quebec. The Bloc Quebecois is strenuously opposed to this centralizing action by the federal government. We emphatically disagree with the new powers and responsibility of the Department of Industry to formulate and implement policies,

plans and integrated federal approaches with respect to regional development in Quebec, as indicated in section *9(a)*.

• (1625)

We also decry the powers enabling the minister to lead and co–ordinate the activities of the Government of Canada in the establishment of co–operative relationships with Ontario and Quebec and with business, labour and other public and private bodies as stipulated under clause 9(1)(c). By passing and implementing this bill respecting the Department of Industry, the Liberal government is flying in the face of Quebec's fundamental claim to manage its own development.

I would remind the members of this House that regional economic development is a residual jurisdiction and therefore not enshrined in the Constitution. Because of its power respecting economic planning, Quebec is demanding exclusive authority in this area. Ever since the Quiet Revolution, we deem the federal government's infringement in this jurisdiction that is exclusive to Quebec to be totally unacceptable and inadmissible.

The Liberal government must withdraw from this sphere of action and transfer to Quebec regional development funding in a fair and equitable manner. The sterile competition between Quebec and Ottawa regarding regional development and the policies of the Federal Office of Regional Development are costly, as you know, and result in overlapping due to the duplication of decision–making centres.

This maze of jurisdictions consumes so much energy that none is left to deal with the real problems. In the meantime, the money does not go where it should. There is an obvious contradiction in the claim by the Liberal government to the effect that it wants to eliminate overlapping while it makes sure with this bill that overlapping will continue to exist.

Regional economic development is an area which the federal government has taken over through its spending power, without taking into account Quebec's desire to take full responsibility for it. To conclude, I will say that I support and second the motion by my colleague from Trois–Rivières denouncing federal involvement in Quebec's regional development.

I would like to take advantage of the few minutes allotted to me in this debate to raise two basic points which are particularly relevant to the dynamics of regional development in Quebec. Let us first review briefly the federal involvement in regional development in that province. I will then deal in greater detail with the Quebec regional development policies which are clearly superior to any other policy developed elsewhere in Canada in that respect, this being said without false modesty.

As the Bloc Quebecois critic for regional development, I ask this House the following question: what has the federal government accomplished in this respect? Between 1982 and 1987, DRIE, the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, the federal agency responsible for regional development in Quebec adopted a sterile centralizing policy.

The regions were simply excluded from the financial assistance application development and evaluation process. Often, useless programs were subsidized, while initiatives having meaningful local value were not. The DREI decision–making process was dominated by sectorial concerns, with the result that more funds and energy were devoted to industrial development in central regions than to regional development.

When this became obvious, the federal government claims it reoriented its policy through a new strategy based on master agreements. This course of action proved no better than the previous one. Our unemployment rates bear witness to that. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, in 1993, unemployment cost the Canadian economy over $109 billion. That is what the federal government involvement in the area of regional development has accomplished.

Let us take a look at what the master agreements do. Instead of giving the regional development resource envelopes directly to Quebec, allowing for income tax points to be repatriated, the federal government withdraws and cuts back budgets to such an extent that a structural vacuum is created with respect to regional development in Quebec. The Economic and Regional Development Agreement, or ERDA, for the 1994–2004 decade proves the point. It has not yet been signed and will apparently never be.

Last summer, the Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec refused to sign the agreement, arguing that the time was not right in view of the upcoming elections in Quebec and considering it had signed an agreement respecting the free movement of goods between provinces the same week. Too much work for the same people in one week. That is how serious FORD is in Quebec; it only brings confusion to Quebec regional development.

• (1630)

The FORD structure has been impossible to define ever since it was founded. It is always being reorganized. In short, it is like Jell–O. Now that the ERDA is no longer in effect, we are facing a structural vacuum. It would be very effective and much more serious for the Liberal government to recognize Quebec's jurisdiction over regional development. Accordingly, the government should transfer all monies set aside for this purpose.

It would be in the federal government's interest to admit that its involvement in regional development is unacceptable. The economic foundation of outlying regions—and they are different from major centres—is decaying, the social fabric is disintegrating, the rural exodus is continuing and young people are the first to leave their regions. The number of demographically shrinking municipalities has risen alarmingly in the last 25

years so that it is now higher than the number of growing communities.

The federal government's current involvement in regional development is therefore most unfair, as the figures from the FORDQ itself tell us. Atlantic provinces receive $920 in spending per resident, Western Canada, $240 and Quebec, $230. As far as umbrella agreements such as ERDA are concerned, the federal government's record of involvement in Quebec is disastrous. In 1987, the total was $431 per capita in the Maritimes, $259 in Western Canada and $64 in Quebec.

I should also point out that in the remaining subsidiary agreements with good results, the federal government backed out of $75 million worth of financial commitments. I refer specifically to the withdrawal of funds for the Eastern Plan, which affects over 5,800 timber owners. However, since the federal government intervened in an area of provincial jurisdiction, we demand that the funds be repatriated in the form of tax points to be managed by Quebec.

Let us look at reality: cuts worth $70 million are called for in the finance minister's February 1994 budget. Quebec regional development cutbacks will be spread over the next three years: $14 million in 1994–95, $32 million in 1995–96, and $24 million in 1996–97. A FORD internal document issued at the same time as the budget states that the objective pursued is to cut financial commitments by half. Since the 1993–94 fiscal year, the financial commitment has averaged some $20 million a month. The same document says that as of March 1, 1994, FORD's funding level should be reduced to $10 million a year.

The federal government is leaving the field of economic development in Quebec and I want to mention the cuts in transfers to companies. In 1994, Quebec will lose $70 million in funding; this situation is intolerable. We demand that funding be transferred to Quebec and that Quebec alone manage its development and its regional development organizations.

From another perspective, we can say that the federal government's involvement in development is just a way to show its presence. It is a way of showing the Canadian flag with everything it is doing in all sectors of the economy and in all the present constitutional fields. With its involvement, the federal government increases its visibility but its action remains ineffective.

FORD's action is not based on a comprehensive vision of local development. It more often takes a scattergun approach. From reading some FORD documents, we get the feeling that it is a federal propaganda agency in Quebec. Thus, in a document published in January on a new approach for programs concerning small and medium–sized businesses in Quebec, we read that FORD is well placed to represent the federal government to small and medium–sized businesses and, a little further, that these specific agreements are intended to establish a properly co–ordinated federal presence.

• (1635)

So, the Federal Office for Regional Development becomes the co–ordinator of the federal activity in an area of provincial jurisdiction. This duplication is interesting in that it says much about the centralizing objectives of the federal government. From now on, it is clear that, under the cover of FORD, every federal department wants to extend the scope of its activities in Quebec.

This is why Part II of Bill C–46 includes a set of specific objectives regarding FORD and regional development in Quebec. This is a case of shameless interference in a Quebec constitutional jurisdiction. The new mandate of FORD is clear: that office gives up any type of core agreement to concentrate instead on specific agreements. While freeing itself of financial commitments, FORD takes on the responsibility of an information broker for small and medium businesses, thus limiting its activities to searching for new markets, promoting research and development as well as export markets for regional businesses, thereby duplicating the role of already existing organizations.

FORD is fulfilling the responsibilities of already existing organizations such as industrial commissioner offices and development corporations in several regions. This duplication is confirmed by an act. Why yet another duplication of institutions and structures? Why this waste of energy and human resources? The federal system is the initiator of a series of disastrous money–wasting schemes which are largely responsible for this country's excessive debt.

In Quebec, the future of regional development is dependent on respecting Quebec's jurisdiction in that all–important sector. In our province, the future is contingent upon a decentralization of power. Does the word decentralization suggest anything to you? I am referring to a decentralization in favour of regional decision–making levels which are well aware of their situation, including regional county municipalities, which form the first level of government. The Quebec government recognized the primary decision–making role to be given to regional development councils to ensure that regions would have control over decisions which directly affect the socio–economic life of their communities.

The federal government should pledge to withdraw from that sector and not interfere with the priorities of the strategic planning done by every regional county municipality and every region in Quebec. The creation of regional county municipalities by the Parti Quebecois in 1980 was one of the first elements of the current regional development structure in Quebec. The first socio–economic summits of 1985, as well as the reform undertaken by Liberal minister Yvon Picotte, are other important elements of this very particular structure which led Quebec to the creation of regional development councils. These councils have the mandate of planning, co–ordinating and programming

the development and to ensure joint accountability with local authorities and the provincial government.

In short, these councils are regional consultative and decision–making assemblies. Because of its dynamic role, regional economic development in Quebec is at the centre of the issue of global development in that province. In 1988, the Government of Quebec developed and published its own regional development policy that, even before the Federal Office of Regional Development existed, concentrated on the development of regional enterprises. Its goal, to stimulate entrepreneurship and create jobs in the regions, was a distinct departure from the traditional approach that emphasized the construction of public utilities and infrastructures. There is nothing particularly new or innovative about the new focus of the Federal Office of Regional Development.

• (1640)

Once again, the federal government is merely setting up the same kind of regional development infrastructures that already exist in Quebec, and it has clearly confirmed it has no intention and no desire to remove overlap and respect Quebec's wishes.

In a world where free trade has lowered trade barriers and exposed regional economies to fiercer competition, the new government in Quebec wants to promote local responsibility for regional development. The policy of the Parti Quebecois now in power is clear and unambiguous. It provides for a new sharing of responsibilities by the Government of Quebec with regional governments represented by the l'Union des municipalités du Québec and l'Union des municipalités régionales de comté du Québec among others.

From now on, regional development in Quebec is to be focused on the authority of the regions, a far cry from the endless hesitation of a federal government that does not know where it is going. The Parizeau government has made regional decentralization a priority, and the federal government should be aware of that.

The policy of the new government in Quebec is clear: decentralization will be the responsibility of authorities who are accountable and must include autonomous resources and fiscal powers. The regional municipality will become the decision–making centre and, as such, the new basis for regional and social economic development in Quebec.

To deal with the various aspects of regional issues, a planning and consultation instrument is absolutely necessary, and so we have the Conseil régional de développement, the Regional Development Council. If the federal government will not recognize what is being done in Quebec to give the government's decision–makers the responsibility, funding and power to make those decisions, it is not on the right track and merely confirms its decision to centralize all powers in the centre of the country and ignore what is being done in Quebec.

Finally, we demand transfer of funding and full recognition of Quebec's exclusive responsibility for regional development.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I really wanted to hear the hon. member. Rather than a member serving his constituents, he seems to be representing bureaucrats. Frankly, the number one priority among Quebecers, and in particular those living in remote areas, is job creation. When he dares say—

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Ask your question.

Mr. Gagnon): True, I should get to my question; I will have another opportunity to talk about this issue.

Could the hon. member name the federal government failures in eastern Quebec, when we know that over the last 20 years major investments were made in all kinds of port, airport and tourism infrastructures, as well as in small businesses? Does he refuse to acknowledge that more than 1,000 small businesses took advantage of the liberalities—yes, "liberalities"—of the federal government? Could he name some who might have been resounding failures? There may be some but I doubt it. I would like him to tell us who are these 500 eastern Quebec companies who were not well served by the federal government.

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to remind the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine that, as regional development critic for the Official Opposition, I am not without experience. I worked in that field. If the hon. member knows his area, he will acknowledge that tens, hundreds of people in his region, his RCM, took part in the development of strategic plans for their area, in the analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the riding and the region. The results were then discussed at the regional council level and prioritized before inclusion into a concrete regional development plan. This is what I call working with people, not bureaucrats.

• (1645)

What I would like to stress to the hon. member, who is long on rhetoric, is that our main concern is to ensure that the proper regional development organizations in Quebec are recognized, region by region, and to ensure also that the central government, in Ottawa, recognizes Quebec's intention to decentralize its services towards the regions, bringing them closer to the people.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed the impassioned address of my hon. colleague from Richmond—Wolfe. If Quebec were to have exclusive jurisdiction in regional development, should Quebec also have exclusive responsibility for raising funds in Quebec for disbursement in Quebec? If so, would Quebec be able to maintain spending at current levels?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I did mention in my speech that this is not covered by the Constitution. The involvement of the federal government in regional development is only due to its spending power and is not enshrined in the Constitution.

The regional development initiatives taken by the Quebec government in the last 10 years have resulted in more co–operation between all the major economic, social, health and education stakeholders and a learning process during socio–economic summits, followed by consultations, which ensure that the reform introduced by Liberal minister Picotte, in Quebec, really led to some money transfers to the regions.

The current situation is best described as follows: the regions can decide and have real budgets. What we want now is to go beyond tax transfers and have the power to levy taxes through regional county municipalities. That would give us a real tax base and enable us to make real decisions and solve regional problems which would have been analyzed at once by people in the regions. So, as you see, tax points are important.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, since we only have a few seconds left, I will be brief. I just want to assure my hon. colleague that this government respects all provinces, including Quebec.

I want to ask him a question about a very important issue he raised. It has to do with overlap and duplication. Given the changes undergone by the machinery of government during the last ten years, would he not agree that progress has been made? It seems to me that we have less problems than we used to have. I have been examining this whole situation for a while and I wonder if the hon. member has come to the same conclusion as I have and would agree that progress has been made and there are less overlap and duplication than before.

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): As my hon. colleague just said, it is true, Mr. Speaker, that some progress has been made and that individuals have co–operated with federal agencies in that area, but the fact is that nothing really happened. I cannot answer yes to his question. Directives and standards applied within federal agencies are never quite in sync with standards applied elsewhere. So, civil servants are always on business trips, travelling throughout the country to meet their counterparts and say: Your standard does not meet mine. We will have to meet again next week, because I have to go over this with my boss and see what can be done.

This is not only duplication, but also a waste of human resources and money.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Bourassa—Immigration.

[*English*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take a few minutes to speak on the subject of Bill C–46, the Department of Industry Act. This is very comprehensive legislation providing for a department with far–reaching responsibilities and a wide array of instruments to carry them out.

The department it creates is a necessary tool in the agenda of the government to generate economic growth and job creation and to prepare for the innovative and, indeed, very different economy of the 21st century.

Bill C–46 recognizes once again what are the real needs of the new economy, what is demanded of Canadians if we are to continue to enjoy the economic well–being that a resource rich past has made possible.

• (1650)

This bill provides the organizational structure to permit a consistent, coherent focus on those strategies which will assist Canadians in the transition from a resource based to an information based economy.

This organization will have the lead role in generating the consensus and gathering the studied advice of the main players in the economic development game, whether they are business people, scientists, engineers, educators, consumers or other governments.

The bill recognizes that at the heart of economic development and job creation are science and technology, research and development, technological and managerial innovation, areas that have for far too long been neglected in this country.

Attention to these issues and approaches to the challenges they present are long overdue. Canada has been slow to recognize the importance of innovation and technology to competitiveness. Technology has transformed the economy dramatically with increasing growth in the knowledge and information based industries.

Also technology is revolutionizing the way we do business in manufacturing, in resource industries, and the service sector. Thus innovation has become the key to growth in both the new and traditional sectors of the economy. Our performance in embracing innovation has not been spectacular.

For example, the percentage of Canadian firms that carry out any research and development activities is less than one–half of 1 per cent of Canadian enterprises. That is unacceptable.

Further, not only do we have too few leading edge firms developing new technologies, we do not have enough Canadian firms searching the world marketplaces to find technology and bring it home, using it here to build our innovative capacity, in other words adapting it to the Canadian experience.

Canadian businesses, scientists, and Canadian workers are becoming increasingly aware of these needs and yet they cannot meet such challenges by themselves individually and separately.

Somehow the concerted, co–operative effort of all the participants must be brought to bear in addressing the problem. That is precisely what the government has recognized and is taking steps to bring about.

The red book that first outlined the agenda that the government is following pointed out the need for an innovative economy. It also pointed out that innovation does not just happen. It thrives in countries that consciously understand the innovative process and take measures to create a national system of innovation.

It stated that the role of the federal government is to work with the private sector, to identify strategic opportunities for the future, and then to redirect existing resources toward their fulfilment. Common sense, a hallmark of the government.

That is the spirit in which the government has approached the science and technology sector as a key to development of an innovative economy. The February budget illustrates that spirit in action. Again, common sense.

The federal government spends about $6 billion per year on science and technology. Tax expenditures account for about $1 billion more. One of the measures announced in the budget is a true strategy to maximize the benefits of these expenditures, a strategy for research and development with priorities, direction and review of results.

The Minister of Industry was charged with the task of preparing a paper on science and technology clearly stating the government's priorities, to set the stage for a national dialogue on a new national science and technology strategy. This paper was released on June 28. In the meantime a full review of science and technology programs is under way.

The February budget also announced a number of initiatives to further the cause of an innovative economy. The Canadian technology network to help small businesses get access to new technology to compete in world markets was announced, as was a technology partnership program to help smaller firms gain access to research results done in government and university labs.

An engineers and scientists program will help small businesses get the technological expertise they need. Development of a Canadian strategy for the information highway was announced. Again, common sense.

Other decisions and initiatives have followed. Negotiations were completed with the United States for participation in the space station resulting in an excellent deal for both countries.

A new long–term space plan was announced. The National Centres of Excellence funding was extended, 10 networks renewed and the second round of competitions for new networks launched.

• (1655)

A new president of the National Research Council was appointed and the council's declining budget was stabilized, as were those of the granting councils.

Initiatives aimed at helping young Canadians adapt to an innovation economy such as SchoolNet, Computers for Schools and Innovators in the Schools have met with great success.

The evidence is clear to me that the government is on the right track and well–launched on the route to assisting in the creation of an innovative economy. The bill which officially establishes the chief instrument of the federal government's role in this task is yet another step along the route.

The Department of Industry created by this bill will be uniquely equipped to become the workshop in which the major players in the innovative economy can forge their weapons. This is the organization that will be able to provide the listening post, host the consultations, lead the discussion and develop the resultant policies.

It will be able to provide the consistent, continued attention required to develop and implement coherent strategies over the time required for them to be effective. Common sense once again.

I have every confidence in the abilities and creative energies of Canadians. I do not find the idea of common sense funny. I find it, again, common sensible. I am sure we have the capacity to create an innovative economy capable of competing in the global marketplace well into the 21st century, as long as we do not spend a lot of time laughing.

What Canadians need to get the job done is the kind of common sense leadership that the government is providing; leadership with clear objectives and concrete measures to achieve them. Bill C–46 is one of these concrete measures. I firmly recommend its approval by the House.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that we have a new president at NRC. The gentleman's name is Dr. Arthur Carty. He was vice–president in charge

of research at the University of Waterloo. That is most significant because the University of Waterloo has very much been an innovator in the new technology.

I wonder if the hon. member would like a comment on the following. So often we hear the laissez–faire approach from the Reform Party but when we look at successful economies presently able to compete internationally they are economies with a national strategy.

Would the hon. member agree this puts us in a position of being able to have a national strategy with a Team Canada concept as we go out and compete in the international marketplace, exporting, bringing business to this country, putting people to work?

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Waterloo for his question. Indeed I would agree most particularly. As the hon. member is aware, my riding of Halifax as well has universities that have been part of the kind of development that his well respected University of Waterloo has been.

Without an industrial strategy such as the one proposed through the Department of Industry in concert with the Department of Finance and other departments, we will not be prepared for the next century. I know this perhaps better than some because I come from an area of the country that suffered a great deal when we agreed to choose Canada and become part of this great country in Confederation.

We had a north–south bias. We had the days of wooden ships and iron persons as we now call them. Many things happened in the way of transportation, the passage of goods and other things that were not always to the financial benefit of Atlantic Canadians.

However, being part of this great Confederation has always been to the benefit of Atlantic Canadians. We are perhaps not the proudest but among the proudest citizens of this country. We are glad we chose it and would do so again and again.

• (1700)

We also know that to ensure our region is healthy, to ensure that Ontario, the engine that drives the country, is healthy and to ensure that the great Canadian west and north are healthy, an industrial strategy is an absolute necessity.

I applaud the minister and the department for the work they are doing in this area.

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak on the subject of second reading of Bill C–46, the Department of Industry Act.

Like other members who have spoken on this topic, I am convinced that this bill is a sound strategic initiative by this government and an excellent piece of legislation. I like this bill for its comprehensive inclusion of the chief functions necessary to achieving the government's agenda for economic growth and job creation, for its incorporating under one organizational umbrella the many concerns related to growth.

I take particular satisfaction from the recognition by the bill of the importance of small and medium size businesses and tourism. My riding has many small businesses and I believe firmly that this bill will be of great assistance to them.

In recent months as I met and spoke with small and medium size businesses in the metro Toronto area one of the recurring things that came through consistently was that is was very difficult for them to access government programs. It meant going from department to department and most small and medium size businesses do not have the resources to research what government programs are available, how to access them, who to talk to and how to research them and whether or not their company is eligible for any of these aids or partnerships that we offer.

It is important and critical that the four departments are now coming together, that there will be one stop shopping and that the businesses will be able to access these programs and work collectively.

In order for Canada to succeed in the global economy and to create the jobs that we need it is important that there be one consistent vision and one cohesive approach to strategic planning. To me it is important that when we put together R and D, the manufacturing, marketing, the promotion of mobility across this country and all of the things that this department will be grouping within it, these things work together, that one augments the other and supplements the other, and that business can access all of it at the same time.

Some of the examples that were given to me by business were things such as research and development is great but you can develop a product and not be able to bring it to market. One example was given where there was some research done by a university but where the product was in the end manufactured in the U.S. The jobs are in the manufacturing, not just in the research. That is where a large number of jobs are. It is critical that these kinds of things happen within our country and that kind of linkage exists.

It is also very important to me and I am very pleased to see that sustainable development and the environment are included in clause 5 of this bill. Putting together the environment and industries in the same clause, dealing with it very aggressively in making it a partnership is very critical. We have to be leaders in this country. The environmental industry is job creation. It is a plus. It is not a detriment, as some people might think.

To me it is extremely important that industry will be working together with the environment and that the environment is part of the planning of industry so that it is not something separate that one does as an adjunct to the industrial strategy of this country.

The red book which detailed this government's agenda before the last election foresaw this bill. It announced that the government would focus on small and medium size businesses as the determining factor in turning around the economy. The speech from the throne made good our electoral commitment by placing small and medium size businesses at the top of the agenda, focusing on them for long term job creation.

The February budget followed through, announcing a long list of small business related initiatives. With the February budget papers the government published its action plan entitled growing small businesses. This publication was meant to stimulate discussion and get the business community actively engaged in helping to create an environment more conducive to small business and entrepreneurship. For example, Industry Canada is exploring with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce the feasibility of developing a business network strategy to set up some 30 business networks to foster co–operation and collaboration among small and medium size firms with common interests.

Also, an array of initiatives has been announced as part of the small and medium size enterprise agenda.

• (1705)

A pilot program will be launched under the technology partnership program, exploring the feasibility of incentives for universities to enter into partnerships, the small and medium size firms to develop emerging technologies for industrial application.

As part of the science and technology review, the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development will conduct consultations on a program to provide small and medium size firms with cost shared salary support for hiring scientists, engineers, technologists and industrial designers, as my colleague said previously.

A new fund has been established to help expand existing business through the Federal Business Development Bank. The Canada community investment fund has been announced, one of the aims of which is to ensure availability of equity financing for small firms.

Industry Canada is working with a private sector coalition to set up a national business network demonstration program. The program will help business create networks to foster co–operation and collaboration and better prepare Canadian small and medium size businesses to compete at home and internationally.

Another example of our recognition is the hospitality industry. The key role of tourism in the economy is clear. Five per cent of the Canadian workforce is employed in some 500,000 full time equivalent tourism jobs in more than 60,000 enterprises.

Employment in tourism is growing one and a half times faster than industries as a whole. Visitors to Canada last year contributed approximately $9 billion in foreign exchange and Canadians added about $18 billion while travelling within Canada.

I want to point out that it is not simply in work within this ministry that co–operation is happening. We look at the HRD department and how it is going to be complimenting what we are doing in this department. Look at the hospitality industry. That department has recently signed an agreement with the National Tourism Human Resource Council. Its objective will be to co–ordinate and support research and analysis of the industry's training needs. It will formulate national occupational standards and certification programs. It will provide the means for the sharing of information initiatives and it will be a national advocate on behalf of the tourism industry for human resource issues.

Human Resources Development Canada endorses the council and the goals that it has set for itself. The federal government is contributing over $977,000, the tourism industry is providing over $2.2 million or thereabouts. This is only one of 13 sectoral agreements that had been signed. Since the hospitality industry agreement was signed a great many more have been signed.

This shows that we are not just looking at the industrial side which is absolutely necessary. Coupled with that we are also looking at the manpower required in order to create the jobs in these industries. There cannot be one without the other. We have a new bill and new department pulling together all of the industrial strategies necessary for the country.

However, we also have another department that is looking at the manpower required and arranging sectoral agreements with various sectors of the economy to create the kinds of skills and manpower required for the jobs we are creating for the future.

I am very much in support of this bill and I want to congratulate the minister for pulling this together. I hope the House will support it.

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–46 is a balanced, streamlined and positive bill. The country is ready for a new industrial, scientific revolution.

I would like to share briefly with members some of the signs that are occurring in Mississauga and I would like to ask for her comments at the end.

Mississauga is the ninth largest city in the country and is a microcosm of Canadian society. The forecast for housing in Mississauga was $600 million. It was revised today to $850

million in new starts. The industrial growth has been revised from 2.2 million square feet to 3.5 million square feet for next year.

Does the member for Beaches—Woodbine believe that Bill C–46 and all this wonderful economic activity going on in Mississauga balance or co–ordinate at all with the election of a sensible, positive Liberal government?

• (1710)

Ms. Minna: Mr. Speaker, obviously it does compliment. I suppose that is a leading question if I ever had one but it is a great question.

The member is quite right. We talk a great deal in this House about getting rid of duplication and cutbacks. There are all kinds of comments coming from the opposition about the overlap. In this case we are doing exactly what a great many people have been saying, let us get rid of the overlap of the duplication and let us pull together into one bill all of those aspects which are necessary to deal with the new strategies of the global economy and the new technologies of today. We are dealing with technology. We are dealing with all of the different aspects that involve these things.

At the same time we are looking at the manpower needs for the future in the new strategies of industry. Small and medium size businesses need this kind of assistance and infrastructure. They are working with us. We are not coming up with these solutions or policies in isolation without consultations with small and medium size businesses and business in general in this country.

As I said, the sectoral agreements which were signed by the Minister of Human Resources Development were signed in agreement. We are working together and sharing the responsibilities. That is how this country was built and where the future of this country lies, in a partnership with business.

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this bill.

Bill C–46 provided the federal government a chance to do more to change the status quo. This bill will give the Minister of Industry powers relating to regional economic development programs in Ontario and Quebec. This is outlined in part I, subclause 4(2) of the bill.

Will these powers actually extend to the Minister of Industry and will he retain these powers or will the Governor General continue to vest to the Minister of Finance control over the federal office of regional development Quebec? We will be watching these developments very closely.

It is clear that present ways of administering government lack effectiveness and efficiency. I need only point to the federal debt which is well over the $500 billion mark and rising to illustrate that point.

By the end of the next three years this government will have added approximately $97 billion to the federal debt. That is the highest increase in the history of Canada for any three year period. The so–called fiscal plan of the government short-changes all Canadians. The plain fact is that fixing the deficit targeted at 3 per cent of GDP is not good enough when our federal debt is at 71 per cent and the total public debt is nearly 100 per cent of GDP respectively.

The government must change the way it operates now if it is going to bring the country's financial house in order. Bill C–46 does little to achieve this goal which is the main reason we cannot support it.

Bill C–46 is a statement of what the Department of Industry does. This bill gives the minister sweeping powers to create an environment where government is the central tool of economic development and deeply involved in the private sector. My colleague from Okanagan Centre went into great detail in that area.

There were 52 Reform MPs elected for some very fundamental reasons. The Canadian electorate wants change to the system. Last year's election was the first wave to bring about that change. One of the reasons Reformers were elected has to do with our policy regarding private enterprise. Reformers believe that private enterprise must be the engine which drives the economy. A dollar left in the pocket of the businessman is more efficiently spent than a dollar spent by the government. This is common sense. Businesses are in the business of creating jobs, making and investing money and unfortunately governments are in the habit of spending it, very often frivolously.

• (1715)

Reformers value enterprise and initiative. We see the government's role as fostering and protecting an environment in which initiative and enterprise can be exercised by individuals and groups. Regional development programs have the potential to create waste and abuse. It is no surprise that a senior cabinet minister from Quebec is currently in charge of FORD–Q. Nor is it a surprise that a senior cabinet minister from the west is in charge of Western Economic Diversification. And the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is administered by the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

These regional development programs, which account for well over $1 billion per year, do little for the long term benefit of the country. They are supposed to enhance employment opportunities, strengthen the national economy, stimulate investment and promote the interests and protection of Canadian consumers.

These are not my musings, they come straight from Bill C–46. However I submit that these programs do very little to achieve their self–proclaimed goals. FORD–Q is an example of how a regional development program just does not stack up. The objective of FORD–Q, as outlined in the 1994–95 main estimates, part III, is to promote the economic development of the regions of Quebec with low incomes, slow economic growth or

inadequate possibilities for productive employment, by emphasizing long term economic development and sustainable employment and income creation.

In an address to the Standing Committee on Industry in May the finance minister waxed eloquent, as he usually does when he speaks, about the so–called merits of FORD–Q. He told the committee:

> Over the last six years FORD–Q's activities in all the regions of Quebec have created remarkable spin–offs: $1.1 billion invested in more than 3,600 projects, a total investment of nearly $5.8 billion and 56,000 jobs. We have enjoyed outstanding success.

I find it very interesting that the finance minister considers spending over $103,000 for one job to be an efficient use of taxpayers' money. What is even more interesting is what the finance minister said to the committee in his next breath:

> Quebec is nonetheless saddled with an unemployment rate that approaches 13 per cent.

The evidence is there. In the last six years FORD–Q has done little to promote long term economic development and sustainable employment. Quebec has an unemployment rate higher than the national average, yet part of FORD–Q's mandate is to promote sustainable employment.

Additionally, FORD–Q was to help convince Quebec to stay in Canada. It is a miserable failure in that area as well.

It is important to point out that FORD–Q is not the only regional development program which falls short of its mandate. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency also merits comment. Since ACOA launched its co–operative program in 1989, a program of federal–provincial economic development initiatives, two things have happened: first, the average unemployment rate in the Atlantic region has increased by nearly 2 per cent; second, the number of people on welfare has grown by nearly 3 per cent.

I ask the question: Has ACOA really made the Atlantic economy more viable? The numbers would seem to indicate otherwise, as would the deplorable state of the fishing industry, especially in Newfoundland.

Western Economic Diversification is another example of a regional development program engaging in huge expenditures of taxpayers' dollars. This year's budget for WED is over $452 million. Its mandate is to promote the development and diversification of western Canada's economy. Since its inception in 1987 to the end of fiscal 1993 WED has doled out more than $1 billion to over 3,000 projects. That is over $330,000 per project, never mind the fact that only 40,000 jobs, many of them short term, have resulted from this huge expenditure.

The average welfare rate in some of the western provinces has gone up by almost 2 per cent in the last three years, and the unemployment rate has followed a similar path. Again the numbers indicate that regional development programs are not very effective.

As a critic for regional economic development, I would like to relate some information we obtained which shows why these programs are questionable expenditures of taxpayers' dollars.

• (1720)

FORD–Q recently finished up its support program for fashion design. This program committed $2.9 million to raise the profile of fashion design from the Montreal region. Of that $2.9 million, $2.6 million was in the form of grants, money which is not repaid. On researching this particular program we found that three companies went out of business shortly after receiving their grants. There were three additional companies for which FORD–Q officials could not account. Why would FORD–Q give money to these companies without keeping tabs on their progress?

We looked into the whereabouts of these companies and found that only two of the companies were still in operation. Combined, the grants for these companies totalled over $234,000. That money has gone up in smoke. FORD–Q officials cannot even keep track of where the money is going. FORD–Q under the Montreal development fund program is now handing out another $1.5 million to the fashion design sector. How much of that money will go unaccounted?

Taxpayers would rather manage their own money than have one branch of the government take it and pump it back into programs that just do not seem to work. There are examples this kind right across the country. Taxpayers deserve a better fate than having their money squandered on so–called regional development programs. It is no wonder division exists in the country when questionable programs for every region of Canada waste taxpayers' dollars.

As a new government the Liberals have a chance to truly change the way things are done. These regional development programs were used by the Tories as pork–barrelling tools. I would encourage the Minister of Industry to do a thorough review of all the regional economic development programs, including western economic diversification.

In fact I ask the minister to go even a step further and turn all economic development over to the provinces.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, the suggestion of the hon. member in his speech dealing with western diversification is that there should be a review. That is presently taking place. The review is being conducted.

During this review and while visiting communities in Alberta and British Columbia, the business people in those provinces have indicated that there is a need for western diversification funding during a certain time in the development of product. In Saskatchewan the biotech industry exists because of western

diversification. It has become the envy of other science communities and has become one of the leading biotech centres in the world.

Does the hon. member feel that all funding for all purposes in the development of industry in western Canada should be cut off by western diversification? If so, does he see any role whatsoever for western diversification in western Canada?

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, in so far as the human resources review is concerned it has been so on and off that no one really knows where it is right now.

Our policy is to cease funding to regional economic development. The reason why Alberta and to some extent B.C. have diversified their economies so well has not so much to do with federal funding, it has to do with the provinces providing the right kind of atmosphere and climate for these diversifications to occur.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, this bill that is before the House today—

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe that my hon. colleague was splitting time with me so that I should probably be up at this time.

• (1725)

The Deputy Speaker: The lists change all the time. It was the Chair's understanding that the Reform Party was not splitting time and that the member for Edmonton Southwest was going to go for the full 20 minutes if he so wished after the two members on the other side.

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I will follow the Liberal speaker.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry Act in Bill C–46 that is before the House today combines many things into one department. There is not too much wrong with that because in the last Parliament—at least in 1984—we saw 40 ministries represented in the House of Commons. It was the largest cabinet in Canadian history.

Today we have 22 ministers in the House of Commons. The Department of Industry Act will provide a clear, comprehensive, legislative mandate and some co–ordination for many of those departments that were before separated and divided among 40 people.

Some people have the idea that everything the Department of Industry will be doing was listed by the parliamentary secretary today when he was speaking. Why should it be all listed? I believe we can safely say that such an impression is just that, it is an impression. While titles ideally should be symbolic, they should not be mistaken for substance.

If a number of subjects are built into one department and the minister has some initiative, some vision and some leadership ability, as we have in the Department of Industry, all those things are going to be co–ordinated very well.

The minister has many challenges in the proper co–ordination of all the various agendas that have been handed to him in one department. Let us take tourism for example. One of his jobs is to promote the tourism industry.

I have seen a very good group of tourism people put together in former departments shoved from one department to another. In recent years, they have been chopped to pieces and now just a few of them are left.

I sat in on a committee in the last Parliament where even representatives of big tourist industries were saying: "We do not need Tourism Canada at all. We can look after ourselves. We would rather promote ourselves." That is fine if you are one of the big tourism industries. They can look after themselves at home and they can do their advertising abroad. The small and medium sized industries are not in the same favourable position.

We should be promoting tourism in every nation of the world. Canadian citizens represent a lot of people from various countries. We should be zeroing in on those countries because there is a friendship base to go on. We should invite those people to come over here to visit their relatives and to travel. We also should go into the massive population areas of the world as well and advertise there.

Seventy per cent of the world's population will be living on the Pacific rim in the year 2000. That is the area where Canadians should be zeroing in for tourist business as well as for international trade.

In every phase of the Department of Industry that this bill is setting up today, we are going to require that vision, that breadth of mind, the determination that we mentioned in the red book during the election campaign. New initiatives are necessary. We cannot stay with the status quo. We cannot promote the status quo. We have to change with the demands of the international market. That should be no big problem.

• (1730)

Under the new legislation we will have sections in the department of industry such as science, development of new technology, communications, investments, consumer and corporate affairs and industrial development generally. They are not the total department by any means. We need some co–ordination. In the Public Service of Canada and other sectors there have to be people with some imagination, and real life experience does not hurt once in a while.

We talk about high technology. Many people think of it only in terms of industry, that is the old term industry. They forget that agriculture is an industry. We have large farms today that are industries in their own right. We have the dairy industry. We

have new technologies in the dairy industry, the beef industry and in cash crops. We could talk about any of them. There are new developments.

If members want to see the change in the agricultural industry over the years they should go to a modern day ploughing match such as the one we had in Renfrew county this past week. They will see all kinds of changes. Even the faces of members of Parliament who go there change. I am proud to say that 17 members of the House saw fit to plough. I congratulate the hon. member who came first, a member of the Reform Party from British Columbia. I compliment my colleague from Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington who came second. I congratulate the hon. member for Erie who came third. However it would do us a lot of good if we kept up with modern technology. Maybe we would make better ploughers.

Nevertheless we have all this equipment and advertising, 42 city blocks of it, and people talk about agriculture as if it is a way of life. It is a real industry in itself and that is what every parliamentarian has to realize.

I notice investment is a very important part of the new Ministry of Industry we are setting up today. If there is anything that businesses need today, it is stable financial sources to work with. If there is anything we have to do in Parliament, it is to provide a source of money for industry to operate, to develop and to progress.

The Federal Business Development Bank will have to change. There must be reforms. We have to move into a new era. In my view Parliament, the 35th Parliament of Canada, and the present government have the greatest opportunity. Yes, they have many challenges but along with the many challenges are the great opportunities. The Government of Canada, ministers and members of the House have a great opportunity to bring a new deal to our nation of Canada. We have to do it with some vision. We have to look forward. We cannot be antsy about changing our ways.

Recently a Japanese homebuilder along with a Canadian entrepreneur visited my office. The Japanese want to buy houses from Canada, but they do not want to buy houses that will North Americanize the Japanese culture. They want Canadians to produce parts for their housing that will retain the Japanese culture. If that is what they want and if there is a big market there, it is up to Canadian entrepreneurs and the department of industry to work with them to develop new housing to suit the Japanese culture.

• (1735)

China is opening up. There are all kinds of new ideas and new opportunities. The message the Minister of Industry has to send to industries and entrepreneurs in Canada is that it is for them to make their product fit the demand.

The Minister for International Trade is going around the world. He has to find opportunities, bring them back to Canada and give them to our entrepreneurs. They should be flexible. With the expertise in the department of industry they should be able to meet that market, make a great success for Canada and provide jobs, great opportunities and growth right in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–46, an Act to establish the Department of Industry, is yet another initiative, another attempt by this government to achieve the targets it had set itself in terms of economic growth, job creation and federal administration restructuring.

Whether we like it or not, Canada is rapidly moving away from the widely resource–based and strongly labour–intensive economy we have had so far and towards an economy based on information, knowledge and innovation. The economic standard calls for the restructuring of not only our industry and trade, but also our society. It also calls for greater attention being paid to basic factors, that is to say the underlying sources of growth and competitiveness as well as to the establishment of a climate conducive to entrepreneurship and less reliance on government financial assistance.

We must do better in the areas of education and training and emphasize research and development. Today more than ever before, we must face changes with an innovative and flexible attitude. We must take an international perspective which opens the door to both unforeseen opportunities and stiff competition on the globalized markets. The infrastructure will have to be capable of supporting tomorrow's economy, which pre–supposes making available to the Canadian public in general world–class communication and information technologies.

We must also make all of our activities more effective, in the private and public sectors alike. Business and industry must eliminate waste, reduce costs and make the most of Canadians' skills and talents. More generally, in order to revive the economy, the government must give priority to fostering a climate in which businesses can create more jobs for Canadians, and that is just what the Prime Minister did on September 18 when he announced the program to be developed by the Department of Industry by the end of October.

• (1740)

This program is aimed among other things at improving the business climate for entrepreneurs, helping businesses take advantage of the new technology, searching for growing markets, and promoting the tourism industry in particular.

It will not be easy to meet all these requirements. All participants will have to work together continuously. Furthermore, the government will have to adopt a consistent approach to the allocation of our resources and to the development and implementation of these same policies. That is why we have brought together in one department all the effective economic development tools that previously came under the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Department of Communications, Investment Canada and the Department of Industry, Science and Technology.

First, this reorganization will increase efficiency by eliminating duplication and overlap. Second, it will lead to more coherent policy development and thus greater effectiveness. The mandate of the Department of Industry is to promote economic development in Canada and to continue to keep the commitment made in this regard. Instead of simply distributing money to solve problems, the Department of Industry will work in conjunction with industry, teachers, scientists, technologists, researchers, consumers as well as other governments to reach these objectives.

By giving responsibility for the consumer affairs policy to the Department of Industry, we will ensure that consumers have a say in the development of policies influencing our marketplace. Efficient market operation is essential to economic renewal, and will benefit consumers as much as businesses. The Department of Industry Act sets up an integrated process in which consumers' concerns will be addressed as early as possible in the policy development process.

Efforts to protect consumers can thus be focused on preventing problems, rather than on solving them after the fact. In areas of vital interest for all Canadians, such as biotechnology and genetic engineering, the Labelling Act, and the regulation reform, our action will be based on consumers' interests. The co–operation of the Consumers' Association of Canada in many initiatives reflects consumer representation in the policy development process.

Let me mention, among others, the consultative committee on the information highway, the drafting of a new privacy protection code, the discussions between the federal government, the provinces and the industry on a code of practice for electronic funds transfer, as well as a pilot project to set up an alternative to dispute resolution, so as to allow consumers easier access to small claims court.

Those departmental initiatives are well underway, as shown by recent announcements made. As you know, the action plan unveiled by the Prime Minister to create an innovative economy, is consistent with our guiding principle. The Minister of Industry will soon announce the details of that important initiative. You are also well aware that Industry Canada participates actively in various program and policy reviews which will help us fulfill our mandate under the law.

Here are a few examples of our activities. We have finally made real progress regarding the domestic trade issue. Indeed, the Minister of Industry recently had the pleasure and the honour of contributing to the signing of an agreement between the provinces, the territories and the federal government on the first measures to eliminate the obstacles to domestic trade which have been created in our country over the last 127 years.

• (1745)

The agreement on domestic trade signed by the first ministers on June 28 is a good thing for all Canadians. Obstacles to domestic trade cost Canadians up to $7 billion a year. Having the goal of allowing for freer movement of individuals, goods, services and capital, this agreement provides for the elimination of trade barriers by July 1995.

The agreement sets general rules prohibiting the implementation of any new obstacles and abolishing existing barriers in ten areas, including transportation, government contracts, investment and workforce mobility. The agreement provides for another very important feature, a dispute settlement mechanism for these areas. Obviously, there is still much to be done. However, some of the provisions in this agreement will help us make more progress. The kind of co–operation we got in preparing the agreement allows us to hope for free movement of goods, services and workforce in Canada within a true economic union.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, it has been a very interesting morning and afternoon in the House as this debate unfolded.

I am moved to ask rhetorically one question. What is it about getting elected that makes politicians venture capitalists? Is there some magic laying on of hands or something that we go through that I missed, that all of a sudden somehow we have the right to extract tax dollars out of the hides of people who are barely getting by earning $8 or $10 a hour, take it into government and then regurgitate about 20 cents to give it to somebody to go into competition with the people who gave us the money in the first place?

What is it about getting elected that gives us the wherewithal to start taking money from individuals and giving it to other individuals or giving it, worse, to corporations?

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): How did you get elected?

Mr. McClelland: By saying that we are going to put a stop to this foolishness. We got elected by saying we have had enough of that. People in Alberta have learned that you cannot get yourself elected by continuing to spend other taxpayers' money

like it was someone else's. We have to start treating this money like it is our own.

I will give three reasons why we should not be in this business, MagCan, NovAtel and Gainers. We have no business being in business.

How did we get here? It is 1994. Here we are sitting in the Parliament of Canada. Many of us are sitting here because the last government imploded upon itself—Kim Campbell. How did we get into this reorganization in the first place? I guess that is the first question we have to ask ourselves. How did we get here in the first place to do this reorganization?

We got here because Kim Campbell noticed that there were a few bumps on the road ahead and she figured that perhaps one of the things that she could do is reduce the size of government, reduce the size of the cabinet which had grown to 40 or so members.

It makes sense, right? It does not make sense if you do it for the wrong reasons. It should have been done for the policy reason, not because they wanted to get elected, not for political reasons, but because it was the right thing to do.

Most people realize that before you make substantive organizational change you would do a review to make sure that you are making the change in the correct way and going at it carefully.

What did we do? The Liberal government inherited Kim Campbell's last gasp to get herself elected. It then had the opportunity and, recognizing the wisdom of downsizing government which was definitely a step in the right direction, carried forward and added to it.

• (1750)

Let me quote from *Organizing to Govern*. This is a book written by Gordon Osbaldeston and most people in this House would certainly recognize that name. For the benefit of people watching, Gordon Osbaldeston had a distinguished career in the Canadian public service. He has held posts in the foreign trade commission service and was a deputy minister in the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

He was secretary to the Treasury Board, Minister of State for Economic Development, under–secretary of state, Department of External Affairs, Clerk of the Privy Council, on and on—35 years of distinguished service to our country.

He wrote a book called *Organizing to Govern*.

I heard him being interviewed on the news the other day and it was interesting because the radio interviewer said if he was a proponent of radically downsizing government and retracting the tentacles of government from the daily life of Canadian business, how is it that he for the best part of his life was involved in the expansion of the government's role in everybody's business.

His response was that as we age we sometimes learn something and he hoped he had learned something over his long career in the public service.

In any event, rule number one in organizing and governing, three rules to live by, is resist proposals to reorganize unless you are certain the benefits of the proposed change outweigh the costs. He goes on to say organizing is not as free lunch, adding new organizations or ministerial portfolios adds complexity and reorganizing existing ones causes disruption. Neither of these costs should be taken lightly. At minimum it can take three years to implement a major organizational change and in many cases five years.

Our public servants, all 6,000 involved in this reorganization just in industry, and all of the public servants all over the country deserve some kind of a medal for the chaos they have had to live in and endure over these last 20 or so years.

If we believe Mr. Osbaldeston to be accurate, and there is no reason to think we should not, look what has happened in the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce since 1892 when the then Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Mackenzie Bowell, went to Australia and drummed up business for the CPR. We are still doing it. We started in 1892.

In any event remember, according to Mr. Osbaldeston, it takes at least three to five years to be able to accommodate change and so here we have industry trade and commerce from 1892 to 1969—virtually nothing. They probably ran the thing out of a reasonably small room. Then it started to grow.

In 1963 it changed; 1965, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1978, 1983, 1983 again, and then we started adding to it and adding to it. What happened was that all of a sudden after the war C.D. Howe really ran the whole government from his position in the Department of Defence Production. He became the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and a very powerful figure in government.

Through his seat of power it started to expand the department of industry. The department of industry did not become obtrusive and get its tentacles into everything. For those of you in business who have a daily relationship with Statistics Canada you know exactly what I am talking about when we talk about intrusive.

Walter Gordon became the minister and I am going to quote again from the book *Organizing to Govern* by Gordon Osbaldeston: "Since their defeat in 1957 the Liberal Party have been honing ideas for the next election campaign. One individual who played a key role in ensuring that a new department of industry was part of the Liberal platform was Walter Gordon".

If it sounds like déja vu, it is déja vu. Someone lifted the red book over there and there it was all over again—how are we going to go about getting elected? We are going to hone the

Department of Industry. We are going to get more intrusive. We are going to make sure that we can say, let us get on with it.

• (1755)

I am quoting again: "Gordon lead a royal commission appointed in 1955 to look at the economy. Few of the commission's recommendations were adopted by the St. Laurent government. When Lester B. Pearson became the new party leader, Gordon's ideas came to the fore and in a party that was looking for new ideas and keen on economic reform he found fertile ground. He had long been a friend of Pearson and now he became a trusted adviser".

It is really interesting to see how we got to where we are today. Nobody really planned it. It just sort of happened. All of a sudden we have $3 billion a year going through the Department of Industry, with that department's civil servants, bureaucrats and politicians picking winners and losers in the marketplace.

I will get back to my quotation: "The reason the Department of Industry was created was because Walter Gordon wanted one and he had the personal influence with Pearson and those close to him to ensure that he got it. But why did he want it? What pushed Gordon's thinking to a new department? Undoubtedly Gordon's overriding motivation was his personal philosophy regarding government and industry. When his royal commission reported in 1957 it described severe problems with foreign investment in Canada and an associated weakness in the Canadian industrial sector.

A senior official who worked closely with Gordon on the royal commission described Gordon's views as follows: "The whole idea of a separate governmental entity to concern itself with Canadian secondary industry really was inspired by Walter Gordon. He was an interventionist, a bit of a nationalist with a protectionist kind of mentality".

Is this not the same Liberal government opposite that signed the NAFTA? I will quote again: "His protectionism took the form of using—" Listen to this. This will send chills down the back of everyone here. You people in television land may want to turn your TV sets off, folks. You are not going to like what you hear.

"His protectionism took the form of using government power, government funds, government leverage and pushing these things in one direction rather than another. Almost all of it had protectionist overtones, albeit in the form of subsidies rather than higher tariffs". Where has that put us today?

Mr. Abbott: That is where the debt came from.

Mr. McClelland: It is a clue. The question is, where did the debt come from? We have a clue here. We are narrowing in on how we got a debt of $500 billion and how we are going into the hole. This year alone the debate is $40 billion and $110 million every single day.

It is debt we are putting on to our children, our grandchildren and their children. Their standard of living is not going to be nearly as good as ours because we have been living beyond our means. It is immoral. It is not right. Our generation has to take responsibility for that debt.

One of the things we have to do is recognize the window of opportunity, change and get our economy back on track, get the government back on track doing what government should do.

An hon. member: What should government do?

Mr. McClelland: That raises the question. What should government do and what should the real role of government be in a free economy? I would submit that it is a whole lot less than we are doing today.

Let me give an example of the extension of what we started with all the good ideas of Walter Gordon. They were well meaning. He certainly did not get up the morning and say: "How can I wreck the country? Do you know what I would really like to do? I would really like to make sure my great grandchildren cannot afford to buy a car". C.D. Howe did not say: "We beat the Germans but we are sure going to destroy our future generations". It just sort of happened but look what it has led to. Transfer payments in the Department of Industry. Contributions under technology for environmental solutions initiative, $10 million; contributions to defence industry productivity programs, $158 million; contributions to Bombardier de Havilland.

• (1800)

It should not be called the department of industry; it should be called the department of grants to Bombardier, de Havilland and SNC–Lavalin.

Here is another one. It is over a number of years. It is $143,682,285. It is a 1994–95 disbursement forecast for contracts signed with SNC–Lavalin and subsidiaries for geographic programs all over the world. The $143 million is subsidized by little people earning 8, 10 or 12 bucks an hour.

David Lewis, a member of the New Democratic Party in this House, Stephen's father, coined the phrase corporate welfare bums. It is true there are corporate welfare bums. We have to wean corporations away from the public trough. If we are stupid enough to make it available they are going to be smart enough to take it because it is their tax money as well.

What do we do? It is fairly simple, fairly straightforward. We pay attention to what is going on in Alberta. There is no point in going through the trials and tribulations of what is going on in Alberta and not learning from it. The very least we can do is

learn from what is going on in Alberta and carry that forward to the whole country.

Government must reduce its intrusion into the marketplace and get back to basics. Our job is to look after the infrastructure of the country that cannot be looked after other than through the national government. Above all, we should have in the department of industry some kind of overriding mission statement so that we can look at it every day and ask whether what we intend to do or are trying to do fits with what our plan should be. Do we have a goal? Do we have even clue one about where we want to be at the end of the day? The first thing we need is a mission statement.

I submit this might be a place to start to establish and maintain a culture which rewards entrepreneurship, innovation and research and which ensures a level, honest, competitive marketplace. Nothing more, nothing less.

Business people in Canada do not want a free handout from the government, but if we are stupid enough to give it to them they are going to be smart enough to take it. It is up to us to say no.

Therefore I would like to move a subamendment to the Bloc amendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended by striking out the word "Quebec's" and substituting the following therefor "each province's" and by deleting the word "regional".

The Deputy Speaker: I understand the subamendment of the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest was seconded by the hon. member for Okanagan Centre.

The subamendment has already been submitted to the Clerk and has been found to be acceptable.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Southwest talked specifically about the grants that were processed through the department of industry and mentioned a few names. Most Canadians would realize that even though three or four names were mentioned, thousands of small and medium sized businesses across the country benefit from support from Industry Canada.

I have a question for the member. He seems to have the point of view that the notion of grants should be phased out or eliminated. In the tax act of Canada there are tax expenditures in the billions of dollars to the oil and gas sector of the country that are the same as tax grants. Is the member suggesting that all tax grants in the tax act of Canada be abolished?

• (1805)

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his very salient question. We cannot have one rule for one and a different rule for everybody else. Then we would be hypocrites. We must have one rule for everyone.

It is interesting we use the term grants which presupposes that it is our money. If I have $10 and I want to give it to one of my kids, that is a grant; but if I am taking somebody else's money and giving it to someone else, that is a loan.

I will answer the member's question directly. I think we should have a flat tax, yes. Without question we cannot have one set of rules, for example, on depletion allowances and all the rest of it. Income earned is income earned and we pay tax on it. Tax points and tax credits are exactly the same as cash that does not come in.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): You would abolish all tax credits.

Mr. McClelland: Every one of them.

An hon. member: Right after you gave back the $70 billion you took under the NEP.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, since this amendment was proposed by the opposition, I would like to know, for the benefit of the Official Opposition, what the hon. member for Edmonton means by the terms "each province" and by the word "regional". What do these two terms mean to him?

[*English*]

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, as I understand the principle of the amendment, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. We are talking about the country as a whole, not just about Quebec. If it makes sense for Quebec it makes sense for everyone.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's speech was very eloquent and very interesting. He indicated the requirement that all grants be reduced or eliminated to all businesses, et cetera. If all such moneys are eliminated I take it there would be an elimination of moneys and benefits to everyone, not just corporations across the board.

Could the hon. member indicate whether the elimination of benefits to corporations are any different from the elimination of tax benefits such as RRSPs to individuals?

Mr. McClelland: Yes, of course they are. They are entirely different. When we talk about eliminating grants to businesses which artificially change the marketplace and allow the government in its wisdom or lack thereof to pick winners and losers, it is entirely different from our fiduciary responsibility as citizens to look after those who are not able to look after themselves. We are talking about individuals who need help, not corporations that want help.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest. Given his proposal, how does he intend to reestab-

lish a balance between rich areas and underprivileged areas with high unemployment if the government does not do anything?

[*English*]

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, if the solution implied in my hon. colleague's question is that regional economic expansion is key to preventing and eliminating regional disparity in the country or in any other country, for that matter, I would send the question back by saying that we have been sending scads of money to depressed areas of the country for years. Has it changed anything? I submit it has not.

I would also submit there is a situation that parallels the one we are talking about between the northern and the southern states of the United States.

• (1810)

The fastest growing economic area in North America today is the southern states. For years they were depressed. Gradually over time their economies were such that their labour rates and the cost of housing were lower. They had a highly motivated workforce and businesses started to invest in that area. Now it is booming.

If trying to eliminate disparities in Canada by taking money from a wealthier area and transmitting it through business to a less favoured area works, we would not have a problem today. However we do. The statistics quoted by my hon. colleague from Yellowhead indicated that nothing has changed after years of sending money to these various areas through ACOA, FORD–Q, DREE and all such things.

We are in exactly the same situation except we are in the hole by $500 billion. Even if we wanted to, we cannot afford it any more. We are creating and perpetuating dependency. We have to look for new solutions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I join many of my colleagues on this side of the House in supporting the establishment of a Department of Industry and I hope that this support will be unanimous. This new department will give Canada and Canadians the new tools they need to help them create jobs and build a more secure future.

However, before we go any further, I think that we have to take into consideration the history of our country. We can always think of the first settlers who were supported by the church or by people who were put there to help them develop an area—in my case it was the Gaspé Peninsula—and that is how Quebec and Canada were built.

There is always some degree of co–operation between the various elements of our society in any area, whether it be industry, education or, of course, the public service. But since then, since the 17th and 18th centuries, there was Confederation in 1867 and the National Policy was established under Sir John A. Macdonald. It was a very ambitious plan. It all started with the construction of the railway better known today as CN and VIA Rail. This great project to link our country from east to west did not go unnoticed in other parts of the world.

It was undertaken to give some impetus to the Canadian economy, but it could not have been done without the support of governments, without money being spent on the construction of this trans–Canada railway. Indeed, if we look at the debates held in 1867 in this House, we will see that there have always been critics of this avant–garde vision of the federal government at that time. But by developing the railway, that government believed that it was giving itself the means to develop this country. The resources were developed afterwards; then, thanks to the railway, Western Canada was populated, as well as Ontario and part of Quebec. Links were made between these new provinces, and this marked the beginning of the Canadian federation.

This is a primary example of a massive intervention by the federal government, but in consultation and co–operation with business interests and also with provincial governments.

• (1815)

Then came the first world war. Once again we found some unanimity, a will to fight for our rights, for our country, but still in a spirit of generalized co–operation. The same thing happened at the time of the Second World War when, over a period of five or six years, our industry, with government support, went from a third–rate position to making Canada the third or fourth greatest economic power of the time.

As you know, before 1945, before the war, over 45 per cent of the Canadian population was rural. After the war years, Canada became an industrial power. We went through an urbanization phase with people leaving rural areas to settle in the city. After the war and initiatives like the Victory Loan Bonds to raise money, the government took the same approach. After six years of substantial interest rates, Canadians were able to invest in their country's own economy because they had faith in it. They bought into Canada.

In 1945, 1946, and 1947, we were in a position to implement a demilitarization policy to foster an economy based on consumer spending. We became a consumer society, but that did not happen without the help, involvement and commitment of the federal government.

My colleague opposite mentioned C. D. Howe, who master–minded Canadian industrial development in those years, and Walter Gordon. They were men of vision who laid the foundation of the Canadian society as we know it. Those developments should be seen in their historical context so we can better

explain the goal of the present government in revitalizing the Canadian industry as we enter the next century.

The 1950s came. You know that those years are often called the dark ages in Quebec. The province was ruled by the Union nationale, under Duplessis. Quebec was undergoing changes, but changes similar to those outside Canada.

We then had the Quiet Revolution which, obviously, met many Quebecers' aspirations. We should never forget that the Quiet Revolution took place under a Liberal government, within the Canadian context and the Canadian federation. We were able to show Quebecers that federalism is a flexible and generous system which fulfils the deep–rooted aspirations of all Canadians.

During the 1960s, new schools were built. University education was popularized and made accessible to all Quebecers. Of course, we must not forget that education—as is the case today—was financed in large part by the federal government. Never did the federal government dare intervene in this quiet revolution, never did the federal government dare hinder the material progress, the economic progress of all Quebecers. This fact must be recognized.

In the late 1960s, more specifically in 1966, the people elected another Union Nationale government which claimed that the premier of the day, Jean Lesage, went too fast for Quebec. We must not forget either that Jean Lesage served as a minister in the federal government in the 1950s. Surely, he must have borrowed some ideas and solutions from his colleagues from Ontario and the Maritimes. I believe we must recognize—and I think that many researchers and specialists interested in Jean Lesage do recognize—that Jean Lesage's tenure in Ottawa served him well in developing Quebec as we know it today.

• (1820)

That being said, more progress was made in the 1970s. In those days, we believed more and more in the welfare state. It is not a concept exclusive to Quebec or Canada, but a concept also known in Germany, Scandinavia, France and even England. The purpose of the welfare state is to make sure that everybody's interests, not only the interests of financiers, or people from Montreal and Quebec City, are taken into account.

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order please. We are supposed to be talking to Bill C–46, the Act to establish the Department of Industry, tabled pursuant to decisions made in 91–92 by Mrs. Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada.

Instead we are being given a history lecture which goes back to the Jesuits, the Quiet Revolution and the Plains of Abraham. We will talk about that during the upcoming referendum campaign. Then we will give classes in Canadian history. But for now, we should be talking about this Department of Industry Act and the member for Bonaventure—îles–de–la–Madeleine is completely off the subject.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to thank the member. He is right, according to Standing Orders, comments should be related to the matter at hand. As the member, I fail to see the relevance of the comments. However, since my nomination here, I have noticed that few people abide by that rule.

Therefore, the parliamentary secretary has the floor once again.

Mr. Gagnon: As a Quebecer, as a younger member, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Rocheleau: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. If he wants to go on with the lecture, I hope the member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine will not forget the October Crisis.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to deal with that issue. I find it unfortunate that we often have weird–minded historians. In order to understand today's society—and I challenge the Bloc Quebecois on this—we must fully understand its history, we must be very clear on our intentions to explain history, because it is through history that we can explain to the people the situation as we know it today. Nobody can disagree with me on some historical issues that I have raised, and I want to say this to you: Ask Europeans, Asians, Americans, and they will all tell you that Canada is a resounding success.

French Canadians were able to overcome their difficulties when they first arrived in New France and established their own community. These French Canadians became part of the larger Canadian family, thanks to newcomers, Eastern Europeans, English–speaking people, even people from the United States, from Europe, Asian people who are coming to this country, because they are well aware that Canada is a country of freedom, of progress, a good place to live.

That is why I demand that we take into account the historical value of industry, but also the history of Canada, which somewhat explains this bill and the objective of this government.

Of course, industry is important. We are entering the 21st century and I believe that we must prepare ourselves accordingly. But instead of telling you about history, I will tell you about global reality. I know that it is an issue which deeply concerns members of the opposition parties.

The Prime Minister of Canada is setting up Team Canada. We had a hockey team called Team Canada and we were very successful. Now, we are going to have an industrial and economic Team Canada whose mandate will be to create new markets for all Canadians. Besides, as you know, we even asked the newly elected Premier of Quebec, Mr. Parizeau, to be part of the team, because what we are trying to do is make sure we get the contracts and ensure sustainable economic development for all Canadians. This is what we must kept in mind.

• (1825)

Again, why China, why go to China, why are Canadians so welcome in China? I want to know. I bet that some of you never heard of Dr. Bethune, a Montrealer, a Quebecer who did a lot for China during the 1949 revolution. It is because we have built ties with that country as with others.

By creating this department, we are saying that there are changes, that we are increasingly recognizing that 80 percent of the jobs today are created by small businesses. We know that we have invested in megaprojects in the past, at both the federal and provincial levels. This was a joint endeavour. Quebec invested in James Bay. In Montreal, there were substantial municipal investments in the Metro. There were also large investments in regional economic development, but I will come back to that.

We must recognize that industrial development requires close co–operation between governments and companies in order to make Canadians more competitive on the eve of the 21st century. As you know, Canadians, Quebecers, the Western World in general, are faced with extremely strong, well organized competition. Look at the seven small tigers. Who had heard of Singapore ten years ago? Who would have thought twenty years ago that South Korea would rise to the point it is now? Who talked about Taiwan? Who would have imagined China as a competitor? Who could have predicted the fall of the Berlin wall?

We have lived through tremendous changes these past few years. Free enterprise won over the tyrannic powers of the world without a fight. Changes are occurring and I believe that this reorganization of Industry Canada will take them into account. Although the opposition was saying that we were still in the 1960s, I believe they are sticking to a nationalistic view which, in my opinion, does not represent the real aspirations of Quebecers and Canadians who want jobs.

With the new Department of Industry and the help of new technologies, we will be able to steer small businesses towards new markets. Our advantage is that Canada is a well–known entity. When you go to your banker to ask for a loan, he wants to know your past history, he wants to know if you have a good credit rating. Do you have any business experience? Do you have any experience in your present field of endeavour? Do you have resources—In any case, I am grateful to the members of the opposition for talking a little bit about the natural resources of this country. It is important for investors, it is important to realize that Canada possesses not only natural resources but also a qualified population to meet challenges.

The basic role of Industry Canada is to bring together those various participants of the federal government and to improve planning.

As you know—I realize, Mr. Speaker, that I only have one minute left although I could have spoken for half an hour—history is important in order to better explain to the opposition and enlighten it on the real issues that all Canadians expect to come to the fore: job creation, close co–operation, and not the upheaval or modification of a well–known system.

There will be a referendum in Quebec and I can assure you federalism will not be put on trial. It will be our task to explain to you, loud and clear, the essence of federalism as we all know it today.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I have often mentioned in the House the dramatic situation in Rwanda. Among other things I asked the government to help the thousands of Rwandan refugees. On June 13, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration a question concerning the case of Léon Mugesera, a Rwandan national who came to Canada in 1993 and who some believe is responsible for slaughters that have taken place in Rwanda. The Quebec association of Rwandan immigrants has made very serious allegations to this effect.

The parliamentary secretary told me that Immigration Canada was conducting an investigation into this case. I hope the investigation results will be made public today.

[*English*]

The situation is still extremely difficult in Rwanda. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has denounced the massacres perpetrated by the Rwandan Patriotic Army. These massacres have resulted in the deaths and maimings of thousands of Rwandans. The refugee camps in Ngara, Tanzania are full of Rwandans. Half a million Rwandans have been massacred. Over two million Rwandans are refugees in Zaire, Uganda and Burundi. Unfortunately the genocide of the Rwandan people is not yet over. Many relatives of the victims live in Canada.

Through humanitarian action Canada has tried to do its part. However concerning the level of acceptance of Rwandan refugees into Canada, the actions of the Canadian government are still very insufficient. Only 96 refugee status claims have been referred between January 1 and June 30, 1994 of which the majority, 63, have been in Quebec. However the majority of the accepted cases were students who had already been in Canada.

There is no special program to receive Rwandan refugees, as was the case for the former Yugoslavia and for other countries. Our country must be more generous with regard to the Rwandan victims and those being persecuted. A lot of criticism has been expressed regarding the embassy at Nairobi; many Rwandan refugees are not even able to put forward a visa application there.

[*Translation*]

I wish to thank the Canadian NGOs for their excellent job in helping the people of Rwanda, including the following organizations from Quebec: YMCA, Oxfam Québec, Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, as well as several religious communities, particularly the Jesuits. I also want to underline the great job done by the four organizations—Proveda, Oxfam, CECI and Amitié Rwanda–Canada—which created Urgence Canada–Rwanda and contributed generously to the more than four million dollars in humanitarian aid collected in Québec.

Development and Peace alone already collected $1,800,000 to finance emergency relief programs. From now on, the government of Canada, particularly through CIDA, and the NGOs should direct their efforts to encouraging the safe return of the refugees who presently live in inhumane conditions in neighbouring countries. They should encourage national reconciliation programs in Rwanda and give strong support to the democratization process in that country devastated by civil war.

I want to reiterate my solidarity with the people and the victims of the tragedy in Rwanda.

[*English*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments and give a very brief response, as the member's statement did not relate specifically to the question he had asked at the time.

As we all know, the situation in Rwanda has been in turmoil for months. The world watched horrified as thousands were butchered, most of them Tutsis targeted by Hutu rivals. Now there are reports of Hutus being tracked down by vengeful Tutsis. In such a situation it is obviously very, very difficult to operate under the normal conditions of the immigration and refugee process. There is no question that Canada is deeply concerned.

The hon. member asks us to see the peaceful relocation or return to their homes of those who are in neighbouring countries. That may or may not as yet be possible because of the turmoil and difficulties. As he says, a great many of the refugees or those who would be refugees to Canada are not able to get to the Canadian offices in Zaire or neighbouring countries. There is the problem that there are dangers for Canadian personnel as well.

The situation is extremely tumultuous. The minister and the government are looking at it very closely. We are very aware of our humanitarian duties and will carry them out as best we can.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn is now deemed to have been adopted. This House stand adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.36 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 27, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

TOXIC SUBSTANCES

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, this morning I am releasing for consultation a discussion paper outlining a proposed Canadian policy for the management of toxic substances.

The policy proposes that Canada introduce the most advanced toxic substances strategy in the world. It would be the leading approach taken by any nation. The document is based on the most up to date international scientific findings and is consistent with the conclusions recently reached by the world's leading scientific experts at a meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry.

[*Translation*]

Although the document I am tabling today contains some very complex information, the objectives of the policy document are quite straightforward. We want to eliminate from the environment, as completely as possible, all substances that are the result of human activity, take a long time to break down in the environment, accumulate in living organisms and are toxic.

[*English*]

The bottom line is that the Canadian government wants to see no measurable release of toxic substances into the environment. We want to clean up what is there now and we want our international partners to do the same.

[*Translation*]

In the case of all other substances that meet only one or more of these criteria, we propose to put in place a system for the integrated management of their life cycles.

[English]

We propose to take a leading edge approach to toxics, those that are currently being used in Canada and those that may be introduced in the future.

[*Translation*]

If we cannot find ways to prevent toxics from being released into the environment, we intend to take steps to prevent their manufacture and use.

[*English*]

The new policy involves a principle of reverse onus. It is a very simple principle, a principle that applies now when we deal with issues like medication. It basically means that the onus is on industry to satisfy Canadians that a substance is safe rather than vice versa.

When a substance is targeted for virtual elimination, the onus will be on industry to prove that it will achieve no measurable release into the environment.

[*Translation*]

According to our proposal, the most hazardous toxics should not be allowed in the environment at all, and management of any other substance that causes problems should be subject to the strictest possible controls.

• (1005)

[*English*]

The policy would provide a clear framework for all federal laws, regulations, policies and programs dealing with toxics.

[*Translation*]

In the coming weeks, our government will consult all the provinces and territories, business sectors and environmental groups on the subject of the process and about any improvements they would like to see in the policy and the discussion paper. We want to find out what Canadians think by November 30, because time is of the essence where the health of Canadians is concerned.

I want to make it clear that our ultimate goal is to have a national policy on toxic substances that is the best in the world. We need a healthy environment, both for our economic well–being and our personal well–being. We must concentrate on preventing environmental damage instead of taking action once the damage is done. More efficient management of toxics means that the federal government must take a militant approach.

[*English*]

In the red book we said:

> Canada needs a new approach that focuses on preventing pollution at source. Timetables must be set for the phasing out all use of the most persistent toxic substances. Manufacturing innovations are needed to avoid the use or creation of pollutants in the first place; for example, through raw material substitution or closed–loop processes that recycle chemicals within the plant. There is no alternative if Canadians wish to stop long–term toxic pollutants from entering our air, soil, and water.

[*Translation*]

A new policy that will be the focus of Canada's position on toxic substances in our negotiations with the rest of the world. We want Canada to lead the way in a movement for international action.

[*English*]

The simple reality is that Canada is open to the world on the Arctic, the Pacific and the Atlantic. We cannot solve our toxic problem alone. We must encourage our American neighbours and indeed the whole world to clean up their act. Airborne toxics do not respect borders. The milk of nursing mothers in Inuit communities that have never been touched by industrialization is contaminated by toxins used literally thousands of kilometres away. Toxics dumped in the sea do not respect borders.

I had a meeting earlier this week with Canadian and U.S. members on the International Joint Commission who advised me that when we move to a policy of zero discharge in Lake Superior, which should be in the not too distant future, that lake will still suffer from levels of toxicity up to 25 per cent because of airborne toxins that come from countries around the world.

If we are to protect Canada and Canadians we need local action. We need global action. We need a global agreement. We will only be in a position to reach that agreement if Canada leads from a position of strength. If we have the best policy in the world, if we clean up our own toxic act, we will be able to encourage other countries to follow suit.

Canada must take the lead to establish its position to influence the international agenda on the reduction and virtual elimination of toxins. To that end we intend to host an international conference on airborne toxins in Vancouver. We hope, along with other countries, to pull together an international agenda for joint action on the reduction and virtual elimination of toxins. We need to seize that opportunity to present a model program to the world.

The proposed policy would control the entry of toxic substances into Canada from sources outside our country through commerce and long range transport. If we can move our country ahead in managing toxics we can be at the vanguard of new environmental technologies, new green jobs and new opportunities. Sooner or later the world will move to control toxic substances, and we want Canadians to be in the best position to capture the new markets for green alternatives.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Within the next few weeks, I will be announcing new environmental initiatives to be taken by the government.

I hope, whatever other disagreements we may have, that all members of Parliament will agree on the importance of moving forward on our country's environmental agenda.

[*English*]

All members of Parliament must agree on the importance of moving forward on the country's environmental agenda. I think we all agree that we need to take very serious action to deal with toxic substances that are potentially a poison to our children.

[*Translation*]

Some of the proposals in the discussion paper may seem harsh, but we really must stop poisoning ourselves, our children and our world.

[*English*]

I know the 60–day time frame is a tight one. I also know that the time to end toxic substances is rapidly running out. That is why I look forward to not only the discussion but the resolution of the toughest toxics policy in the world.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Madam Speaker, we are happy to hear from the Minister of the Environment that she intends to establish a new policy on toxic waste. You will understand, however, that we cannot give our support to this working paper without first having a chance to examine it. The minister's intentions seem good, but the federal regulations are often not implemented in due form.

The implementation of the primary Canadian legislation concerning toxic substances, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, presents a number of difficulties. For example, in the two years since the CEPA was first implemented, some 20,000 substances have been placed on the domestic substance list and 44 have been identified for assessment and added to the priority substance list.

In his 1991 report, the auditor general noted that, although the CEPA required that the 44 substances on this list be analyzed by 1994, only two had been investigated fully. In addition, Environment Canada and National Health and Welfare have assessed

20 of the 33 chemical products on the list. To date, only ten of these assessments have been made public.

The creation of the Office of Enforcement is an initiative that should help to solve these problems, but a number of concerns remain, particularly with respect to the regulation and control of toxic substances. Thus, according to the Auditor General, there is confusion within the federal administration regarding who is responsible for introducing environmental programs and the department has failed to evaluate the effectiveness of existing controls.

This example, just one among many, is a clear indication that the federal government is already having trouble enforcing the CEPA. The minister should show us what means she intends to use to ensure compliance with the policy she will be introducing and she should realize that this is necessary if she is ever going to make us think that it will have a definite impact on the use of toxic substances in Canada.

I would like to see the minister's policy ensure a healthier environment and an improved quality of life for us all.

The minister talks about regulating industry in order to prevent the proliferation of toxic substances. Industry should convince the government that a given substance should not be eliminated from the environment. However, the federal government is not itself snow white in this regard.

I would invite the minister to take a stroll in the Old Port of Montreal, a few hundred metres from the downtown core. I would invite her to wander over to hangar No. 3 by the Alexandra pier, at the corner of Callières and de la Commune. The federal government is storing 1.5 tonnes of PCBs here in downtown Montreal, for lack of another appropriate site.

• (1015)

There is no cause for alarm. The building is inspected on a regular basis and well guarded at all times. But I can assure you that the Old Port of Montreal officials would be only too willing to get rid of it. Environment Canada should above all manage these toxic substances responsibly, by not taking any risk, however remote, of causing an environmental disaster in the heart of Montreal.

Last week–end, I had the opportunity of discussing with members of environmental groups from Quebec and Canada at the general assembly of the Canadian Environmental Network. These people strongly dedicated to environmental protection described to us the enormous difficulties they are faced with when working on issues involving dangerous substances.

What they are referring to is the powerful lobby of big industries that use harmful chemicals for the manufacturing or conversion of certain products. We must warn the hon. minister of the political and economic context of the discussions she is planning to have with the industry with respect to the burden that shall rest on it of proving that a given chemical substance poses no immediate or long–term threat to the environment.

The minister also indicated that she intended to discuss with the provinces with a view to improving on the working paper she has tabled. This is the least she can do. In fact, toxic substances control does not fall under the jurisdiction of any level of government under the Canadian constitution. Both the federal and provincial governments can act in that area and it is of paramount importance that all levels of government be involved in developing a policy in that respect.

Having read the minister's paper over, if it is clear that Quebec's jurisdiction was respected and that the policy provisions were duly negotiated with the Quebec government, the Bloc Quebecois will give its support to the minister's policy proposal. This means that the Bloc Quebecois support depends for a large part on the consultation process the Minister of Environment will choose to use with the provinces.

Environment is one area where Quebec and Canada can set common goals. A sovereign Quebec will quite obviously negotiate environmental agreements with its neighbours. Where the interests of Quebec and Canada coincide, which is often the case with regard to environmental protection, the governments must agree to look for a mutually beneficial solution to the problems confronting us.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this paper.

We are all environmentalists. I believe the environment committee is an excellent example. It is one of the committees on which we all get along because we have the same aims. The difference is degree, and that is what we are talking about here.

Toxic substances can be brought into the scene, for example in eastern Europe, in particular Romania where there were huge quantities of waste going into the air. The other end of the spectrum is something like Wood Buffalo National Park. We are in the middle. We clearly want to manage our affairs in the best way possible.

There are naturally occurring substances such as mercury, lead and asbestos but then there are the man made toxics which are the ones we are talking about today. Clearly something that is toxic, persistent and bioaccumulative should not be on our

shopping list. Those should not be there and I believe that is where we are going.

My concern, however, is that we take too hard a line. In some areas of B.C. we have done that. I would hope that there are good scientific data so that we are acting from a good broad base rather than a good feel, for example. As the onus is going to be on industry, it needs to be involved.

I would like to go back into my other life, when I first got to Port Alberni in 1970. This is not a criticism of the pulp mill industry; in fact it is the reverse. The first time I got to Port Alberni I parked in a hotel lot. The next morning I got up and I could not see out my windshield because of the fly ash from the pulp mill. That was 24 years ago.

• (1020)

It was the same for scuba divers I talked to who had gone out into the canal. The bottom of the canal 25 years ago was like a wasteland. Today Alberni is much different. One has to take a second look at the mill on a day during which there is low humidity so there will be no steam to actually see if that mill is running. There is just heat going out of the stacks. There is no fly ash.

When I talk to scuba divers now they say the marine life in the harbour has all come back. That is where we have come in 24 years.

The minister is to be complimented on the consultation process. I have concerns about the time frame because it is clearly pretty tight. I would hope that in the process the minister will listen to what comes out of that process. I hope it is not set down in stone now so that in the process it can evolve.

I am pleased to see all the groups, environmental groups, the industry, all levels, so they can have input into this process. There are some concerns with international agreements and the Great Lakes. How does it tie into CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?

In short, I look forward to working with this document. I thank the minister for getting it to us so quickly.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

[*English*]

GRANDPARENTS' DAY ACT

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–274, an act respecting a national grandparents' day.

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of the bill is to recognize and celebrate grandparents in Canada. We have over four million grandparents living in North America. They take care of more than six million children.

It is extremely important that we celebrate this day by designating the second Sunday in September every year as national grandparents' day, as we do in many provinces and cities in the country.

(Motions deemed adopted adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

• (1025)

PETITIONS

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, the petitioners from my riding oppose any further legislation that might be brought forward concerning doctor assisted suicide.

They believe the provisions of section 241 of the Criminal Code should be enforced. It is their opinion that this by itself would go a long way toward prohibiting this type of activity. They also would like expansion of palliative care.

I should mention in passing that hearings have been undertaken by the government, by the special Senate committee on euthanasia and assisted suicide. There will be hearings in Winnipeg from September 29 to October 1 of this year.

Anyone from the city of Winnipeg or the province of Manitoba who wants their points of view to be known could do so through this vehicle.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by hundreds of residents of provinces across Canada who draw to the attention of the House the fact that the current Criminal Code denies people who are suffering from terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to choose freely and voluntarily to end their lives with the assistance of a physician.

Therefore they call upon Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure the right of all Canadians to die with dignity by allowing people with terminal or irreversible and debilitating

illness the right to the assistance of a physician in ending their lives at a time of their choice subject to strict safeguards.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition signed by 42 constituents of Ontario riding.

The petitioners call upon Parliament not to amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way that would indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

They also call upon Parliament not to amend the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by over 500 constituents from several communities in my riding including Williams Lake, Forest Grove, McLeese Lake, Quesnel and 150 Mile House. The petition is also signed by people who live outside my constituency.

The petitioners call upon the government not to pass any new legislation that results in additional gun control laws. The petitioners also call upon the government under existing gun laws to increase penalties for the illegal possession or criminal use of any firearm.

I concur with the petitioners.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today, both on the same subject matter of gun control.

The petitioners from Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt are outraged at the prospect of additional gun control legislation. They oppose further legislation for firearms acquisition and possession and urge the government to provide strict and mandatory sentences for the use or possession of a firearm in the commission of a crime.

I agree with the petitioners.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 27, 28, 29, 30 and 51.

[*Text*]

Question No. 27—**Mr. Althouse:**

How many Canadian grain hopper cars have been dispatched with: (*a*) CWS cargo; (*b*) open–market WGTA cargo; (*c*) specialty cargo into the United States in each of the past three months and what is their turnaround time?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): (a), (b) and (c). Transport Canada and the Grain Transportation Agency do not have access to the necessary data to answer this question.

Question No. 28—**Mr. Althouse:**

In this crop year, how many loaded hopper cars taken into the United States by CP and CN were diverted to United States owned lines for transport of cargo to final destinations?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Transport Canada and the Grain Transportation Agency do not have the necessary data–information with which to comment on this issue.

Question No. 29—**Mr. Althouse:**

Have any grain or specialty crops shipped into the United States been destined for final destination outside the United States?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Transport Canada and the Grain Transportation Agency do not have the necessary data–information with which to comment on this issue.

Question No. 30—**Mr. Althouse:**

How many additional hopper cars have each of the railways leased for use in the grain trade this year compared to each of the previous three years?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): The Grain Transportation Agency advises as follows.

The following table indicates the car fleet supplied by the railways. The table includes both owned and leased cars, as the agency does not have the necessary data to provide a breakdown for leased cars alone.

NUMBER OF HOPPER CARS SUPPLIED BY THE RAILWAYS FOR GRAIN SERVICE FOR SELECTED CROP YEARS

SHIPPING WEEK	CANADIAN NATIONAL			CP RAIL		
	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
1	4,948	4,121	2,518	1,645	2,652	1,910
2	4,686	3,887	2,421	1,599	2,594	1,898
3	4,354	3,899	2,348	1,315	2,569	1,644
4	4,245	3,819	2,322	1,178	2,329	1,507
5	4,103	3,766	2,238	1,090	1,190	1,387
6	3,977	3,672	2,194	1,276	1,183	1,295
7	3,685	3,034	1,912	1,142	1,129	1,203

NUMBER OF HOPPER CARS SUPPLIED BY THE RAILWAYS FOR GRAIN SERVICE FOR SELECTED CROP YEARS

SHIPPING WEEK	CANADIAN NATIONAL			CP RAIL		
	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
8	3,669	2,625	1,900	1,332	1,230	983
9	3,648	2,581	1,906	1,016	1,196	943
10	3,774	2,590	1,919	1,162	1,174	906
11	3,818	2,627	1,927	1,198	1,185	841
13	4,118	2,573	1,931	1,172	1,179	906
14	4,308	2,736	1,927	1,611	1,070	1,083
15	4,411	2,861	2,214	1,901	938	1,544
16	4,542	3,004	2,226	2,270	904	1,709
17	4,512	3,081	2,321	2,667	992	1,709
18	4,528	3,096	2,431	2,985	1,079	1,786
19	4,646	3,088	2,523	3,142	1,030	1,682
20	4,666	3,100	2,747	2,813	1,116	1,835
21	4,646	3,004	2,949	2,369	943	1,881
22	4,596	2,987	3,193	2,064	929	1,855
23	4,596	2,868	3,525	1,812	951	1,843
24	4,688	2,813	3,719	1,672	924	1,886
25	4,643	2,785	3,812	1,683	911	1,793
26	4,758	2,732	3,977	1,660	888	1,745
27	4,971	2,702	3,977	1,708	841	1,668
28	5,251	2,852	4,107	2,065	815	1,668
29	5,626	3,040	4,111	2,259	767	1,660
30	5,708	3,377	4,289	2,457	747	1,788
31	5,692	3,373	4,523	2,582	729	1,841
32	5,698	3,540	4,743	2,577	699	1,889
33	5,829	9,285	4,817	2,439	716	1,828
34	5,910	3,520	5,037	2,400	760	2,019
35	5,923	3,567	4,985	2,448	780	2,338
36	5,766	3,459	5,015	2,332	796	2,742
37	5,748	3,421	5,030	2,206	687	2,908
38	5,644	3,224	5,052	2,215	623	2,900

NOTE: WEEK 38 OF THE 1993-94 CROP YEAR RUNS FROM APRIL 17 TO APRIL 23.

Question No. 51—**Mr. Harper (Calgary West):**

With regard to grain cars purchased or leased using federal public funds, (*a*) who is responsible for allocating their use, (*b*) what is their present geographic distribution, and (*c*) how is the revenue resulting from their time–mileage use accounted for?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): The Grain Transportation Agency advises as follows: (a), (b) and (c).

The Grain Transportation Agency assumed responsibility from the Canadian Wheat Board for administering the car fleet in 1987. This responsibility includes dividing the fleet between the railways and negotiating new operating agreements with the railways. The operating agreement establishes the terms and conditions for operation of the federally owned hopper cars. The federal hopper car fleet consists of 12,902 cars which the government has provided for railway use to transport grain free of charge. The first operating agreement between the government and CP Rail and CN Rail was established in 1972. Prior to 1972 the railways supplied their own cars to meet western grain

movement. As grain became an increasingly non–compensatory movement, the railways found it uneconomical to invest in rolling stock and the governments, federal and provincial, began supplying cars to meet export demand. Since the passage of the Western Grain Transportation Act, the WGTA, the railways are responsible for augmenting the fleet to meet all demands. The railcars are used to transport eligible commodities listed in the WGTA.

The bulk of the federal fleet would be moving grain in western Canada to domestic and export positions. If the federal cars are used outside the western division, basically western Canada, the railways pay funds to the federal government under the alternate use agreement.

The Grain Transportation Agency also administers the alternate use agreements. Government cars can be used in alternate service in order to improve customer service, to reduce railcar switching and improve system efficiency as long as the railways are able to meet WGTA movement requirements. The agreements restrict the number of cars in alternative service. Alternative service includes non–WGTA movements outside western Canada. The railways are charged a commercial per diem rate. The money earned through alternate use agreements is paid to the federal government through the consolidated revenue fund. Funds totalling $3.4 million were earned during the 1992–93 crop year.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

MEMBER FOR CENTRAL NOVA

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I have given the Chair notice of a point of order arising from comments made in the House during a debate on Bill C–41 on Tuesday of last week.

I will state my point of order briefly. It arises pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 18 of the House. That standing order lists a number of groups and states:

> No member shall speak disrespectfully of—nor use offensive words against either House or against—any Member thereof.

It goes on from there.

• (1030)

On Tuesday of last week the following words were spoken in the House: "The reference to sexual orientation in the code and its proposed inclusion in the human rights legislation gives recognition to a faction in our society which is undermining and destroying our Canadian values and Christian morality". It goes on to state: "Homosexuality is not natural. It is immoral and it is undermining the inherent rights and values of our Canadian families and it must not and should not be condoned".

Those words, spoken by the member for Central Nova, clearly in my view give rise to a point of order pursuant to Standing Order 18. As a gay man, indeed as the only openly gay member of the House, I want to point out that certainly I am not the only homosexual in the House. Indeed there are gay people on both sides of the House and in the other place. I dare say there always have been, just as gays and lesbians are found in all other walks of life.

Pursuant to Standing Order 18, I want to ask what could be more offensive, to use the words of Standing Order 18, than to suggest that my very existence is immoral, unnatural, destroying Canadian values and must not be condoned. If similar hateful words had been directed toward another minority, be they Jews, Blacks, Chinese Canadians, people with disabilities or aboriginal people, all of whom are represented in the House, it is inconceivable the Chair would not have intervened and called the offending speaker to order. Therefore I want to ask why the standard should be any lower in the case of hatred directed at gays and lesbians in the House.

Finally, just to conclude, it is not good enough to suggest that just because these words are not directed at a specific individual therefore they can be spoken with impunity. If the words are unparliamentary if spoken with reference to one individual member, why should they lose that character if spoken of an unnamed general group of members?

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova): Madam Speaker, I feel I have a right and an obligation to respond to the point of order. I point out to the Chair this is not a point of order that the member for Burnaby—Kingsway raises.

If any member has the right to rise on a point of order arising from our debates on the floor of the House on Tuesday, September 20, 1994, it would be me. I have a right as a parliamentarian to express unequivocally what I feel is appropriate on debate when scrutinizing legislation.

If anyone has any concerns it should be this member because of the comments made by the member for Burnaby—Kingsway. In *Hansard* the Speaker will see where he refers to me making statements on the floor of the House that I did not in fact make on the floor of the House. He specifically makes reference to select words and uses the words out of context, words arising from a debate on May 15, 1994 on the CBC prime time news program "On the Line". The issue discussed and debated was what rights should gays be entitled to and questions were posed by both the commentator and the public at large.

The member for Burnaby—Kingsway stood on the floor of the House and used select words and put to other members of the House his opinion of what I said. I will quote specifically from *Hansard* at page 5913. He states: "Will she now stand in her

place and retract those hateful comments?" He makes reference to words that I used on the floor of the House as being hateful.

Second, he indicates that I have no place in the Liberal Party. He then refers to me at page 5912 as "the hon. member, and I use those words advisedly". That is not proper parliamentary language.

• (1035)

At page 5916, speaking to another member when I was not present in the House, on four occasions in the same commentary he referred to me as "she". Not once did he refer to me as the member for Central Nova. I object to that. That is improper. He is a senior parliamentarian and I expect respect on the floor of the House, particularly when I am not present.

At page 5919 the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway in a commentary to the hon. member for Yellowknife said: "The hon. member was present in the House", referring to the member for Yellowknife, "when the Liberal member of Parliament for Central Nova made comments, among other things, suggesting that homosexuality is immoral and unnatural when she suggested that AIDS was a scourge to mankind which had been inflicted upon the country by homosexuals".

Nowhere in *Hansard* will it be seen that I made those comments on the floor of the House. I demand a public apology.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a few brief comments which may assist the Chair.

I think it is obvious that two members of Parliament have made statements in the House on which they obviously have strong views and have disagreed with each other. One member said that another member had suggested that AIDS was a scourge and so on. I do not know whether those comments were made anywhere but they were not made on the floor of the House. To repeat them here in the House certainly is not helpful to any hon. member nor to the debate nor even to decorum.

On the other hand it is quite true that from time to time members of the House do make statements with which others disagree. I think the issue before us this morning is whether or not Standing Order 18 has been breached, notwithstanding all other considerations.

Standing Order 18 reads:

> No Member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any member of the Royal Family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any Member thereof. No Member may reflect upon any vote of the House—

I think those words in our rules have traditionally been interpreted by you, Madam Speaker, and by other occupants of the chair as meaning that a member of Parliament cannot accuse another member of having done a particular thing which is offensive. I cannot accuse another member of Parliament personally of having committed a criminal act, for instance. I cannot accuse another member of other types of wrongdoing in the House and get away with it.

The reason that standing order is there is obviously so that the occupant of the chair can remind members that anyone in the House who makes an accusation personally against another member is forced to withdraw in order to have proper decorum and order in the House.

We have before us today a case of strong disagreement between two people. I am not judging the disagreement. I am suggesting that Standing Order 18 has not been breached in this particular case.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I would urge you to rule that this is not a point of order that is before us but a matter of debate where two members of the House of Commons have put a point of view forward and it is part of debate.

When I look at the circumstances here in referencing Standing Order 18, the member as I recall from what I heard was not referencing a specific member but was talking to a general circumstance. I think that must be taken into consideration when you make your ruling, Madam Speaker.

I believe that as members of the House of Commons we are given the privilege of speaking about a variety of subjects, of giving our opinion personally or on behalf of other individuals or on behalf of our constituents. When we do that we take the responsibility for those opinions and those words as we set them before the House. Those are items of debate in the House and do not come under what we are referencing today or considering a point of order. We have that privilege. Sometimes we are going to say things in the House that are not deemed to be politically correct. That may not be acceptable to some people but in general in referencing freedom of speech they are acceptable and can be said as a member of the House of Commons.

• (1040)

Ms. Skoke: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. It has been brought to my attention that I made reference to the hon. member for Yellowknife and I wish to apologize if there were problems arising from that. It is the hon. member for Yellowhead. I apologize if there was any confusion there.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The Chair realizes the seriousness of the matter before it. We will take it under advisement and come back to the House very shortly.

I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b), because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 20 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food) moved that Bill C–50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, last October the government was elected based on a comprehensive plan for Canada known as the red book, which was our platform. In that red book we made a number of commitments to the people of Canada. I am very pleased that within our first 11 months in office we have made considerable headway on a number of fronts.

As Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food it is my great pleasure to speak today about one of these initiatives, namely the government's commitment to research and development specifically in the context of Bill C–50.

I recall attending my very first meeting with producers as a new minister. It was a meeting of the Manitoba pool elevators last November in Winnipeg. There were a number of issues on the minds of delegates at that meeting. They wanted to talk about GATT and about trade issues. They wanted to discuss transportation and safety nets. All of these issues have been moving forward at a very rapid pace and some of them with much public fanfare and media interest.

I also recall at that meeting another important issue that was raised by one of the delegates, one which received less fanfare and less public attention. The question was about research. I told the delegates at the Manitoba pool convention what I have been telling farmers and farm organizations across the country throughout the course of this past year. I believe agricultural research is an extremely important issue, one where we must continue to focus our resources.

My department already has a very good track record in selecting research and development projects with a high return for Canada. We are continually reviewing our research priorities and programs to ensure that we are getting the best possible value for every research dollar. We are also nurturing our partnership approach to industry responsive research by inviting our industry, academic and producer partners to take responsibility with us.

We are placing a strong emphasis on matching funding and joint projects with stakeholders in all facets of our operations. This allows us to use the market for direction.

Some might say this approach reduces the federal commitment to research or that my department may use the check–off proposed in Bill C–50 as an excuse to reduce expenditures in wheat and barley research. While it is likely that overall government spending will decline as we battle against the deficit, as we must, I want to emphasize that innovation and a strong research program are essential to Canadian agriculture and will be a priority for my department.

• (1045)

I make no apologies for sharing the responsibility of the future of agriculture with our industry and producer partners. Some members may have heard me talk about the matching investment initiative which we have launched this past year. Under this program we will spend some of our existing R and D dollars in a new way. Where industry identifies research projects that are of commercial interest we will match industry's investment dollar for dollar. This is not new money but money we have redirected from lower priority activities.

This approach makes sense and allows us to move forward on research while maintaining fiscal responsibility to Canadians. Producers have told me they want to play an important role in research since the results of research directly affect their operations and ultimately their livelihoods. This shared approach gives us the best of both worlds.

Good research is not a frill or an ivory tower pursuit to be thrown aside in tough times. Dedicated and focused research is a necessity for survival particularly in tough times. Dedicated and focused research supplies the technology that creates opportunities for market development and new exports which are so vital to the sustainability of our industry.

One of the most important initiatives with significant long term implications for the future of agriculture generally and the grains industry in particular is in plant breeding. Today we are considering Bill C–50 which is legislation that will lead to an additional $4.7 million in annual investments in plant breeding research.

This investment has the potential in about 10 years to translate into a $400 million increase in gross returns to prairie farmers annually. It is an investment which will cost wheat producers about half a cent a bushel or about 20 cents a tonne. I think any investor would be more than just a little interested about such an attractive rate of return.

What I am talking about today is a research partnership, the result of a proposal put forward by producers through the Western Grains Research Foundation. The proposal calls for a voluntary producer levy or a check–off program to support plant breeding research programs for wheat and barley. The federal

government is acting on this recommendation from the foundation.

For the past several months my department has been working very closely with the Western Grains Research Foundation to develop a check–off program which will enable grain producers themselves to supplement existing research budgets. To make this happen we require some legislative amendments. That is why I am recommending that the act which governs the Canadian Wheat Board be amended to allow voluntary levies to be deducted for the explicit purpose of supporting plant breeding research. Such deductions are simply not possible under the existing Canadian Wheat Board Act.

I bring this legislation to the House today and I am asking members to support it based on the knowledge that this program is a joint effort among government, industry and the research community. This check–off plan has been developed in close consultation with producer groups as well as with scientists from universities and from my department.

As I stated earlier I am a firm believer that the best way we can accomplish our research objectives is for both industry and government to invest in research in a partnership approach. This effort before you, this specific check–off plan, is supported by the Canadian Wheat Board and has already received strong support from a majority of farm organizations. And well it should since the concept has been a producer initiative from day one, an initiative which we have been working on with producers to make it a reality.

This program will generate additional research funds through the voluntary levies on wheat and barley sales. The levies will be deducted from Canadian Wheat Board final payments to producers. They will apply to board sales of most wheat in the four western provinces and the sales of barley in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C. Alberta sales of soft white wheat and barley would not be subject to this levy as producers of those commodities already have check–offs in place provincially.

• (1050)

Some people might point to reduced wheat acreages and suggest that producers will not want to support a so–called declining crop. To these people I would say that despite ongoing diversification of crops, wheat is still a major crop for many producers on the prairies. Last year it contributed $2.7 billion to the Canadian economy.

Despite the recent and dramatic surge in the importance of canola as a crop in Canada, with better world prices in the last number of weeks wheat may have regained its rank as our most valuable crop. It is important to remember also that wheat is not one crop but actually is seven. Some varieties such as durum, extra strong, and white prairie spring are gaining acreage and gaining market share.

I would like to provide the House with a bit of background about why research levies are needed and what we hope to achieve with them. I would like to explain how the grain producers on the prairies in partnership with government came to the decision that such levies are a necessary and important key to the future of prairie agriculture and the grains industry in Canada.

The Western Grains Research Foundation is a federally chartered public organization with a proven track record in supporting effective pure research. It was established just over 10 years ago to allocate research funds. Its economic base came from the interest earned on $9 million left over from the prairie farm assistance act when it was repealed.

Currently the foundation distributes about $900,000 a year in interest funds. It has done some very good work with that money. It has focused on vital issues such as the problem with fusarium head blight in Manitoba. The foundation is quick in its reaction time and it is targeted on vital issues.

The foundation is run by a board of directors representing its member producer organizations and includes a representative from the research branch of my department. What this means is that the research decisions of the Western Grains Research Foundation are made by producers and the foundation is accountable for those decisions to all of its producers as well as the federal government.

To carry out its new research objectives the foundation will establish two research advisory committees, one for wheat breeding and one for barley breeding. These committees will be responsible for developing operational plans and co–ordinating research programs designed to achieve our plant breeding objectives. They will decide which research projects to fund in western research centres and the emphasis will be on funding work that will meet a future market need.

Western plant breeding centres receiving funding will report on their progress annually to the Western Grains Research Foundation. This progress will be reviewed by the advisory committees who will make decisions about continued support. Furthermore the foundation will report annually to all prairie permit book holders giving an accounting of the money received and how it has been used to accomplish the research goals.

The role of the Canadian Wheat Board in all of this is purely administrative. All major decisions will be the responsibility of the Western Grains Research Foundation which is ultimately accountable to its producers and to the Government of Canada. I feel very comfortable with the accountability process which the Western Grains Research Foundation has established for itself under this proposed program.

In supporting these amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act hon. members of the House will be in very good company. They will in fact be joining a team of supporters from

12 prairie farm organizations which make up the Western Grains Research Foundation.

• (1055)

Those member organizations are: United Grain Growers; Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association; Manitoba Pool Elevators; Prairie Canola Growers Council; Flax Growers of Western Canada; Saskatchewan Wheat Pool; Keystone Agricultural Producers; Western Barley Growers Association; Oat Producers of Alberta; Alberta Wheat Pool; Canadian Seed Growers Association; and the Unifarm organization of Alberta. There are recent indications that other groups and organizations wish to join this team of research oriented and progressive farm organizations.

These organizations are key players in the Canadian grains industry. All of them have backed the voluntary check–off proposal and they have consulted with their producer members. It was the decision of these organizations that dedicated research funds be collected and applied explicitly to plant breeding research.

What we have here is a program that producers want. It is one we will be supporting through the legislative amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act now before the House in the form of Bill C–50. Simply put, the program will enable producers to do what they have asked for: to invest a portion of their own money into the future of their crops, their industry and their very livelihoods.

Canada's grains industry is highly dependent on exports. Today's grain customers are demanding both a stable supply and a high quality product that meets their end use requirements. I have consistently maintained that we must be able to respond quickly to changing market conditions if we are to remain competitive in those vital global markets.

The proposal before the House will help us to improve our competitive advantage while also improving farm incomes. New varieties of wheat and barley will be developed. New varieties will lead to improved field performance, higher yield potentials, increased resistance to disease and insect pests, earlier maturity and reduced harvest losses, all improvements which will reduce per tonne production costs for farmers.

The development of new varieties with specific qualities required by the marketplace will improve sales through the development of new market opportunities. This will keep Canada on the fast track in meeting marketplace demands.

For example, Canada must be able to respond rapidly to new demands for varieties of wheat suitable for specific uses such as frozen bread dough, Asian type noodles, or new varieties of malting barley that are needed in markets like Korea and China. In fact we do have a variety of wheat that is suitable for the frozen bread dough requirement, but so far it is not grown in large enough quantities.

Meeting the demands of these changing trends in food consumption preferences could mean significant new market potential and increased profits for western producers. Sound investments in crop research will pay off in better market returns to farmers in the future.

Will Canada be ready when opportunity knocks in terms of these new markets? With the benefit of research initiatives such as this voluntary check–off proposal contained in Bill C–50, I firmly believe Canadian farmers will be in a better position to compete in that very tough and demanding international marketplace.

As I said earlier, the program has the potential to bring plant breeding research almost $5 million in additional funding each year. The House will note that I used the word additional. This is important. I know concern has been expressed in some quarters that governments might take advantage of the contributions made by producers under this program to reduce the government spending on wheat and barley breeding programs.

We all know that cuts have occurred throughout government and that overall spending reductions are likely to be a fact of life in government for the foreseeable future. My department will not target wheat and barley research for special reductions just because of the contributions made by farmers under the program. Funding levels for wheat and barley research will be held in proper proportion to the amount being spent on research for other grain crops within the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada.

• (1100)

Here is how this voluntary check–off will be implemented. It will work in the simplest form possible through deductions from Canadian Wheat Board final payments before that money is distributed to farmers. When I say "as simple as possible" I mean just that.

There are no huge administrative costs or red tape. I would suggest that the administrative costs proposed in Bill C–50 will be lower than the costs of other similar types of programs already in place in some provinces.

Annual operating costs are estimated to be in the order of $106,000 a year or about 2 per cent of revenues. That amount will be deducted from the total amount of levies collected. Western producers of wheat and barley would pay levies of 20 cents per tonne on wheat and 40 cents per tonne on barley. The barley levy is higher to partially offset the lower volume of barley deliveries.

The amount to be levied will be fixed by order in council. The levies will be deducted from Canadian Wheat Board final payments beginning with those for the 1993–94 crop year and those final payments in the ordinary course of events for 1993–94 would be made in January 1995.

The funds collected, beginning in the coming year and in subsequent years, will be automatically transferred by the Canadian Wheat Board to special accounts set up and administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation.

This program is not intended to duplicate or replace current check–off programs already in place in some provinces. Producers who choose not to participate may opt out if that is their preference. Any farmer wishing to opt out of the levy on an annual basis can do so by a simple notice in writing.

However early indications are that we can anticipate a participation rate in this check–off program in the order of 90 per cent. We have confidence in that participation rate because this program has been initiated by producers and producer organizations. It has had their keen support throughout its developmental stages to the point now where legislation is ready in the House of Commons.

Research and development spending cannot be simply turned on and turned off like a tap. Such an attitude toward research only results in inadequate and inconsistent support and missed opportunities. Inaction on the research front would negate the day to day efforts of hardworking farmers across the prairies and Canada would risk losing its competitive edge in wheat and barley markets. We absolutely cannot run the risk of our wheat and barley breeding programs falling behind those of our competitors. For years now our major competitors like Australia, the United States and the European Union have been taking a direct role in renewing public plant breeding programs in wheat and barley. Incidentally, much of their research has been implemented as a result of producer funded programs. A check–off or a producer levy in Canada is required to keep up with that international competition.

I am pleased to bring forward this producer initiative to increase funding for plant breeding research in Canada. The proposed wheat and barley check–off is a very good example of how producers and government can work constructively together to achieve something that will benefit the industry as whole and will translate into benefits for future Canadians.

I recommend that the House approve Bill C–50 amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act to allow voluntary levies to be deducted in support of this important research program. I am anxious to hear the comments and remarks of members of the House who I hope will indicate their support for this particular direction.

• (1105)

I would draw to the attention of the House, this being Tuesday morning, that I have a commitment in cabinet to which I must attend. I regret not being able to stay to listen to the remarks that will be offered by other members in the course of the debate.

I am very pleased that the secretary of state for agriculture and agri–food and my parliamentary secretary will both be here and listening to the remarks of hon. members. I suspect they will be participating in the debate. I very much look forward to the reaction of members to this important bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Madam Speaker, as the new agriculture critic for the Bloc Quebecois, the Official Opposition, I am happy this morning to speak to Bill C–50 on the Canadian Wheat Board.

According to the information we received at our meeting this week with Agriculture Canada officials, this bill results from a Western grain producers' initiative. What they want is simple: they are willing to cut back on their profits in order to invest in research aimed at improving the genetic quality of wheat and barley. This bill will allow the Canadian Wheat Board to make deductions from wheat and barley producers' final payment cheques for the purpose of increasing private research funding.

As the single marketing agent for Canadian wheat and barley, the Canadian Wheat Board buys almost all grain produced. Deductions of 20 cents per tonne of wheat and 40 cents per tonne of barley will be made from payments on delivery. These figures were calculated by estimating research needs in millions of dollars and dividing the total by the number of tonnes bought.

As a Quebec farmer, I know much more about beef, pork and milk production than about grain production. So I was surprised to learn that although the bill only refers to wheat, the officials who explained Bill C–50 to us assured us that amendments affecting wheat would automatically apply to barley under the regulations. It also appears that two separate funds will be established, one for wheat and the other one for barley.

The deduction rates I mentioned will be set by order–in–council and not by legislation. This provision could exempt some classes of grain or some provinces. Alberta, for instance, will not participate in the barley deductions since the Alberta Barley Commission already makes such deductions.

Again, as a Quebec farmer, I was also surprised by the fact that deductions are optional. Officials said they were very confident that grain producers would participate based on the current rate of participation in the Alberta Barley Commission deductions program. We, in Quebec, have a similar process for marketing and advertising milk, but participation is compulsory.

• (1110)

A method like the one proposed here would not work in Quebec. As you see, we are really distinct in every way. With this 90 per cent participation rate, the commission intends to collect $4.7 million, of which $3.8 million is for wheat and $900,000 for barley, according to the estimates.

This money will then be used to subsidize research on improving the genetic quality of wheat and barley. Also, increasing the yield per acre makes the varieties more resistant to diseases and parasites and helps find new varieties to better meet new market requirements.

The first question that comes to our mind is of course the funding that Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada allocates to research on wheat and barley. We are told that the budget for it now is $18.7 million. If so, why must producers fund parallel or complementary research out of their own pocket? Do not misunderstand me. I think it is quite laudable to encourage farmers to take charge and proceed with the solutions that they know are best for them.

Nevertheless, Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada should not shift its responsibilities to the private sector nor should it be dependent on the private sector. Last week, the Department of Agriculture tabled a bill that, among other things, clarifies its mandate by specifying the department's involvement in research and development. Despite this restructuring, western grain growers conclude that they have to pay twice to benefit from research that meets their needs.

All taxpayers, which of course includes farmers, already pay $18.7 million for research and development on wheat and barley. Nevertheless, farmers will have to invest $4.7 million more to orient the research to their priorities. The department explains that funding for research and development is going down and that the private sector must take over. In the future, will the Liberal government lower its share to increase the contribution from the private sector, namely farmers?

Certainly, research and development is the key to remaining competitive on foreign markets. Initiatives such as this must be encouraged and the participation of the private sector, producers and industrialists, must be increased so that more research and development is carried out. But I think it is fundamental for the government to play its role and to finance agricultural research and development equitably. Earlier, I asked the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane if maple syrup producers in his riding had problems disposing of their production.

• (1115)

In my riding, and more specifically in Plessisville, the world capital of maple syrup, we have a surplus. I urge the federal Department of Agriculture to promote research on maple syrup and sugar in order to find new markets. Surpluses are enormous. Our producers must sell their maple syrup for roughly the same price as they did nine or ten years ago. Production costs are constantly increasing, while the selling price remains the same or is even lower than before.

In any case, what we are looking at this morning is the financing of a private research group, namely the Western Grains Research Foundation, which has already looked at the issue. Private financing of research offers some benefits to that sector. It meets specific needs identified by those who finance that research. On the other hand, the information gathered may remain confidential. Regardless of what we may think, the reality is that those two factors may influence grain producers.

The budget allocated by the department is insufficient. That department is all in favour of finding new markets, but it does not provide the necessary tools to that end. The money spent by the department on research and development for wheat and barley is not in line with priorities in that sector. This second finding shows a certain lack of understanding of the industry's needs.

I will conclude by emphasizing the importance of avoiding—and the minister alluded to that issue earlier—any duplication or overlapping between the department's research projects and those of the private sector. As the member representing the Quebec riding of Frontenac, I know what I am talking about when it comes to duplication and overlapping.

The most recent example is the referendum held in 1992. Quebecers are very familiar with the issue of duplication. We pay double and we keep our mouth shut. Last week, at a briefing on this bill by Agriculture officials, we were told that research initiatives will be discussed with the stakeholders in that sector, precisely to avoid any duplication or overlapping. It seems that the projects to be financed will complement each other but, unfortunately, the legislation is totally silent on that aspect.

Right now, we support Bill C–50, except for a few minor details. When the time comes to review this bill section by section for the benefit of western farmers, we will try to coax the Liberal government, the minister, as well as the new parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Beauséjour.

• (1120)

Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Champlain will also discuss Bill C–50 in a few moments.

[*English*]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, it is truly a pleasure to be here today to speak to Bill C–50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act to allow a refundable check–off from wheat and barley which will be taken from the producers' final payment for the explicit purpose of plant breeding research.

I would like to start by summarizing provisions of the bill. The bill would allow deductions from the farmer's final payment checks for each pool period unless the farmer files with the Canadian Wheat Board to be exempted from the deduction. It places revenue into a special account set up and administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation.

The Canadian Wheat Board must estimate how much money it will take from farmers to put into the account and then estimate the share for the research agency. The Canadian Wheat Board will then give the money to the research funding agency after paying the administration costs to the board for administering the fund.

The research funding agency would then distribute the money received to persons or plant breeding centres engaged in the research into new varieties of wheat and barley. An additional reserve account will also be set up into which a portion of the money collected will be put. This reserve account is there to cover the costs of research contracts if there are insufficient deductions in a particular pool period.

An annual report must be submitted to the agriculture minister on its operations and affairs no later than the end of June, three months after the end of the previous fiscal year.

The deductions would start immediately and would be retroactive to August 1, 1993, with farmers having to file notice before February 25, 1995 if they decide that they want to have their contributions deducted or refunded.

The governor in council may make exemptions to the program on the basis of the class of wheat sold or on the province or region in which the wheat was produced.

The rationale behind the bill and the assumed benefits are to give producers a role in supporting and directing agriculture research. It will give farmers control to more closely link agriculture research to farmers' priorities and to marketing priorities and needs, and to develop new wheat and barley varieties which will assist the competitiveness of Canadian farmers by providing $4.7 million in additional research money which certainly seems to give a good payback to farmers.

Another rationale behind the bill is to develop new market opportunities and to improve farm income to reduce unit production costs. This is a rationale behind the bill.

I do have some concerns about the bill. The first is a concern about the possible overlap in deductions. There are some farmer groups such as the barley commission in Alberta which have check–offs in place now. Will there be an overlap with the wheat board check–off? It is a concern. There is no fixed levy and the rate of the levy may be increased in the future. That is a concern as well.

• (1125)

The plan focuses on producing new crop varieties. However, for reasons of efficiency, farmers should probably be moving to completely different crops in some cases. I think it is important that this be considered. If the money is simply not in the agriculture department's budget for this type of research then I have a concern that the department should do some priorizing regarding research projects under its existing budget and not merely download this expense on to farmers.

Another concern is that in the last Auditor General's report it was revealed that research efforts within the department of agriculture were very poorly co–ordinated. It is important that is worked on and not just allowing a separate fund to deal with the targeting of research money.

There would certainly be an increase in the cost of administering the program. There would be new administration costs taken from research funding. This is always a concern and I think it has to be carefully monitored.

The Reform Party and I do support the bill, however. The reasons for our support are that the contributions to the research fund are automatic, although they may be refunded on an annual basis upon a written application by the farmer. We propose that the application for refund be made easier by having a box on the Canadian Wheat Board permit application form which gives farmers a choice of whether they want to take part and want to have the deduction refunded.

Another reason for support is that farmers and industry representatives seem to support the program. There seems to be widespread support among farm organizations certainly, and there is some support among farmers.

Another reason for support is that the program will bring an additional $4.7 million of research to be targeted for wheat and barley, which has already I believe taken a bit of a hit in terms of research funding due to research money going into research on other crops such as peas, lentils and canola.

The research funds I believe will be in the hands of farmers and farm organizations; they will direct the funding. It is certainly a positive step any time we can get farmers, the people who are going to benefit from the research directly, involved in allocating the funding. That is a possible move.

Again the Reform Party supports the bill. We will be proposing some amendments in committee. We will do that when this matter is discussed in committee.

I am extremely disappointed that any bill which opens the Canadian Wheat Board up to discussion was not far more broad and substantial. If there is any doubt at all that there is a need for major reforms of the Canadian Wheat Board then I would like to demonstrate with the scenario I am going to present now.

Last Thursday on a farm in southern Manitoba a group of seven RCMP officers, special officers and customs officials arrived at a farmer's door, knocked on the door and seized a wide variety of documents from a farmer. In a neighbouring town the same morning at the same time another group of RCMP officers, special officers and customs officials arrived at a door of another farmer and seized documents.

What heinous crime had these farmers committed to have this large group of RCMP officers, special investigators, customs officials seizing their documents? Was it a drug bust? Were they suspected of some kind of embezzlement? Was it a crime like that? No. The crime they were accused of was shipping grain to the United States without a Canadian Wheat Board permit.

• (1130)

Canada signed a free trade agreement with the United States which allows for free movement of wheat and barley across the United States–Canadian border. We signed the free trade agreement but the crime those farmers were accused of was shipping wheat or barley across the border without a Canadian Wheat Board permit. Now that is a heinous crime.

The government, the minister of agriculture and the revenue minister are using these heavy handed tactics on farmers who are only trying to make their business profitable and in one case to save the farm which is close to being foreclosed by the Farm Credit Corporation. Instead, why does the government not change the law that applies to the Canadian Wheat Board which prohibits farmers from taking advantage of the free trade agreement? I think the crime is that the government refuses to act in spite of a groundswell of support among farmers for these changes.

I believe that we do need major reforms to the Canadian Wheat Board. These reforms must centre around giving farmers direct control over their organization which they fund. Farmers pay the complete operating costs for the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Canadian Wheat Board was set up for farmers. It was much needed when it was set up and it probably still has an important function to serve but farmers must be given control. No longer is it good enough to put the control of the Canadian Wheat Board in the hands of government appointed commissioners.

The change must start by having farmers elect a board of directors so they gain control of their Canadian Wheat Board. Beyond that I am not sure the direction in which the board would go. Farmers have told me some of the things they would like to see, but it is up to them to determine the change once they do get control.

I propose that shortly after the board of directors is elected a mechanism should be put in place with different options for how the Canadian Wheat Board would look. These options can be put forward to farmers and they can decide what the make-up of their organization will be and what it will look like.

Some of the things I have heard from farmers is that they want competition to be allowed with the Canadian Wheat Board. They want the freedom to take advantage of the free trade agreement by shipping their wheat and barley into the United States and other markets. That is what farmers have told me. Farmers have said that once competition is allowed to the Canadian Wheat Board but certainly not before, they would be open to the idea of the Canadian Wheat Board handling other grains and oilseeds and specialty crops besides wheat and barley but only after they have the right to compete.

Farmers have told me they want the wheat board to continue to guarantee loans on wheat sold abroad only as long as other countries continue to do the same.

Those are some of the things farmers have told me. Once again, I cannot understand why this government seems so opposed to giving farmers control over their organization. Why is it so determined not to have this happen? I do believe that farmers absolutely will not put up with it much longer. The movement is there. There are more and more groups and more and more farmers all the time who are supporting this change in the Canadian Wheat Board.

• (1135)

I am not talking about getting rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. I am talking about improving it so it truly works for farmers and not just for the sake of the organization itself. Make it democratic.

When talking about the wheat board the argument has been raised from time to time that one of the advantages of the Canadian Wheat Board is that because it is a monopoly, because it totally controls the export sales of wheat and barley, it should give farmers a better price. It has that bargaining power.

First, whenever there is a monopoly involved in a market the market does not function well. Second. when it comes to buying for export the Canadian Wheat Board does have a monopoly, but when it comes to selling it is competing against all the other sellers in the world. The monopoly argument just does not work. The wheat board is one in an oligopoly, many sellers all of which do have some influence on the market.

The argument along that line has changed since the wheat board was put into place. When the wheat board was originally put into place wheat was not nearly as diverse a commodity as it is today. Back then there were far fewer different grades and types of wheat and markets. Customers did not demand a very specific product. In the market today however there are dozens and dozens of different types of wheat. No longer is wheat just wheat. Customers are looking for a very specific commodity. This of course changes the influence of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Instead of looking at huge markets we are often looking at the smaller, harder to find markets which want a very specific commodity. I believe as do many farmers that the wheat board just does not do a good job in finding and taking advantage of those smaller markets. Farmers and their agent grain companies do a good job of that and they must be allowed to do that job. They must not be interfered with by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Let us realize that times have changed. Customers are very demanding in terms of the products. We are looking at smaller more lucrative markets. Let us change the board and allow farmers involvement to accommodate that.

Some have suggested that the first step in changing the board might be to put a continental barley market into place. This may well be a place to start but it does not go nearly far enough. It is interesting to note that both the minister of agriculture and the Prime Minister during the election campaign promised to hold a plebiscite on a continental barley market very shortly after the election. It was a promise. They thought it was a good idea.

I would like to know why they are not honouring their promise. Farmers also want to know and they want them to honour their promise now and that is only reasonable. Farmers expect the government to keep its commitment and honour its promise. I expect that, as do the farmers.

The government continually takes pride in talking about how it consults with people before it makes a decision. I am not going to talk about the general consultations in other areas, but I do want to talk about consultation in agriculture. The government's consultation in the area of agriculture has been almost exclusively with government organizations and with farm organization leaders.

Farm organizations are extremely useful bodies. They do a lot of good in promoting their particular commodity or their area of interest, but it is time for government to talk to farmers about what they want in terms of their future in agriculture.

There are plans for the committee to travel to study agriculture. The unfortunate thing is this plan does not allow for focused and organized consultation with farmers. Reform has put forth in committee over the past several months a very specific plan as to how this consultation program could be improved immensely.

• (1140)

We have proposed focus groups with properly trained conciliators running them to determine what issues are important to farmers, what issues they want to talk about. These focus groups would lead to a public consultation process, public meetings where everyone would be welcome but the discussion would be focused based on the results of the focus groups.

It would be a travesty and a misuse of taxpayers' dollars if this committee did not allow some type of process similar to what Reform has proposed. I am not saying necessarily we have the only process, but it will work and it will work much better than what the plans are now. I strongly encourage this minister to go ahead with that.

I will conclude by saying that we do support Bill C–50. Being as the Canadian Wheat Board Act has been opened up, it is a real shame there were not far more broad and sweeping changes. I compare this change to adjusting a rearview mirror on an old beat up car that really needs to be replaced with a brand new model. I encourage this government to go out and let farmers tell them what brand new model they want.

Mr. Gagliano: Madam Speaker, I would like to give notice that the members on the government side from now on in this debate will share their time, 10 minutes and 5 minutes questions and comments, until further notice.

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the bill today, the amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, particularly so in view of the comments I just heard from my colleague in the Reform Party. I shall be splitting my time with my colleague from Dauphin—Swan River.

As the minister said earlier the amendment will allow a check–off to Canadian Wheat Board sales of wheat in the four western provinces and of barley sales in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

There are two very good reasons the bill deserves the support of all in the House. The amendments will pave the way for an additional $4.7 million annually in research funding, specifically in the area of plant breeding. I raise for the consideration of the House why the Reform Party would favour a long consultation process with the farm groups that are already supporting these amendments which would delay that kind of valuable research. It makes no sense to me because we already have grassroots support for the initiative.

Second and more important, and it ties into the point I was just making, Bill C–50 is a result of a specific request by the grain industry. The speedy response of our government to the request recognizes the importance of such research initiatives as well as the fact that no longer can government solely be relied on for research. Results can be achieved only through strategic alliances with industry.

My riding of Saskatoon—Humboldt includes a portion of the city of Saskatoon and a large rural area. It is an urban rural split of about 60:40 respectively. In fact this time last year I spent many hours on the road driving around the farm area of my riding during the election campaign. I remember stopping along the road north of Domremy to talk to a couple of farmers. I guess the Reform Party would call that consulting with the farmers on

their views. Lawrence and André Georget took a moment to tell me some of their concerns.

Just last week I had a most enjoyable and informative half–hour meeting with one of the Canadian Wheat Board representatives from my province of Saskatchewan. We discussed many things, including the check–off provisions which are under discussion today. That fellow made the point, and I think it is a good one, that the additional research that will be carried out as a result of these amendments will benefit not just the producers but all Canadians. All Canadians will have the benefit of better credit as a result of increased research funding.

• (1145)

How did this check–off scheme come about? It should be noted that the Western Grains Research Foundation, made up of 12 prairie farm organizations, asked the government to enact legislation that would enable producers to invest a portion of their own profits into plant breeding research.

The Western Grains Research Foundation is accountable directly to the producers as well as the federal government for the way in which research funds are spent. Producers believe that plant breeding research will help find new varieties and, in turn, enable the industry to maintain and increase its market share. All of this, for a farmer's investment of about half a cent a bushel or 20 cents a tonne.

Another interesting point is that studies have shown the return on investment in agricultural research can be more than 50 per cent. In the case of the legislation before the House this could translate into an extra $400 million to prairie farmers annually. That is because research and plant breeding has a potential to lead the development of varieties that are 15 per cent higher yielding and equal in protein content to existing varieties.

This brings me to another point. As I noted in my opening remarks, my riding of Saskatoon—Humboldt includes a large rural area as well as approximately one–third of the city of Saskatoon. That one–third of the city of Saskatoon includes the University of Saskatchewan and our College of Agriculture, which was one of the founding colleges in 1907 and enjoys a stellar reputation in the area of agricultural research.

Just north of the university in the lovely area along the South Saskatchewan River bank we have Innovation Place, a business research cluster whose focus is biotechnological research, development and commercialization. Hence my particular delight in having an opportunity to speak to the bill before the House today.

Producers know that research is vital to our agricultural industry. They know that their future livelihood depends on their ability to grow crops which will meet the shifting demands of the marketplace. Producers know as well that unless they start investing in research they risk lagging behind their competitors.

Farmers in Australia, United States and the European Union have been taking a direct role in renewing plant breeding programs in wheat and barley for years. In the United States over 15 states have check–offs on wheat. These are made at the state level and are deducted at first point of sale. The check–offs are generally voluntary and enjoy a high level of participation as we anticipate this will be. The Australian wheat board has had a non–voluntary levy in place for the past five years.

I mentioned partnerships between government and industry in my opening remarks. The industry strongly supports Bill C–50. This producer initiative has enjoyed broad industry support in its development and it will continue to do so, supporting a form of 12 prairie farm organizations that make up the Western Grains Research Foundation.

Perhaps not everyone is aware of who the members of this organization are: the United Grain Growers, Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, Manitoba Pool Elevators, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Alberta Wheat Pool, Prairie Canola Growers Council, the Flax Growers of Western Canada, Keystone Agricultural Producers, Western Barley Growers Association, the Oat Producers Association of Alberta, Canadian Seed Growers Association, and Unifarm.

Five of these organizations are also members of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and, most important, all these organizations have taken this issue to their membership and have received a strong vote of confidence. Again I would suggest this indicates some form of consultation. I doubt very much if the membership of those organizations would thank the government for going through yet another consultation period, at the taxpayers' expense, to find out the answer to the question that producers are in favour of this kind of research check–off.

What contribution does government currently make to agricultural research? Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada spent over $2.5 million on wheat research in the last crop year and a further $8 million on barley research. The department will continue its commitment to research but this check–off proposed by producers will help us catch up to our competitors by providing additional research funding. These additional funds will allow us to double our wheat and barley breeding research programs. Government cannot do it alone and that is why we are so pleased to enter this research partnership with Canadian producers.

I would like to take a moment to review the minister's explanation of how the system will work. Western wheat and barley producers will pay voluntary levies of 20 cents a tonne on wheat and 40 cents a tonne on barley.

• (1150)

I should point out for some of our urban listeners that this constant reference to check–off has nothing to do with Russian literature. These levies or check–offs from the Canadian Wheat Board payments will be put into the research fund.

The amendments before us today are necessary to permit the use of the moneys collected by the Canadian Wheat Board for this cause. The Canadian Wheat Board will not be distributing the moneys collected. The funds from the check–offs will be distributed under the direction of the producer driven Western Grains Research Foundation.

The foundation will establish two research committees, one for barley and one for wheat. These committees will ensure research moneys are spent on research projects in western research centres that focus on the development of improved wheat and barley varieties.

Participation in this check–off is voluntary. Producers who want to opt out need only to submit a written request. As I said earlier, this check–off will garner additional research funds. It does not replace existing funding for agricultural research.

Supporting the legislation will mean that the levies collected will assist in providing the Canadian agricultural industry with the means to develop and use new technologies, technologies that will boost our competitive edge.

The ultimate objective of the legislation is to improve farm income through two main mechanisms; first, by improving the field performance of barley and wheat through new varieties that mature earlier, have higher yields and offer increased resistance to disease and insect pests; and, second, by maintaining and improving sales of wheat and barley by developing varieties with specific qualities required by the marketplace.

The government is committed to strategic partnerships to secure our research goals. We have invited the industry to share the responsibility for the future with us as equal partners and it has accepted.

I recommend the legislation be enacted to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act for the purpose of initiating voluntary producer levies in the interest of plant breeding research. We will be financially supporting the legislation because it is directly accountable to the producers of western Canada and because at its heart the legislation is motivated by producers who want to work with government in partnership to increase their competitive edge.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the comments of the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt. I recognize that she represents an agricultural riding. I want to follow up by getting her thoughts on the idea of consultation with farm groups.

I understand that in the hon. member's comments she suggested that farm groups are supporting this check–off bill. As a result of what my colleague from Vegreville said I suggest that it might be important to broaden the base of the consultations in these ongoing hearings that agriculture is putting forward to meet with individual farmers.

Although there is support from farm organizations, these organizations may not speak for the majority of individual farmers. If the hon. member checks the membership she might find that out. Would she agree it would be important to consult agriculture producers in large numbers, and not just the farm organizations, to build support for this check–off?

Also would she agree it might be important for the Canadian Wheat Board to have elected directors as opposed to those appointed by the federal government? Would that not also boost the kind of support that we need in order to build a strong agricultural industry?

Mrs. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. The point I would like make on consultation, and where I had some concern with the remarks made by the member for Vegreville, has to do with what appears to be a mixing of strategies.

The amendments before the House today deal specifically with amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act that will permit an additional $4.7 million to go into research funding. There seems to be broad grassroots support as represented by the 12 members in the foundation, who, I would expect, speak in a large part for their membership, for the producers themselves.

My comment to my colleague earlier had to do with the wastefulness of delaying the accumulation of these research dollars that can be immediately put into plant breeding research for the benefit of the producers, the industry and, as I said in my comments, all Canadians.

• (1155)

Perhaps I misunderstood the member for Vegreville, but it seems to me what he was suggesting was a giant overview of the Canadian Wheat Board and how it functions. That would be time consuming. It would involve delay and it would impede the very valuable contribution that this research initiative as proposed in Bill C–50 would have. Those were my comments and that was my intention.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, just to clarify matters for the member who just spoke, I did say very clearly that Reform supports the bill. I also said that the bill is a very small change to the Canadian Wheat Board compared to what we need. We need substantial, wide sweeping, major changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. I was just pushing for these changes to happen, some time in my lifetime I would prefer, and the sooner the better.

I just got a call from my assistant who said she had taken a call from a constituent who was wondering who this Bill Checkoff is and what team he plays for. Does he play for the Edmonton Oilers? He did not really know. She explained that no, it is a check–off bill we are talking about, not Bill Checkoff, a hockey player. I just wanted to clarify that.

The hon. member mentioned a figure for the number of dollars spent in research in agriculture. What benefit is derived from those dollars spent? I would prefer her to talk about the benefit derived and not so much the number of dollars spent, as though we are bragging about the number of dollars spent. I would like to ask the member to respond to that. What was the benefit?

Mrs. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I am happy to respond to anyone in the Reform Party at any time. I thank him for his support of the bill and our colleagues in the Bloc who have endorsed the broad picture that is before us today.

Admittedly it is a small change. I do not think we get anywhere in this life by saying that if we cannot do the whole thing today we will not do it at all.

I also would like to question the member for Vegreville on his support of the new politics we are supposed to be seeing from the Reform Party, in particular having the decency to come forward from time to time and say: "Yes, this is a good initiative. We give it our support. Let's get this done today and if there is another aspect that we need to worry about, yes, we will continue with that".

The minister has indicated his willingness to constantly be improving and helping the effectiveness of the Canadian Wheat Board. Perhaps that is a matter for another day. We welcome the member's input to that process and consultation can take place in that regard.

For the moment we have before us a bill that will permit increased research funding right away. We should just get down to it and keep our minds focused on what we are talking about.

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River): Madam Speaker, as the member for Dauphin—Swan River, I would like to share with you and my hon. colleagues a brief but fascinating snapshot taken from the pages of Canadian history.

I do this in support of the legislation that has been introduced to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act. The amendments are required to make way for a voluntary wheat and barley check–off that would help fund plant breeding research in western Canada. This initiative is producer driven and is expected to generate an additional $4.7 million a year to research funding. These funds will be administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation, a federally chartered public organization comprised of 12 prairie farm organizations.

Wheat was first introduced into western Canada in 1812 by the Selkirk settlers in Manitoba's Red River valley. The names of the wheat they brought with them were not recorded. In 1842 Mr. David Fife received a sample of red fife from a friend. It was a contaminant in a winter wheat sample obtained from a shipment in Poland. When this seed was grown a few heads appeared to be more vigorous than the rest. These were carefully selected and increased to become red fife, which was first introduced in Manitoba in 1870. Red fife quickly became the main variety of spring wheat grown in the area and went on to become the international standard of high milling and baking quality typical of Canadian hard red spring wheat.

• (1200)

As the wheat growing area of western Canada gradually progressed north and west, it soon became apparent that the relatively short summer would eventually limit the wheat area. Plant breeders began to focus their attention on the development of early maturing varieties of wheat.

That is when Dr. Charles Saunders entered the picture. Dr. Saunders was a plant breeder at Agriculture Canada's Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa. He was the son of William Saunders who founded the farm in 1885. It was the young Dr. Saunders who in the summer of 1892 began experimenting with a cross between the famous red fife and an early ripening variety of hard red spring wheat from India.

Following 10 years of plant breeding experiments, Dr. Saunders led the way in the development of a wheat cross called marquis. Marquis became a world renowned wheat variety and is said to be the single most important factor in establishing Canada's reputation as a producer of high quality wheat. Its performance was so remarkable that all inferior varieties were practically eliminated from production and marquis was to remain the varietal standard for Canadian bread wheat for most of this century.

Since the days of Dr. Saunders more sophisticated breeding techniques have evolved but the original challenge of human versus nature remains. Plant breeders have continued their efforts, developing subsequent varieties for qualities such as plant vigour, early maturing, resistance to chatter, resistance to rust and a number of other problems that were bane to the early prairie farmers.

Canada has originated some of its most eminent varieties from the search for better stem rust resistance, all the while retaining excellent milling and baking qualities.

I believe this brief historical overview is necessary to our discussion on the importance of the proposed amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, amendments which will provide for a voluntary producer of wheat and barley check–off. The check–off will provide western Canadian plant breeders with additional research funding to continue developing new varieties which

will in turn help Canada maintain its competitive edge and ensure a future for our industry.

Plant breeding enables us to produce new varieties more resistant to diseases and insects, to give larger yields and a higher grade and better quality. Specific varieties are needed to adapt to specific conditions. For example, varieties of eastern Saskatchewan and Manitoba must be resistant to the rapidly changing races of leaf and stem rust. Varieties for western Saskatchewan and Alberta must have resistance to drought. For northern wheat growing areas the new varieties must be early maturing to minimize losses from early autumn frost.

Since the early 1930s over 600 crop varieties have been introduced into Canada and since 1990 more than 70 varieties of seed crops resistant to disease, cold and stress have been released.

One might say after all these years we must be getting very close to the perfect variety. It is much more complex than that. Our plant breeders have achieved wonders in developing varieties best suited for the full range of Canadian growing conditions and challenges. However, it must be remembered that the industry is constantly facing new crop threats. The pests and the diseases we fight do not always go away but when they do they are replaced by new ones.

It must also be recognized that a variety that suited our purposes extremely well over five or ten years ago may no longer be in great demand in the marketplace.

One of the key roles of today's scientists is to help develop the varieties that will enable us to meet the new and diverse international market demands. It is plant breeding research that gives us the ability to grow crops that can be made into the products such as frozen bread dough or into Asian type noodles with just the right consistency to beat out all of our other competitors.

The costs of research extend beyond the need for a lab where trained scientists experiment in crossing two varieties of wheat. To find the required gene, such as a gene resistant to a particular strain of stem rust, the wheat breeder may have to find it in native wild grasses. Information is needed on the milling, baking and other qualities of potential plant breeding material. Above all, new varieties must possess the high quality milling and baking qualities which are the characteristics of Canadian wheat and which meet the needs of the end user.

• (1205)

Tests must be performed on new varieties to be recommended for registration. A new variety must perform for at least two and normally three seasons to the satisfaction of a committee of specialists recognized by my hon. colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food. All varieties must be registered prior to sale.

Is it costly? Yes, it is. Is it worth it? Absolutely. Specialists in the field believe that a well co–ordinated and adequately funded research program over 10 to 15 years in all western wheat classes would bring significant results such as the development of varieties that are 15 per cent higher yielding and equal in protein content to current varieties. This would be above and beyond any yield increases resulting from existing research funds.

If the price of wheat were $125 per tonne this would translate into $400 million annual increase in gross returns to prairie farmers. Perhaps this explains the foresight of Canadian producers who have asked for this check–off and who are quite willing to invest what amounts to less than one cent a bushel or about 20 cents an acre. I call it an excellent business decision on the part of producers.

I strongly recommend that the Canadian Wheat Board Act be amended to allow voluntary wheat and barley levies to be deducted in support of plant breeding research.

Support will give producers the research program they want, one directly accountable to the producers who fund it. Members will be supporting this government's commitment to continued research through a framework that includes the industry as a strategic planner or partner with a shared responsibility.

In backing this legislation members will be recognizing the need for the Western Grains Research Foundation to continue the important work carried out by the David Fifes and the Charles Saunders of the country. Most important, members will be supporting the future of plant breeding research which offers Canadian producers a strong presence in the international marketplace.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate our colleague who has just spoken, so optimistically, to Bill C–50. Past events do not, however, warrant her boundless optimism today.

Would the member indicate to this House the minimum number of producers needed to participate in this voluntary deduction scheme at 40 cents and 20 cents a tonne respectively for wheat and barley, in order to raise the $4.7 million anticipated by the Minister of Agriculture?

The Minister of Agriculture estimated that 90 per cent of Western grain producers will participate willingly, but there is, of course, a clause allowing grain growers to opt out if they wish.

My question is as follows. If, five years down the road, only 40 or 50 per cent of producers actually pay for research and development, while the others are benefiting from the fruits of the research, will voluntary participation still be tolerable?

• (1210)

Another of my fears is that a future Liberal government might gradually withdraw from agricultural research and development. This is a constant danger, one we cannot ignore.

I must tell you, Madam Speaker, that I do not have all that much confidence in the Liberal Party when it comes to agricultural research and development.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cowling: Madam Speaker, that was an excellent question from the member across the way. He mentioned being optimistic. I want to remind the member that this is a new government on this side of the House.

Of course I am optimistic about the future. I am a farmer. I come to this House with a long record of community involvement and have been involved in major farm organizations across the country developing agriculture policy. I know how important it is to have a voluntary wheat and barley check–off that will fund plant breeding research for western Canada.

Farmers have been saying this for a long time and that is why it is so important that as a government we move ahead. As a Liberal government we are keeping our promise to those people out there producing that grain.

In my constituency of Dauphin—Swan River, Jim Parker, one of my constituents from Gilbert Plains, was a pioneer in plant breeding. He was an optimistic gentleman and clearly an example of the producer–farmer involvement in plant breeding. Parker developed a more rust resistant variety of wheat. This illustrates how farmers are committed to the research and recognize its importance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague from Frontenac and critic for agriculture, has covered all the issues raised by Bill C–50 on the Canadian Wheat Board. I must say that I do agree with him that it is essential to support initiatives from people who want to take charge of their development, as in the case of western grain producers.

Since last October's elections, we have heard the term consultation used to mean just about anything most of the time. It means meeting with many groups from a given sector, talking a lot and listing their recommendations in a neat document that will end up on a shelf. For once that bureaucracy does not get in the way of the public will, we are certainly not going to object to an initiative grain producers consider desirable.

Two elements of the proposed legislation caught my attention however. First, the means by which the Canadian Wheat Board will pay the balance of research funds to the agency concerned, and second, the voluntary nature of deductions. The bill states that the Board must pay the research funding agency back no later than 180 days after the end of each pool period.

In the present case, this would be the Western Grains Research Foundation as the agency that offered to raise the contributions. The Foundation, which represents 12 Prairie farm associations, seems the most logical choice. According to the Foundation, producers would derive a gross revenue of approximately $400 million from research. The bill also provides that the Board will decide which agencies will receive research funding. In that case, the choice appears to be unanimous. But, for the protection of the producers' money, it could be suggested that the bill be amended to provide for the selection of the agency to be made by a vote among representatives of the wheat and barley producers. In the event the Foundation were dissolved or new ones emerged, it would be better to have a consultative process than to let the Board decide alone.

• (1215)

By the way, while board members come from the agricultural sector, all five of them are appointed by the minister. As for the voluntary nature of the 20 or 40 cent deduction, it would not get very far in Quebec, where mandatory deductions are favoured.

I understand that a different approach be taken in the West, particularly given the different historical development of farming in the Prairies. The voluntary approach could be criticized for allowing individuals to benefit from research without having contributed to its funding. On the other hand, it also enables lower income producers who cannot afford to contribute to the research fund to benefit from it anyway. It may nonetheless be advisable to set a minimum participation rate below which the deduction mechanism will have to be reviewed or abolished.

In addition, as the deduction rates are set by order in council, on the advice of the Canadian Wheat Board, it should be specified that could only be changed after consulting all agencies representing western wheat and barley producers.

One last word of warning in closing. The research this bill will help finance should be geared towards meeting the needs of all producers. It would be unfortunate if it focused on problems peculiar to businesses of a specific size.

[*English*]

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food): Madam Speaker, I will now congratulate the first speaker from the Bloc, the member for Frontenac, on being appointed critic for agriculture and agri–food as we could not make comments after his first comments in the House today.

I also want to comment on some of the concerns that the Bloc has raised. One is the statement made by the Bloc inadvertently that the wheat board buys Canadian wheat and barley. The wheat board does not buy Canadian wheat and barley. The wheat board

sells Canadian wheat and barley on behalf of producers in western Canada. It does not buy the product at all.

Regarding the other concern of some overlap or concern about spending taxpayers' dollars, one really tremendous thing about this amendment to the act which I want to clarify for them is that this will cost Canadian taxpayers absolutely nothing.

The cost of administration within the wheat board and in the research foundation will both be subtracted from the fees collected voluntarily from the producers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, we are always concerned about program overlap and duplication but I think it will not be the case here. At least, we hope not, so that Western grain producers will not be at a disadvantage. As it is, with their contributions of 40 cents and 20 cents, they already pay twice for research.

[*English*]

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris): Madam Speaker, I deem it an opportunity to speak on Bill C–50 with a backdrop of optimism and accomplishment in this harvest season throughout our country.

Our agriculture and agri–food sector is positioning itself to tackle the future with increased confidence and fundamental strength. We must ensure the decisions we make today and the initiatives we undertake in the future are part of a comprehensive long term plan for a modern progressive industry that is nothing less than the best in the world.

• (1220)

Research is fundamental to this government's goal of making Canada the world agriculture and agri–food leader. Without research the grain farmers of the Canadian prairies would never have gained their reputation as producers of the highest quality wheat in the world, a reputation that is well deserved and one that the government intends to preserve, protect and promote.

In our platform outlined in the red book the government made a very strong commitment to research. Currently the Department of Agriculture and Agri–food spends about $21.5 million on wheat research and $8 million on barley research each year. The industry has recognized that we need to do more to keep up with our competitors and the industry has recognized that government cannot and probably should not do it alone.

It has looked at what we need to maintain our international reputation and keep up with competitors like Australia and the EEC which have been investing heavily in their wheat and barley production and programs for several years. They have realized we need to spend additional money on research.

This is why I am recommending the House support the proposed amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act that we are discussing today. These amendments are required to make way for a voluntary wheat and barley check–off that would help fund plant breeding research in western Canada. It is estimated that the proposed wheat and barley check–off will result in about $4.7 million additional cost per year added to the funds already mentioned earlier today.

What do prairie producers hope to accomplish with the additional infusion of funding into plant breeding research? They hope to continue to develop new strains, to meet new and developing markets, and to better meet changing climatic conditions.

As the minister outlined earlier this morning plant breeding research gives us new varieties to resist disease and insects, to increase yields and produce higher grades. The voluntary check–off program was brought to the government by the Western Grains Research Foundation. The foundation has a track record in supporting effective, purer research in the west.

The idea for the check–off came about when the producer organizations making up the foundation were discussing the problem how to innovatively boost research funding. They did not come to the government asking for additional funding. They did not throw up their hands in despair because the money was not handed to them. They came with a plan of action. They said they wanted to place some of the responsibility squarely on their own shoulders.

Since that time the Western Grains Research Foundation had been working with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food, to develop the mechanism to make their proposal a reality. The proposal is being brought to the House today for additional member support. I believe that this legislation is indeed an excellent example of a partnership initiative which will benefit the entire sector.

While the legislation before the House today calls for amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, all funds will be managed by a third party with emphasis on funding work that will meet future marketing needs. The foundation will be accountable to the very producers who pay for it, accountable through an annual report to all permanent book holders and accountable to producers who have the ability to opt out at any time. Any producer who does not wish to participate may so indicate in writing and indicate that they are not supportive of the program.

The projections however are that a 90 per cent participation will be in place because of the producer driven initiatives mentioned earlier.

In conclusion, through partnership efforts such as this leading edge research and development will continue to receive support. The grain producers of western Canada may ask for your support of these legislative amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, legislative amendments which will allow them to divert a portion of their income toward their future, a future that they can secure through technology.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. member for Brandon—Souris to give me his opinion. In his speech, to which I listened very attentively, he talked about the importance of research and development.

Does the hon. member for Brandon—Souris undertake today to put pressure on his good government to release funds?

I would be satisfied with $700,000 or $800,000 a year for R&D on maple syrup products which, fortunately or unfortunately, come almost exclusively from Quebec.

[*English*]

Mr. McKinnon: Madam Speaker, in relation to the components of the bill, we are talking only of wheat and barley.

I would bring to the attention of the members opposite the fact that if we are talking about the $21 million that agri–food and agriculture have in place right now, I believe those allocations are put through the budgetary process from this department.

If we are talking about the half cent, the $4.5 million that we are discussing here today, we are only talking about wheat and barley research. I can only comment that I would not support additional funding out of this allocation for anything other than barley and wheat research.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C–50, especially as the bill relates to the Canadian Wheat Board, one of the superior marketing agencies not only in Canada but in the world.

Much of my comments will be directed to the Canadian Wheat Board as it is this agency that will allow a check–off on board sales of wheat in the four western provinces and sales of barley in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C.

It is important to note that this check–off is voluntary. I as a member of Parliament oppose the idea of imposing on farmers a check–off that could be viewed as another form of taxation. In part in response to the previous question, we as a government must be committed to research and development from public revenues. The public of Canada as a whole benefits greatly from the increased economic spin–off of research and development and especially so in the agriculture sector.

This voluntary aspect shows the principle of co–operation of farmers working together through the Canadian Wheat Board and other agencies in terms of achieving greater research and development as they already do in terms of marketing.

It is designed as the wheat board was in the very beginning to challenge the inequities and the inefficiencies of the bare bones marketplace.

It is significant to note that Alberta barley is not contained in the bill. I will have some questions later at committee stage on that point. I need to know and I will question whether there will be duplication of research. I need to know and I will question whether Alberta barley producers are given a choice in terms of whether their funds go to research in Alberta or through the Canadian Wheat Board system.

Let me for a moment talk about the bill specifically. The purpose of the bill is to bring in additional plant breeding research. The plant breeding research funded by the proposed check–off is anticipated to improve farm income through two main mechanisms: first, by reducing unit production costs through improved field performance due to increased disease and pest resistant varieties and, second, by maintaining and increasing exports through the development of varieties with desired market qualities.

• (1230)

A key point is exporting and marketing those improved varieties in a way that enhances and maximizes producers' returns. That is where the Canadian Wheat Board really comes in.

It is important at this stage to review where the government is at in relation to the Canadian Wheat Board. I would like to go back to our policy announcement in May of last year. I will quote from the red book. I am sure members in the Reform Party will want to hear this. The book states: "An effective and efficient agri–food strategy must provide policies and programs such as orderly marketing boards, the Canadian Wheat Board and stabilization programs to minimize the impact of market price fluctuations and ensure adequate returns to producers, processors and other efficient managers in the system".

I stand by that commitment and I fully support the Canadian Wheat Board. I used to be involved extensively in the west. I continue to get calls from farmers in the west emphasizing that this government should maintain that support with the onslaught from some of the industry at the moment.

Yes, there are some who are attacking the Canadian Wheat Board and have been for a number of years. It should not surprise us. They are looking for short term personal gain at the expense of the industry as a whole. They are attacking Canadian institutions when they should be attacking the fundamental

problem in terms of the grain industry, the use of the export enhancement program south of the border.

In fact I would suggest that some of those groups have fallen victim to the American corporate interests and are fostering their agenda rather than a truly Canadian agenda.

Yesterday I was shocked as members of the Reform Party stood in their places and condoned the illegal practices of those breaking the law in terms of Canadian Wheat Board marketing. It really amazes me that a party that talks about law, order, justice and following the law would condone those practices. All I can say is shame.

The two key characteristics which distinguish the Canadian marketing structure which is focused on the wheat board are single desk selling and price pooling. I think I had better speak for a moment on those. Through single desk selling, the Canadian Wheat Board is the only accredited agent for the selling of Canadian wheat and barley in export markets. This ensures that the needed quality and quantity of grain is provided to the marketplace. It ensures that the Canadian Wheat Board has negotiated power and flexibility, enabling it to provide farmers with the best possible return. That is an agency that maximizes returns to primary producers, works in their interest, finds those markets and does the market intelligence on behalf of all wheat board area producers.

The second major component is price pooling. Under that the Canadian Wheat Board ensures that farmers benefit equally from sales regardless of when and where their grain is sold. Returns are deposited into one of several pool accounts. All farmers delivering the same grade of wheat will receive the same return at the end of the crop year. The federal government ensures that any shortfalls are covered.

The member opposite is raising funny questions here. The reason I feel so emphatic about that principle is that I come from the east coast and I can see those of us in the potato industry missing opportunities because we do not have an agency like the Canadian Wheat Board that maximizes returns and works in the producers' best interests. I have seen that concept operate. I realize that an agency like the Canadian Wheat Board works far better than the absolute bare bones marketplace that I talked about earlier.

• (1235)

A very important component relative to the Canadian Wheat Board is the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee. I will just take a moment to explain. The advisory committee consists of 11 elected members who represent more than 130,000 permit book holders throughout western Canada. Elections are held every four years. The committee provides good advice to the Canadian Wheat Board in terms of its marketing initiatives.

I think I am running out of time. I would have liked time to talk about the challenges, certainly the Americans. The Reform Party members seem to be the only ones out to attack the Canadian Wheat Board and try to do away with that really good structure of marketing. Members will note that in the four challenges from the United States we won every one.

In closing, it is very critical the Liberal government stands behind our commitments to the Canadian Wheat Board, those commitments that we ran on in the last election across the west and won. Although I am from eastern Canada, I stand fully behind that board in terms of its ability to maximize returns to primary producers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I listened with considerable attention and what surprised me is how strongly the hon. member for Malpeque supports the Canadian Wheat Board. Like him, I come from the East, from Quebec to be more accurate, and I have four questions to put to the hon. member for Malpeque. These questions could require long explanations but I would be happy with a short answer.

Is the hon. member for Malpeque proud of the Canadian Wheat Board? Does the hon. member for Malpeque think that, in the past 12 months, the Canadian Wheat Board was dynamic enough in finding new markets? Could the hon. member for Malpeque tell us if he believes that the Canadian Wheat Board is democratic enough? Finally, does the hon. member for Malpeque believe that the appointment of members by the government, by the Lieutenant–Governor–in–Council, is today, in 1994, a good thing, as it was in 1949?

[*English*]

Mr. Easter: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud of the Canadian Wheat Board. I have been fortunate enough to have travelled internationally. Farmers around the world look at the Canadian Wheat Board and wish they had an agency like it.

The Canadian Wheat Board over the past 12 years has been aggressive. It can be improved in terms of its aggression in some areas. We have to understand that one of the difficulties the Canadian Wheat Board has had is that we had a government in Canada for the past nine years that did not believe in the principles of the Canadian Wheat Board and did everything it could to undermine the ability of the board to operate as effectively as possible.

In terms of democracy, I mentioned a moment ago the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee. Looking at the record over the last nine years of the previous government, the one that lost the last election, it did not use the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee which was the elected representative of farmers. It did not want to hear what those elected representatives of the farmers had to say in terms of support for the wheat board. The previous government undermined those democrati-

cally elected producers, the mass majority of which support the Canadian Wheat Board in the west.

• (1240)

In terms of commissioners there are several concepts of marketing. If commissioners are appointed, they should sit at the pleasure of the government. I personally believe we should conduct an investigation to ensure that the commissioners appointed by the previous government are operating in the interest of the policies of strenghthening and maintaining the Canadian Wheat Board and are not trying to undermine it from within. The principle of appointing commissioners is that the government appoints those with expertise in marketing. It is not like an election where people are elected by popularity. They are appointed for their expertise in marketing, those who will do the best job of marketing on behalf of producers.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the hon. member for Malpeque.

First I want some clarification. The member said we condone the law breaking that is going on by farmers shipping wheat over the border to the United States without a wheat board permit. This is absolutely untrue. He is deliberating distorting what Reform has presented.

As well the member said that the Reform Party is out to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board. He knows he is distorting the truth. We are not out to destroy the wheat board.

I have three questions. Does the member's party support him in his left wing purely socialist view in regard to the Canadian Wheat Board? Does the member believe that farmers should determine how they run their organization, the Canadian Wheat Board, or does he hold his strong socialist principles in such esteem that he refuses to give farmers control over their organization?

My last question is with regard to the advisory committee representing 110 permit book holders. What power does it have? I will answer that one because he will not. It has no power whatsoever. Why not elect a board of directors that has power?

Mr. Easter: Mr. Speaker, I will try to keep my answer short. In response to the first question I may have misinterpreted the Reform Party. I hope that one of its members will get up on a point of order later today and ask that the government charge those people violating the laws of the land. Maybe that would clarify it specifically.

These members have tried to talk about inefficiencies. I just want to make one point before I sit down. The Canadian Wheat Board has reduced its staff substantially over the last number of years. In fact, with a staff of 430 the wheat board transacts $4.5 billion to $5 billion worth of business annually which translates into an administrative cost of less than 3.5 cents per bushel for wheat and 2.8 cents per bushel for barley. That is amazing efficiency on the part of the wheat board in terms of operating for producers.

As the member knows full well, the democracy is in the election of the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee which advises the board on matters. Democracy also exists in terms of this party campaigning in the last election that it would strengthen and maintain the wheat board and stand by it. We intend to do that. We have been elected to do that and I stand by that commitment.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to enter into this debate. I would like to make my points of view known with regard to Bill C–50 and possibly make some remarks on some of the issues that have been raised in this assembly.

As we know the bill has as its main purpose to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act. It allows members of the House to look at the Canadian Wheat Board in its broader sense and make some judgments and certainly make our points of view known in this assembly with regard to those matters.

• (1245)

Bill C–50 is set before us with one specific purpose. It allows a voluntary deduction from the final payment cheques of wheat and barley producers for the purpose of plant breeding research programs. That should be the focus of our discussion but certainly other items could be raised in the general arena.

When we talk about a voluntary check–off we should also recognize that this is somewhat of a taxation on producers. The producers of the country should have some kind of right to determine whether they accept it or not.

We know that in bringing the legislation forward a number of industry representatives have given support to the program and that is good. The farmers involved in those organizations have been consulted and we think that is good as well.

We recognize the driving force behind the legislation has not been the government in total, even though it may take credit for it through its red book. Rather, the Western Grains Research Foundation has initiated it and through a variety of actions has made it possible that the amendment has come before us today.

That research organization is made up of 12 prairie farm organizations. It certainly has done some excellent work in the area of funding research for Canadian farmers.

A number of successful WGRF funded research projects have already been undertaken at Agriculture Canada Research Centre located in my constituency of Lethbridge. I would like to recognize those here today.

There is a communication to the hon. member for Vegreville from the chairman of the board of directors of the Western Grains Research Foundation. Mr. Roy Piper indicated that the Western Grains Research Foundation since its incorporation in 1981 had been working toward improved funding of grains related research.

He said: "We now provide grants of about $1 million annually. An accumulative total of our grants paid and committed through 1996 is $11.5 million". He goes on to say: "Of this amount, 50 per cent has gone into projects in plant breeding in wheat, barley, canola, pulse crops and plants. Most of this money has been paid to Agriculture Canada research stations and the Universities of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta". I can only commend the organization for providing that support. A number of benefits have certainly occurred to us as farmers.

In my constituency one project should be of note. Research funded through the research grants is going on in the area of biological control of the Russian wheat aphid, which if allowed to continue to spread could be very devastating to our grain production in southern Alberta and other parts of Canada.

One of the other items of note is a funded project at the University of Alberta. They are applying biotechnology to reduce green seed in canola. We all recognize that having green seed in our canola certainly downgrades the canola and downgrades the net return to the Canadian farmer.

The Reform Party is supporting Bill C–50 largely because of the support expressed for it by the major stakeholders in the grain industry and because of the excellent work since 1981 of the Western Grains Research Foundation and the projects it has funded.

The central feature of the bill as has been recognized and outlined by the minister is the voluntary nature of the program. Western wheat and barley producers would voluntarily pay levies of 20 cents a tonne on wheat and 40 cents a tonne on barley. I do not think there is any necessity to go into detail but this then makes it incumbent upon the government in terms of accountability for this tax.

• (1250)

The request is 20 cents per tonne on wheat and 40 cents per tonne on barley. It is my hope there will not be an abnormal increase in that funding imposed by the government. If there is any kind of increase in funding it should be done with the co–operation of not only the farm organizations we have talked about today but also Canadian farmers as well, because it is a tax. It is a cost to us as farmers.

There is also the inclusion of an opt out provision. That opt out provision is expected to have a number of beneficial outcomes. It introduces a degree of market discipline that is difficult to create in a bureaucratic setting. The voluntary aspect of the program—and I hope it does not change—allows farmers who disagree with how the WGRF operates or with how it is allocating its funds to effectively withhold their contributions until the research foundation responds to their objections. This should help to ensure that the research foundation acts in a responsible and a very responsive fashion.

Another benefit provided by the voluntary nature of Bill C–50 is that it provides a degree of flexibility for the farmers depending on their needs and their interests. Hard–pressed farmers would not be forced to contribute to the program nor would farmers who have had an unexpectedly bad harvest be expected to contribute. Likewise, if farmers do not feel they will benefit from the research being conducted, they cannot be compelled to participate.

As my colleague from Vegreville explained earlier, the Reform Party will support Bill C–50 both because of the voluntary nature of the check–off and because of the support it has received from the farmer groups in the Western Grains Research Foundation. However, there are some aspects of the bill that raise concern in my mind.

A potential problem is that Bill C–50 might be looked at by government as a way to shift the cost of its research and development responsibilities to the farmers. According to the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food the $4.7 million that is expected to be generated each year by the check–off for plant breeding research is in addition to what the government already spends on agricultural research and development.

In other words this is not a reallocation of funds from within the current budget, but rather an additional research and development initiative controlled by a private sector organization that is designed to complement the existing government research efforts.

When taking this into consideration with the effects of inflation government support for agricultural research has decreased in recent years. If the government makes further cuts to agricultural research programs then the impact on the research foundation program will be seriously undermined.

Nobody is disputing that producers have a role to play in supporting agricultural research. They are the ones who benefit directly from such spending and it only makes sense that they bear some of the costs. However, Canadian farmers need government support to survive in a global marketplace that is awash in agricultural subsidies. At a time when governments of the United States, the European Community and Australia are all increasing their financial support for plant breeding programs, the Canadian government should not reduce its own support.

Any attempt to make the WGRF an alternative to publicly funded research rather than a complement to it will adversely affect the competitiveness of Canada's agricultural industry. Today in the House the minister assured us that the government will not reduce its present contribution in terms of research and development in the area of wheat and barley. I respect him for making that statement in the House. As an opposition member and a member from the farming community of Alberta I intend to hold him accountable to the commitment he has made to this assembly.

• (1255)

As I said earlier one of the most attractive features of the bill is the voluntary nature of the check–off. The Reform Party would like to see this philosophy extended even further. We believe Canadian exporters of grain should not be forced to operate exclusively through the Canadian Wheat Board.

Reform is encouraging the implementation of special opting out provisions for entrepreneurs interested in developing special niche export markets. If individual farmers believe they can get a better price for their produce, especially barley, than the price negotiated by the Canadian Wheat Board then we believe they should be given the freedom to do so.

Instead of allowing farmers this freedom the present government has already demonstrated it will support the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly. The best example of this is what happened when farmers this year tried to take advantage of high prices in the American market. Rather than encouraging such a growth of an entrepreneurial spirit, Revenue Canada and the Canadian Wheat Board instead worked together to impose heavy fines on all prairie grain farmers attempting to transport grain into the United States for direct sale to customers.

When we in Reform talk about opting out provisions, be it for the plant research check–off in Bill C–50 or for the broader questions of farmers opting out of the Canadian Wheat Board pooling system of export of grain, what we are really talking about is choice. Farmers must be given the choice to control their own lives. The Reform Party has serious doubts about whether the Canadian Wheat Board as it is currently organized is capable of providing the flexibility and choice demanded now by Canadian farmers.

A good place to start is to undertake a review of the Canadian Wheat Board. I am not suggesting that the Canadian Wheat Board should be disbanded. There is a lot of support for the Canadian Wheat Board, but there is a lot of support for change as to how it operates.

For many years now the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in assisting individual farmers to penetrate foreign grain markets. However I am suggesting it has a virtual monopoly over all sales. This virtual monopoly is unnecessary and serves only to stifle the initiative of those farmers who wish to market on their own.

Another aspect of the Canadian Wheat Board that should be reassessed is its undemocratic nature. Because the board of directors is appointed by the government there is no democratic way for producers who support greater freedom from the Canadian Wheat Board to influence its actions. Reformers believe that steps must be taken to democratize the Canadian Wheat Board. We have already had a discussion in the House about that.

The people who are now on the Canadian Wheat Board are political appointments. Most likely most of them were appointed by the last government. I am sure it is going to be the intent of this government as soon as it is possible to take those people out of their appointed positions and appoint its political friends. But where do farmers stand in that kind of action? Farmers do not have a role in determining who represents them and one of the most important boards in this nation, the Canadian Wheat Board, has a monopoly.

The present government appointment system should be changed to a board of directors consisting of producers elected through a fair and open electoral process. The first thing this would accomplish is to increase the legitimacy of the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers would know they have had a means of influencing wheat board policy through exercising their vote. They would also be more likely to accept wheat board decisions made by a democratically elected board.

Flowing from this democratization would be the improved responsiveness of the wheat board. Not only would election of board members encourage candidates to listen to farmers' concerns but farmers would be in a position to hold wheat board members accountable at election time.

In conclusion, let me quickly review the main points I have tried to make here today.

• (1300)

Reformers have decided to support Bill C–50 for two reasons. First, we believe that the voluntary check–off provides farmers with a degree of flexibility and choice in how their money is spent and invested in their future. Second, we are optimistic that this will encourage the Western Grains Research Foundation to be responsive to farmers' concerns. As well, we support Bill C–50 because it allows producer organizations, in this case the Western Grains Research Foundation, to have more say over their own destiny. Decisions on how to spend the moneys raised by the check–off will be made by the private sector stakeholders, not by the government.

Finally I have argued today that much remains to be done to improve Canadian agriculture. Specifically there is need for a reform of the Canadian Wheat Board. By advocating the democratization of its board of directors we hope to encourage the

creation of a more flexible, more responsive Canadian Wheat Board for the farmers of Canada.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus I would like to join in making some comments on Bill C–50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

The Liberal government is amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act to introduce the voluntary check–off program for wheat and barley research. I believe this is a very good move on behalf of the government and on behalf of the producers and those who support this move.

It is reminiscent of the pulse crop producers in Saskatchewan who over the years have had check–offs on their crops, on their production for the purpose of research, for the purpose of enhancing their markets, for the purpose of providing greater returns for agriculture in the pulse crops that are produced in the province of Saskatchewan.

It has proven very successful there. I predict it will be very successful if it is managed properly by the government and by the administrators for the wheat and barley end of it as well.

The proposed check–off has been debated by western farmers over the last few years. There is no major opposition to the concepts and the government is responding to a proposal from the Western Grains Research Foundation. The proposal was developed by producers and farm organizations, the research community and the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Western Grains Research Foundation is proposing a 20 cents per tonne check–off on wheat and a 40 cents per tonne check–off on barley. This could produce an estimated $3.8 million for wheat and $900,000 for barley. The levies will be deducted from the CWB final payments beginning with those for the 1993–94 crop year. These funds would be automatically transferred to special accounts set up and administered by the WGRF.

The bill excludes check–off on soft wheat and barley marketed at delivery points in Alberta. This is a point that requires further review and explanation. The Alberta government has introduced a long list of check–offs on farm products.

It is our view in the case of barley producers that some of the money is being used in a permanent campaign against the Canadian Wheat Board. All farmers should be in the check–off as proposed in this bill. Alberta farmers will obtain the benefits of plant research financed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba farmers while the Alberta barley growers association uses its check–off to attack the Canadian Wheat Board which is trying to build its industry.

If the Alberta barley producers want to maintain a check–off for political purposes, it would be their business. If the aim of the check–off is to foster plant breeding research to reduce the administrative costs of the check–off, since the barley growers association, including Alberta producers, members of the WGRF and others, there is no logical explanation to exclude them from this voluntary check–off.

I have a question for the member for Lethbridge, a member of the Reform Party. How do the member and the Reform Party square their support for the bill and yet do not support the Alberta farmers from being involved in the check–off, contributing to the research and contributing to the benefit of their industry and using their money to contradict and campaign against the CWB?

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, I certainly can only respond in a general sense rather than in a specific sense.

My understanding is that the Alberta barley growers have as their purpose and function to promote their organization and to make contributions to research. To say that they are just a political body I would not agree with that. They are trying to make a case that the wheat board is not serving their purpose.

• (1305)

More of a concern about the Canadian Wheat Board comes from individual barley producers who are financing their own campaign against the wheat board. They are entrepreneurs who feel that they can market on their own and can develop a market in the United States and other places in the world. They would like the opportunity and privilege to do so. What we should do in the Canadian Wheat Board legislation is allow for that to happen.

We cannot have producers having their cake and eating it. There would have to be some kind of a provision that if a producer wishes to do it on their own and go out into the free marketplace as an individual producer then they have to take that risk and not be able to all of a sudden jump back into the Canadian Wheat Board when something looks better in that case. Therefore there has to be some kind of a trade–off done through the Canadian Wheat Board legislation.

I believe that Alberta producers want to play their part in research and development, specifically in barley.

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to discuss Bill C–50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

The purpose of the bill is to allow for a voluntary check–off on board sales of wheat in four western provinces and the sales of barley in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia. The funds collected, an amount estimated to be $4.7 million a year,

would be administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation and would be used for plant breeding research.

The research moneys would be directed toward improving farm income through two main mechanisms: by improving the field performance of barley and wheat through varieties with increased disease and pest resistance, and by developing varieties with specific qualities required by the marketplace.

The CWB act is specific in the terms of the deductions that can be made from final payments. The bill would amend the CWB act to allow voluntary research check–offs to be made. There are a number of key provisions in the bill which are worth taking note of.

The CWB would now be legally empowered to make voluntary deductions from final payments to producers of wheat and barley for the purpose of plant breeding and research. We are really talking about responsible legislation from the government that in essence is helping western Canadian grain farmers ensure the future and viability of the industry.

The program is voluntary but I believe that participation will be high as most farmers, including myself, realize the importance of research and development. The program has the potential to bring in $4.7 million in additional plant breeding research. This figure is significant in light of the fact that Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada research centres spent $18.7 million on wheat research in 1991–92 and a further $10.5 million for barley.

Plant researchers have expressed the belief that a well co–ordinated and adequately funded research program over 10 to 15 years in all western wheat classes could lead to the development of varieties that are 15 per cent higher yielding and equal in protein to current varieties.

Based on a current price of $125 per tonne for wheat, the preceding implies that the gross total return for the research levy is projected to be worth approximately $400 million to the prairie farmers annually.

Producer funded research programs are not new. This type of initiative is well established and conforms to our GATT obligations, as producer funded programs are not subject to any restrictions. Over 15 U.S. states have check–off programs on wheat. These are made at the state level and are deducted at first point of sale.

• (1310)

The levy can be refunded by request within 60 days. The check–offs are generally voluntary and have a high level of participation. In general most funds are used for market development activities and domestic production. Research also receives a small portion of the levy fund.

There is also an Australian example. The Australian wheat board has a wheat industry fund levy that has been in place since the 1989–90 crop year. In this case a non–voluntary levy is used in part to fund plant breeding research. It is set at approximately 1.5 per cent of the return price. As all hon. members can see, Canada is not breaking new ground here; we are simply catching up.

Another key aspect of the bill is the provision made by way of order in council for fixing the rate of deductions and for excluding from deductions certain grains and/or classes of grains for certain regions within Canada. A study of the needs for enhanced plant breeding programs in wheat and barley has shown the need for an additional $3 million annually in wheat and $1 million in barley.

The business plan of the WGRF proposes a check–off of 20 cents per tonne or a half cent per bushel of wheat, and 40 cents per tonne or about one cent a bushel for barley.

I believe this is a small price to pay. The world grain industry today has a high dependence on export markets. Consumers demand both stability of supply and the quality of the product for their end use requirements. The ability to meet these demands provides a competitive advantage for Canada.

Satisfaction of both these demands depends to a large extent on the genetic make–up and the varieties grown by barley and wheat producers in Canada. It is expected that there will be significant growth in demand, not only in the heavily populated Pacific rim nations but around the world, particularly for the quality and quantities of grain that western Canada has so far been unable to supply.

Canada must be able to respond rapidly to new demands for the varieties of wheat suitable for specific end use such as frozen bread dough and noodles. Meeting this challenge could mean significant new market opportunities for western producers.

The bill also provides for the deposit of the amount of deductions from the final payments into a special account, by way of order in council providing for the ultimate distribution of those amounts to the account through the WGRF to the various organizations where needed.

These would include governments, organizations, corporations, foundations, educational institutions and other bodies having among their objectives the support of scientific research to develop and improve wheat and barley varieties.

The WGRF is made up of 12 major prairie farm organizations, including the United Grain Growers, the Manitoba Pool Elevators and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The board of directors is made up of these 12 organizations as well as one representative from the research branch of Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada which will collectively set their priorities.

The program has been designed with its own checks and balances. There is accountability at the individual producer level since a person can flag their support or disapproval by opting out of the program. There is accountability at the institutional level since the WGRF is made up of such a broad base of farm groups.

The WGRF which will be overseeing the research also represents the interests of its member organizations. There are costs associated with the program. The CWB has estimated a one–time setup cost of $56,800 and the annual costs of approximately $55,700. The WGRF has estimated its total costs at $50,000.

• (1315)

The total administrative costs are estimated to be less than 2 per cent of the research funds generated and will be deducted from the levy funds. The proposed bill obliges the WGRF to provide annual reports to both the producers and the federal government of their activities.

What we have finally is a recognition that producers have an important role to play in an activity that is directly related to their livelihood.

Producer funding is increasingly important because plant breeding of wheat and barley has been eroded by so many years of inflation. By allowing producers to have such a direct role in this process they can contribute directly to ensuring the future and viability of their industry.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden): Madam Speaker, the main political issue of Bill C–50 would be the opening up of the Canadian Wheat Board Act. That is the view of the New Democratic Party caucus. We are a bit concerned about opening it up even though it is for a good purpose. Inadvertently this may have a negative effect on the wheat board and its operation.

The reason I mention this point is that members of the Reform Party are demanding freedom to choose. They want referenda and other approaches to the wheat board and its orderly marketing process. It is my view and the view of some farmers I represent in the province of Saskatchewan that it poses a possible threat to the stability of the board.

I want to ask the Liberal member if the government could give some assurance or a clear statement on the future of the wheat board and to confirm again the government's commitment to orderly marketing and its election promise to ensure that the Canadian Wheat Board is an ongoing strong, single desk marketing agency.

Mr. Calder: Madam Speaker, I understand where the hon. member is coming from with this. First, the bill allows for more funding and is actually GATT responsive. That is one thing we have to look at here.

To allay his concerns as to whether or not it is backed, I just want to read off some of the grassroots organizations that have already said they approved. The list includes the Prairie Pools Incorporated, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Manitoba Pool Elevators, the Alberta Wheat Pool, the Canadian Seed Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Seed Growers Association, the United Grain Growers, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers and Keystone Agricultural Producers.

I do not think the hon. member has anything to worry about concerning the Canadian Wheat Board in the future.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member opposite. He spoke about the support the bill has from all of the different organizations. I believe he went on to list 12 organizations that had indicated support.

Would he also have enough confidence to seek direct support from producers by making it possible for them to say when they apply for a permit book whether or not they support this type of check–off? I suggest to the member opposite that although there is a lot of institutional support, these people may not speak for the majority of farmers. The fact that they have to continually reapply to get this check–off back if they do not support it is very cumbersome.

Let us give producers the option of indicating whether they support this when they apply for their permit book. Would he support that?

• (1320)

Mr. Calder: Madam Speaker, the key here—we have to take a look at what is being discussed in the bill—is the word voluntary. That is exactly what we are discussing here.

As a poultry producer, I have a lot of faith in my industry. I know what research and development means for the chicken industry. I hope that wheat and barley producers have that same commitment to their industry and that they want to put money into research and development.

In looking at research and development in this industry, if the researchers see they have the backing of the people who are involved in the industry itself, they will go a lot farther in the development of wheat and barley for the world market.

Let us face it. Canada is an exporting nation. If we have the best quality wheat and barley product to put forward on the world market, I know we can go farther. I will cite members an example in the chicken industry.

In the 1960s, it took us 14 to 16 weeks to produce a four–pound chicken and we said: "Wow, that is as far as we can go". I do it in 36 days now and through research and development, they are also talking about a 30–day chicken. Wheat and barley is no different.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of Bill C–50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

I commend the minister of agriculture for the work he is doing to improve the prospect of the Canadian farmer. My riding of Oxford has a large variety of agricultural production. The north end of the riding is dominated by livestock, mostly dairy. Just north of Woodstock is the Western Ontario Breeders Incorporated which collects, tests, stores and sells semen around the world for the artificial insemination of cattle. Toward the south end of the riding, we have a predominance of tobacco production. Over the past decade as tobacco has decreased, these producers have looked for alternative crops to grow on the sandy soil of the tobacco belt.

We have found that not many crops are successfully grown in this soil. As one moves throughout tobacco areas, one can see the occasional farm growing ginseng or peanuts. However not all farmers can afford to make this change, nor can we have these markets flooded by new producers.

Another experimental crop which was successfully introduced this year on a limited acreage by Mr. Joe Strobel of Tillsonburg was hemp. This crop was harvested last month and will be used in the production of hemp clothing.

This is why this bill is important to my region. The provisions in the bill for research and development of new crops is good for all Canadian farmers. It is hoped that this research may even develop a new wheat or barley variety that could be successfully grown on lighter land such as that formerly used for tobacco.

We sometimes forget just how competitive the agricultural industry is world wide. With our shorter growing season in Canada, we must take full advantage of improvements in crop and livestock variety and quality in order to finish ahead of the competition.

If research can develop new and better crops that can be used for human and livestock consumption, then we can forge new markets around the world. These new markets will not only develop income for our farmers but will generate employment throughout Canada.

As this country has moved from a primarily agrarian economy to our present industrial and information age economy, we sometimes forget how important agriculture continues to be not only for the food it produces but for the jobs it creates. Jobs in our transportation networks, packing plants and food processing plants are all dependent on agriculture.

As every farmer knows, the greatest resource we have is the land. This land is a farmer's capital. It is our basic resource and our goal has to be to preserve the land and to make it as productive as possible. The research that is called for in this bill is good for all Canadian farmers.

I would like to address a few remarks to my hon. friends from Lethbridge and Peace River. I had the pleasure last week to sit with the advisory committee of the Canadian Wheat Board. This is an elected body of grain farmers from the various regions of the grain provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta.

• (1325)

To a man these elected representatives supported the Canadian Wheat Board largely because of its success in marketing our grain and because of its pooled selling. There was some discussion about the possibility of some entrepreneurial ventures regarding barley. I am sure that will be discussed by the board. There are farmers elected who give input to this board. I was pleased to meet with them and to know that they were satisfied with what was being done.

When the bill becomes law we will be able to say to our farmers that we have passed a law that will improve the ability of the Canadian farmer to compete in international markets. This is a strong step forward for Canadian farmers and the Canadian agri–food industry as a whole.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Oxford, who represents his riding so well, just told us once again that he wishes western producers would pay 40 cents and 20 cents per metric tonne for R&D; he also expressed in the same breath the hope that tobacco producers who can no longer grow tobacco will benefit from research spin–offs.

I wonder whether the hon. member for Oxford is not a little dependent on Western producers for his region's development. If it is good for his region, he should urge his government to rack its brains to find a way to make everyone—or at least those who may eventually benefit from agricultural R&D—pay.

In addition, I would like to ask the hon. member for Oxford, who also seems very happy with the Canadian Wheat Board, to enumerate some improvements that would make the board more active, vigorous and democratic. I must tell you, Madam Speaker, that the Canadian Wheat Board is far from enjoying unanimous support in the west. Most producers want to keep it, but most of them also want the Canadian Wheat Board to make major changes, in particular at the senior management level.

[*English*]

Mr. Finlay: Madam Speaker, my hon. friend raises some interesting points. He might be encouraged to know that the wheat farmers of Oxford county and of other parts of Ontario are already paying a dollar a tonne into a fund for research.

Probably he is also aware that the Flue–Cured Tobacco Growers Marketing Board takes a certain amount from each pound of tobacco that is sold through their marketing agency. The money is used for exactly what he is concerned about,

research into varieties and improving the production of tobacco in Oxford, Norfolk and Elgin counties.

I am not sure that Frontenac is any closer to western Canada than Oxford. I am sure that all farmers are interested in maintaining the best possible production in all parts of the country. Research is essential.

• (1330)

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Madam Speaker, I was looking for question period. I thought I would get out of this before that started.

It is a privilege for me to address the bill and I am going to address it more or less in a way that a Reform farmer does, not a Reform politician.

I thank the hon. member for Malpeque for all the free publicity for Reform he is giving us. We really appreciate that. It is good advertising.

The spirit of Bill C–50 goes in the right direction. The spirit is good. The increase in private funding for research, pretty well every farmer supports. I am starting to wonder who drew up the bill. When I look at the body of the bill it looks very sick, very old and very decrepit. I do not think it is going to provide the incentive this money is supposed to give.

To me it looks like it must have been a Liberal lawyer drawing it up, not a Liberal farmer because I am sure some of the clauses would be different.

We take a look at clause 31(3) and all of a sudden I realize we have another agency. The agency is called the western research fund and if we look at the track record of federal agencies we know that they usually have deficits, not surpluses. When we look further on we will see that is exactly what the next clause says. It says the cost of collecting these moneys will be deducted from distributed moneys. What have we left over?

I am becoming very suspicious that there will not be very much money for research which we originally intended.

We go back down to the other clause, and all of a sudden we find out we have another fund, a reserve fund, more administration. How much cost is there going to be to the administration of this 20 cents a bushel levy? It does not end there.

Then we go to clause 33(2) and it says there will be provisions made that certain projects are not eligible for this funding and certain research projects that do not pertain to research on these products could be funded. There is no clear direction in the bill.

We go down further to clause 33(3) and we are talking of an annual report that will have to be made to the minister but there are no guidelines that say what kind of a report. It will be at the minister's discretion what kind of report. Is it going to be a report saying it is minus or plus? Or is it going to show us which projects were funded? Why is there no body to the bill? I want some body in the bill.

Then we go further down and we find the door is left wide open to whatever we can think of. If it is at the minister's discretion to call the report, why call for something when there are irregularities in it, especially if the government of that day would not like the irregularities.

Why not put out a bill that is simple and will direct these funds to the research that we want to target? It is very simple. As I mentioned the other day, give farmers the choice. In the next federal election the hon. member on the other side would be really provoked if he were forced to mark his ballot Reform and then ask for it back because he did not agree to vote for Reform. Let us try it and see what they will say. Maybe they all will vote Reform. Maybe it is going to be that impressive. If we want democracy let us have it everywhere.

• (1335)

I am not surprised, if I look at the bill, that we have problems in government. If bills about immigration and bills about law and justice are so vague and so unpredictable no wonder we have lawyers having the richest industry in the world today. To me as a farmer if I want to support something I want to have that right to say so. I do not want somebody to tell me you put this money in here and then if you have time, if you feel things are not right you can ask for it back. I want that money to go to research. That is why I suggest very strongly to the government, if it wants my support as a farmer, to give me that opportunity. I will guarantee that if farmers have that opportunity the government will get more money for check–off to research funding than it will otherwise.

I have another suggestion for the government. If we really want to co–operate in the House why not ask some of the Reform members on this side to help draft the bill because I know it can be improved. The intent is tremendous. We want to co–operate. It is always suggested that we do not want to co–operate. Any member on this side could draw up a bill that would direct that money specifically to the research that we wanted.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the comments of the member for Lisgar—Marquette. I guess that is about as far as we can say, that they were enjoyable.

I do want to point out to the member from the Reform Party that it keeps stressing that decisions like this by governments should be producer driven. There are already, as he and the Reform Party well know, 12 farm organizations and others requesting addition to the list. I do not really know what more they want than that type of thing. The legislation is producer driven and we as a government are responding to that at absolutely no taxpayer cost whatsoever other than providing a very efficient administrative process or availability to do so.

When I mention that it is clearly stated in the bill that Alberta barley producers will not be taking part. I would ask the member if he has any comments on the fact that since the Alberta barley growers through the Alberta barley commission have their own fund which they voluntarily submit money to, would he consider suggesting to the Alberta barley commission that it become part of this research situation?

When we look at the figures of the amount of money that the Alberta barley commission collects, it collects $1.11 million and spends $270,000 or 24 per cent of the amount of money that it collects on administration. When it is done through the Canadian Wheat Board it will cost 2 per cent.

Would the member for Lisgar—Marquette and his Reform Party colleagues consider suggesting to the Alberta barley producers who certainly want a good return on their dollar that it would be a much better return?

The Reform Party is always talking about administrative costs and wastes. We see 24 per cent used on administration and less than 50 per cent of what it collects used on research, market development, producer servicing and policy development. That same organization is sitting on an annual surplus of farmers' money that it is doing absolutely nothing with after having collected it of $295,839.

Mr. Hoeppner: Madam Speaker, I do not have all those figures available that readily. I do not know all the Alberta barley producers but I can guarantee the hon. member that if they are not paying their fair share in research, they will.

• (1340)

He says they have representation from all farmers and that the wheat board is doing such a fantastic job for farmers. I remind the hon. member that in 1993 after staff reductions, after tremendous cuts, salaries to the Canadian Wheat Board increased by $1.4 million.

Not only that, the advisory group spent $50,000 more on travel and sold 15 per cent less last week than the year before. They should not try to tell me that it is working for farmers. Last fall the wheat board and the provincial and federal governments told us there was no market for our tombstone wheat.

Farmers in southern Manitoba marketed that wheat within hours. My son sold his whole crop of wheat in four hours. There was a good market for it and a good price. They should not tell me that all farm organizations are always supporting farmers or doing the best job because I get a little riled up.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member for Lisgar—Marquette.

I am a farmer in the Canadian Wheat Board area. We have heard a number of speakers on the other side who are not in the Canadian Wheat Board area extolling the values of the Canadian Wheat Board. A lot of these people who have spoken earlier belong to an area called the Ontario Wheat Board in which the directors are elected rather than appointed as with the Canadian Wheat Board. Does the member for Lisgar—Marquette agree that the Ontario Wheat Board model of an elected body rather than appointed is better than the current one we have at the Canadian Wheat Board?

Mr. Hoeppner: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that question. If I read the Liberal red book on the fairness it is portraying that everybody will get under that government, I am sure the Liberals are going to give the western Canadian farmers that privilege to elect their wheat board just like they do in Ontario. If that is the case I applaud them for doing it. It shows democracy in real style, not democracy by region.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources) moved that Bill C–48, an act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on second reading of Bill C–48, an act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend other related acts.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take this opportunity to describe to my colleagues and all Canadians how this bill is consistent with this government's agenda for Canada's natural resource sector.

• (1345)

[*English*]

As well I will describe the importance of the natural resource sector to Canada's economic strength and job creation and the role of my department to ensure that the natural resource sector continues to be a cornerstone of our economy, of employment and of Canada's progress toward sustainable development.

Bill C–48 will establish the Department of Natural Resources under one act. At the present time authorities for the minister and the department are set out in two acts, the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Re-

sources Act. According to the bill natural resources incorporate all of the resources covered in the two departmental acts. Specifically, these resources are mines, minerals and other non–renewable resources, energy and forest resources.

While we recognize the provincial responsibility for the management of natural resources in Canada, the federal government has the responsibility in partnership with the provinces to maintain and enhance the contribution of the natural resource sector to our economic growth and job creation.

In essence, Bill C–48 provides a legal framework for the federal Department of Natural Resources to provide a national perspective on mining, energy and forestry issues and to provide leading edge expertise in research and development to help the natural resource sector meet current and future challenges.

[*Translation*]

One of those challenges is Canada's progress toward sustainable development. Bill C–48 respects the federal government's commitment to encourage progress toward sustainable development.

[*English*]

For example, the bill states that to carry out the minister's assigned powers, duties and functions the Minister of Natural Resources is required to have regard to the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources. While this requirement is contained in the present Department of Forestry Act there is no such reference in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act. This provision will now be clearly stated and applied to all natural resources.

Canada's natural resource industries are not sunset industries. Let me make that point today very emphatically. These industries provide a major portion of Canada's gross domestic product. For example, in 1992 the value of energy, forestry, mineral and metal production totalled $69 billion or 14 per cent of our GDP. In 1992 net trade in energy, mineral and forest products amounted to $40.5 billion and provided much of the basis for Canada's $15 billion trade surplus.

One in every 13 members of Canada's workforce is employed in the energy, forest and mining sectors in all regions of this country. In fact natural resource activity provides the economic backbone for over 500 Canadian communities, many of them in remote areas.

As well, our natural resource industries are high tech industries. Canada is a world leader in the development and application of technology to improve productivity and competitiveness of our mining, forestry and energy industries. This effort to develop new technology has resulted in the emergence of new industries and therefore new jobs.

For example, Canada's requirements for accurate information about our resources has stimulated a new industry known as geomatics. This high potential, $1.3 billion industry employs over 12,000 Canadians. Furthermore Canada's geomatics industry contributes $100 million a year in exports.

• (1350)

Economic challenges face Canada's natural resource industries. Improved productivity and efficiency are essential to our country's ability to remain competitive in the natural resource sector. However the environmental challenges facing the sector are equally important. As a result, I believe that Natural Resources Canada will be a vital bridge between industrial and environmental concerns as we move to meet the challenges of the future.

Fiscal restraint affects all orders of government in Canada. Therefore we must find new and innovative ways to work together. I believe that our ability to encourage the integration of economic and environmental demands will be enhanced through co–operative ventures and partnerships which involve all stakeholders.

Throughout the years the department's research and technology expertise has built a solid reputation throughout the world. Its work has been geared to improving resource sector competitiveness and environmental performance. Natural Resource Canada's scientific and technological expertise has focused on all aspects of natural resource management.

For example, in forest management the Canada forest accord and its action plan, the national forest strategy, represent a commitment to sustainable forest development in the country. Through partnerships between federal and provincial governments, environmental and aboriginal groups and other forest users, we are working together to test and apply new approaches to manage forests as ecosystems.

Our mining industry is always moving forward, searching for innovations to become even more efficient and more competitive. As a result, the mining sector has one of the highest productivity levels in the world. The department's science and technology expertise has contributed to the development of many of these innovative processes. Many are linked to the challenge of meeting environmental concerns. Examples include acid mine drainage, effluents and promoting the use of metal recycling.

The energy sector will continue to be an important part of the department. There is no question that oil and gas development is important to sustain jobs and to Canada's overall economic strength. We are committed to market based principles. We are committed to sustainable development. Therefore we will work closely with industry, the provinces and others to harmonize economic and environmental goals.

Increased energy efficiency is widely recognized to have the greatest potential for short term contributions to our progress toward sustainable development. Moreover, energy efficiency can help Canada make a positive contribution to the government's goal of limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy efficient technologies also contribute to wealth generation and job creation. Many companies and businesses have discovered that energy efficiency makes business sense. Innovative, made in Canada technologies for new products, processes, systems and services can also be exported to a rapidly expanding world market.

[*Translation*]

Natural Resources Canada will therefore continue to address the economic and environmental concerns of the natural resource sector. Canada will continue to lead and be a model in all aspects of natural resource management and use.

[*English*]

I will continue to work with the provinces, industry, environmental and aboriginal groups, and other stakeholders in the natural resource sector. The Department of Natural Resources will promote sustainable development practices and will apply its science and technological expertise to enhance our international trade, our competitiveness and the contribution by the natural resource sector to Canada's economic strength and job creation.

• (1355)

The bill will provide the Department of Natural Resources with the legal mandate and framework in which to deliver all these commitments as we move forward to the next century.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Madam Speaker, my colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois and I understand full well that the purpose of this bill is to ratify what is already a fact; a pure formality, it seems. I dearly hope that our colleagues in the Liberal Party do not expect us to ratify this bill establishing the Department of Natural Resources.

It is easy for us to speak on the subject of natural resources. Quebecers elected us, members of a sovereignist party, both to defend Quebec's interests and to begin the dialogue with the rest of Canada in order to prepare Quebec's accession to sovereignty. It is essential for us to defend Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources. We would be acting contrary to our mandate and the will of those who elected us if we did not speak out against this bill.

All governments of Quebec have always demanded respect for provincial jurisdiction under the Canadian Constitution. The Constitution Act, 1982 describes provincial powers fairly precisely under section 92(a) with respect to the exploitation, conservation and management of forest resources, including the rate of primary production.

This position was maintained by the Government of Quebec when the former Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Sirros, said in the National Assembly on May 25 that the full authority of the Government of Quebec for managing natural resources on its territory—

The Speaker: Order. You can continue after question period, when we resume debate.

It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

HELICOPTER FLEET

Mr. John Maloney (Erie): Mr. Speaker, when the government took office 11 months ago it immediately took action to stop the waste of taxpayers' money. One of these actions was the cancellation of the EH–101 helicopters. These helicopters were the Lamborghinis of the helicopter world, sleek, fast and very expensive.

They were not what was needed to modernize our helicopter fleet at a reasonable cost. Notwithstanding the commitment to modernize our fleet is something that must be done and be done soon. The present Sea Kings have done a marvellous job over the past 30 years. They are, however, near the end of their life expectancy.

I ask that the government take a serious look at replacing our helicopter fleet with an appropriate made in Canada model reflecting our commitments to our armed forces as well as the Canadian aerospace industry, both of which are so important to the constituents of Erie.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIRPORT FACILITIES

Mr. Bernard St–Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport does not care about the problems of our regions. He suggests policies which will adversely affect transport in remote areas. As the national policy on airports is about to be implemented, his department keeps eliminating, arbitrarily, regional airport facilities.

Sept–Îles is the most important airport on the North Shore. The closing of the second of three runways creates additional risks in terms of safety, including for any airplane experiencing

problems. Moreover, this decision will reduce the exceptional potential of the airport facilities in Sept–Îles.

It is unacceptable that the streamlining policies of the Minister of Transport, who seems determined to stop the region's economic development, be once again implemented at the expense of regions.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, recently publicized internal memos have drawn the attention of Canadians to very unethical accounting practices between government departments and Canada Communications Group.

It is incredible that Canada Communications Group would enter into illegal contracts in order to hide money from the scrutiny and accountability of Parliament. We intend to hold the government accountable for this scandalous practice.

The ministers involved have promised a full investigation. We will be watching for the reports with great interest. I am informing the House, as I have informed the ministers, that should this investigation not provide full disclosure I will be calling for further public review before the government operations committee.

Our debt is currently $532,098,154,000 and has grown by $88,000 since I started speaking. We cannot tolerate any more mismanagement of our precious tax dollars.

* * *

SPRUCE GLEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Spruce Glen Public School's graduating class of 1994. These students are now in their first year at Huntsville High School and they carried with them the tutelage of Susan Hawkins, teacher extraordinaire.

Ms. Hawkins, while teaching at Spruce Glen Public School, undertook a class project entitled "Rescue Mission; Planet Earth, a Children's Edition of Agenda 21".

The students participated in the rewriting of environmental plans for the future which arose from the 1992 earth summit in Rio de Janeiro. This led to a teleconferencing project involving the Spruce Glen students and others from around the world. Spruce Glen was designated as Canada's focal point.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Hawkins and the grade eight students for their proactivity in undertaking this important initiative and commend them on their continued support in educating others on the importance of the environment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

KINGSTON FRANCOPHONES

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, during Question Period, the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata said that the problems in obtaining from the Kingston city council a piece of land on which to build a French–language high school confirmed the Commissioner of Official Languages' statement to the effect that it will be difficult to turn Kingston into a bilingual place.

The Prime Minister assured the hon. member that the problem, which is related to finding a piece of land and is not a linguistic issue, will be solved and that a French–language school will be built in Kingston.

It is sad to see how the Bloc Quebecois has a distorted perception of the reality. The Bloc should know that the million francophones living outside Quebec are alive and well.

In my riding, we are proud of our French–language schools. Indeed, in spite of the fact that French–speaking people account for only 2 per cent of the total population, we have one high school and three elementary schools for francophones. I myself benefitted from that school system, as did many other Canadians, thanks to the policies implemented by the Liberal Party over the last 25 years.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, September 22, a member of the Reform Party stated in the House opposition to Bill C–41. I would like to state for the record that I am deeply disappointed with the member's opposition to such a well conceived bill.

Given that the Reform Party continues to campaign on a law and order, get tough platform, demanding strong justice legislation from the government on a daily basis, I am particularly surprised that it is not supporting the government's efforts to increase the severity of punishment for crimes motivated by hate, crimes even more reprehensible than random acts of violence because they are clearly premeditated based on the offender's hate for his victim.

This is just another example of the Reform Party's empty rhetoric, inconsistent messages and lack of substance.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the Canadian Environmental Network held its general meeting. The organization consists of a number of ecological and environmental groups from Quebec and the other provinces and territories. The work they do in educating the public and in making governments and industry aware of the need to protect our environment is essential, although the government often fails to appreciate this fact.

• (1405)

At the meeting, a number of network representatives told us of their concern about possible cuts in grants by the Department of the Environment. The government must not abandon agencies that remind us daily that the environment concerns everyone and that recognizing our responsibility for our environment is the key to sustainable development.

* * *

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker:

Cautiously, wisely,
Canadians had thoughts
That investing in RRSPs
Meant a future without knocks
But comes the finance minister
year after year,
Teasing and punishing
and
creating such fear.
Pension consultants have said: it is wrong!
To punish Canadians for being wise and strong.
But the finance minister says:
"We must take steps
In order to meet
Our budget deficits"
Reformers agree
The deficit's bad
But reducing expenditures
Would make us so glad
Its the expenditure rocks
Not in our socks!
Hands off our pensions, Mr. Minister, we say
Stop all the rumours, long before budget day.

S. O. 31

SOFTWORLD '94

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that the aggressive promotion by Fredericton, New Brunswick, of the information technology industry has resulted in a first time, major international conference being hosted by Fredericton.

Softworld '94, Canada's premier international conference and showcase for the information technology sector, has attracted over 480 delegates from 28 countries around the world. These delegates are senior executives from across North America, Europe, Asia–Pacific, Africa, and Latin America.

Softworld '94 is not a typical conference and trade show. It is specifically designed to encourage deal making and investment between Canadian and international firms.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has played a substantial role in organizing and funding the conference. I thank the Government of Canada for its support. This major initiative once again illustrates the important place of Fredericton and New Brunswick in Canada's information and high technology sector.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Institute of Child Health today released its report "The Health of Canada's Children". Based on 1990–91 data, it paints a dark portrait of the poverty, illness and death that afflict so many of them.

In Manitoba the child poverty rate and deaths during infancy and among pre–schoolers remain alarmingly high, exceeding the national average. Almost 1,000 Manitoba babies were born underweight.

It is therefore timely to remind the House that since the election of 1993 the government has launched initiatives for First Nations children and a nationwide prenatal nutrition program.

I am optimistic that a reformed social security system will win big for the 1.2 million poor children of Canada. This is crucial. Children are less than 30 per cent of our population but they represent 100 per cent of Canada's future.

S. O. 31

CONFERENCE ON UKRAINE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to convey the pride felt by Manitobans because we have been selected to host the upcoming special G–7 conference on partnership for economic transformation of Ukraine.

Canada has had a long and rich Ukrainian presence. Between the two world wars some 70,000 Ukrainians immigrated to Canada for political and economic reasons. Although 80 per cent of Ukrainian Canadians are native born, today there is a strong and significant attachment to Ukraine and to its socioeconomic wellbeing.

In order for Ukraine's political independence to be sustainable and stable, economic prosperity is a must, and Manitobans of all backgrounds are proud to be a part of this process.

May the special G–7 conference on Ukraine lead to further co–operation between our two great countries.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LOBBYISTS

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, when they were in the opposition, the Liberals demanded that the government introduce stringent and effective measures to provide better regulation of lobbyists' activities.

• (1410)

According to documents from the Department of Industry, the government gave in to pressure from lobbyists even before Bill C–43, which was supposed to implement Liberal commitments, was tabled. The bill does not include, for instance, the obligation for lobbyists to reveal their fees, nor does it do away with the corporate tax deduction for lobbying expenses.

These specific provisions were intended to restore public trust in government. Dropping them without further ado, as the Liberal government has done, is irresponsible, in our opinion.

* * *

[*English*]

THE SENATE

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, many times in the House members are reminded to show due reverence for the other place, also known as the Senate.

Our unreformed Senate is an out of date, undemocratic institution filled with out of date patronage appointees. To date there has been only one elected senator, a Reformer, the late Stan Waters.

Until the membership of the Senate is chosen directly by the people of Canada, the democratically elected representatives of Canadians should not feign deference to it.

Canadians have indicated that they have very little affection for the Senate. As elected representatives of the people—

The Speaker: That statement is out of order.

* * *

WINE AND GRAPE FESTIVAL

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, from September 16 to September 25, St. Catharines celebrated the grapes and wines of the Niagara region.

My riding of St. Catharines hosted the 43rd annual wine and grape festival. The festival is an annual harvest tradition of elegant gourmet dinners, outdoor events, concerts, winery tours, parades, children's events, a royal ball and a wide variety of winery hosted events.

The grape, wine and juice industry in Canada is a vital part of our economy. In Ontario alone the industry represents thousands of full time and seasonal jobs. Canadian wines with its VQA, vintage quality alliance, have won many international awards for excellence.

I would like to take the opportunity to honour the excellent wines of the Niagara region and of Canada, and congratulate this year's grape and wine king, Dr. Clair Wiley.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, last week I rose in the House to ask the new Premier of Quebec to keep his promise about holding a referendum on Quebec's political independence not later than eight or ten months from now.

Following his swearing in yesterday, Mr. Parizeau said, in referring to the 1995 timeframe, that it was too early to be either more specific or more undecided. This is an obvious sign of ambivalence.

The Leader of the Bloc Quebecois used the symphony as a metaphor for the position of the two sovereignist parties on a referendum date in 1995.

Unfortunately, today Quebecers are not getting much in the way of harmony from the two sovereignist maestros on a definite referendum date. Ignoring the wishes of the public and the solemn commitment by Mr. Parizeau regarding a referendum, some of our separatist stars, showing a total disregard for promises and democratic values, want to postpone the referendum date and thus penalize Quebec by not letting it exercise its right to choose.

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, September 25, 1994, over 3,000 people gathered in Coquitlam to send a message to the government that they want real change to the Young Offenders Act.

On August 13, Graham Niven, a 31–year old man stopping by a Mac's Milk store, was brutally and senselessly kicked to death by two teenagers, one of them just 15 years old. This is just one of a recent number of tragedies in the Vancouver area.

Addressing the rally were the voices of citizens from our community. Diane wants the government to know that its rules have tied her hands as a caring parent. Her 14–year old daughter is a young offender. The discrepancies and inconsistencies of our youth justice system were voiced by the school board, the RCMP, the mayors, a provincial cabinet minister, the Cadman and Niven families and young people themselves. Neither the YOA nor Bill C–37 are enough.

Yesterday alone my office received over 500 faxes to add to our community petition for real changes to the Young Offenders Act. "YOA give the people a say".

* * *

• (1415)

JUSTICE

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, concerns still continue in the Patrick Kelly case.

In spite of the fact that 10 months ago the crown's main and in fact only witness recanted her testimony saying that she was forced to give this testimony by investigators in the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force, the minister still is acting without any great sense of urgency.

Why is the minister and his department so casual about this matter? Why has so little been done by the minister and his staff over the last 10 months? Why are charges of corruption and dishonesty on the part of the investigating officers not regarded as serious by the minister?

Why have officers involved in this case not been suspended pending an outcome of the investigation? Why has evidence that would clear Patrick Kelly not been made available to his lawyers? Why has it taken eight months to contact the one single witness on which his freedom in this whole case depends? Why is the same investigating officer whose honesty and motives are under serious question involved in the new investigation?

It is time the minister acted with some sense of urgency in this case. The Canadian justice system is under attack as a result.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, after promising an action plan for social program reform, the Minister of Human Resources Development said yesterday that next week he would only table a discussion paper.

He also made it clear that social program reform would again be postponed, when he said that the government's position would be presented next spring or next fall. In other words, a year from now.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Should we see these successive delays as an attempt by the Prime Minister to put off the cuts his minister wants to make at the expense of the needy?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are trying to find out what Canadians think about a reform that is extremely important. The paper will be released to the public, and a parliamentary committee will travel across the country to hear what the public has to say. That is democracy at its best.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this looks more like hesitation at its best than democracy. I want to ask the Prime Minister whether we are to infer from all this that postponing the reform was motivated by the Prime Minister's reluctance to take unpopular measures before a referendum is held on the sovereignty of Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, our job is to give Canadians good government, and that is what we intend to do. Good government involves consulting people.

A few months ago, the Leader of the Opposition criticized us for going too fast, but now he says we are not going fast enough. We were elected for at least four or probably even five years, if we look at the precedent set by the Conservatives. So we have plenty of time, and we will take that time to do a good job, which is what Canadians expect from their government.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, good government means a government that governs and does not spend its time consulting, publishing white papers and travelling all over the place and making speeches.

I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he realizes that by postponing social program reform indefinitely and restraining his minister's urge to make cuts, he is actually asking the unemployed in Quebec to wait at least another year until the training issue is settled.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, anyone who says this government is not doing anything should look at what we have done since we came to power. The helicopters were out in half an hour. Then we dealt with the problems around article XI at GATT. We dealt with the problems around NAFTA. We dealt with the problem of fraud in the cigarette trade. We brought down a budget. We made cuts, we made changes and we intend to go on being an active and responsible government. I am sure that a year from now, if the Leader of the Opposition is as good as his word, when they have lost their referendum, he will no longer be a member in this House.

* * *

• (1420)

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance has intentionally not ruled out the possibility of taxing RRSPs in his next budget. This is what Alain Dubuc, an editorialist at the daily newspaper *La Presse*, had to say about this:

> "—a tax that would affect the living conditions of present and future retirees counting on this income in good faith is immoral."

He goes on to say:

> "It is the most outrageous idea conveyed by a minister of finance in a long time."

In the interest of the already overtaxed middle class, I give the Minister of Finance another chance to end the speculation about taxing RRSPs. Can he undertake today not to tax RRSPs in his next budget?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the idea was not conveyed by the Minister of Finance but by Bloc and Reform members who raised it many times here in this House. So if there is a "trial balloon", they are the ones responsible.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, the simple fact that he does not automatically rule out this possibility poses an unacceptable threat to middle-income taxpayers.

Does he not agree that it is totally immoral to change the rules in the middle of the game and create a kind of retroactive tax by taxing RRSPs in his next budget?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the Bloc Quebecois is afraid of listening to Canadians, of a pre-budget process that will be open and of making constructive suggestions. It is very clear that the Bloc has nothing to say to Canadians who want a chance to tell us what they want to do.

* * *

[*English*]

SOCIAL REFORM

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, details of the government's social policy review appeared today on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*. It seems the only place the minister has not discussed details of his much delayed action plan is here on the floor of the House of Commons.

Why is the Minister of Human Resources Development insulting members of Parliament by leaking details of this action plan to the media before presenting it to Parliament?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it is almost a historic moment that someone has accused me of actually talking to the *Globe and Mail*.

I caution the hon. member and all members that this is a period of time when there are going to be all kinds of speculative stories and reputed leaks. I suggest that the member be patient and simply wait for the real paper and real proposals which will be tabled in the House next week.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that these are proposals and not just discussion points that the minister has referred to.

The minister boasted at the beginning of this Parliament that he would be introducing an action plan to reform Canada's social program but we have seen this delayed again and again for months.

Has the minister lost his nerve? We want to know, where is the action?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the action really resides in the will and motivation of the Canadian people to make a fundamental reform and bring about a modern social system based upon real compassion and justice for Canadians.

Presumably during the last election campaign opposition members made certain commitments to their electors ensuring that their points of view would be heard. Therefore I find it exceedingly strange they would be so opposed to any attempt to have real serious dialogue and consultation.

I recommend that the hon. member change her position and turn around and use this as an opportunity to engage Canadians in a very serious debate about the future of this country.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, of course we are in favour of consultation. It is just that consultation must end sooner or later and then we must act on it.

• (1425)

The social policy review was undertaken because as the minister knows, the status quo is simply unsustainable. Our social programs are too costly, too inefficient and in desperate need of reform.

Knowing that social programs must be better targeted and that Canadians will have to take more personal responsibility to provide for their own retirement, will the minister tell the finance minister to keep his hands off Canadians' private pensions and RRSPs?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I prefer to answer my own questions if you do not mind. In my experience the hon. Minister of Finance is a gentleman of great discretion and judgment and he knows exactly where he wants to put his hands.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAX REFORM

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Ontario's finance minister proposed giving Ottawa exclusive control of a national sales tax that would replace the GST and all provincial sales taxes. In return, the provinces would receive a greater share of individual income tax revenues.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Does he intend to follow up the Ontario finance minister's proposal and are we to understand that the GST reform he is considering will be based on this suggestion?

[*English*]

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Before answering, Mr. Speaker, may I say I would like to see the *Hansard* blues.

[*Translation*]

The treasurer of the province of Ontario telephoned me yesterday morning, just before question period, to let me know about the suggestion he made yesterday. The details were not provided and I think that our officials are going to meet. We are very open to any suggestion that will help us harmonize the tax. That said, we will certainly have many questions about the suggestion, but I think that any constructive suggestion is worthwhile.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance think that to really simplify consumer taxes, eliminate duplication and reduce the huge administrative costs, he should instead abolish the GST as promised and transfer this tax field to the provinces in exchange for an equivalent reduction in transfers, as the Bloc Quebecois recommended in its report on the GST to the finance committee in June? The minister wants suggestions—there is one.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we will certainly consider the suggestion from the Bloc Quebecois with the same open mind as we received the suggestion from the Treasurer of the Province of Ontario. We did so when they presented their report. We discussed with the provinces and we must say that the provinces, including Quebec, are not unanimously in favour of it.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a 1992 internal report which examined mismanagement in the Department of National Defence and raised the spectre of abuse and cover up.

The deputy minister's office was renovated at a cost of $327,000. This contract was awarded without tender and concealed under a completely different project in order, and I quote from the report, "to hide the cost of the DM refit which would be considered excessive by the public".

Can the Prime Minister tell the House what action the government has taken to correct this bureaucratic mismanagement within the defence department?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Secretary of State (Veterans)): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Defence I will take the question under advisement for the minister.

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the problem is not just one of excessive spending; it appears that the department compounded its sins in trying to hide the report by classifying it "protected C".

• (1430)

According to the Treasury Board guidelines "protected C" is reserved for extremely sensitive information which might cause extremely serious injury such as loss of life.

Will the minister agree that this seems to place DND in a position of deliberately trying to conceal information?

The Speaker: My colleagues, we are skating on a little bit thinner ice, "deliberately conceal". I would ask hon. members to please be very judicious in their choice of words. I will permit the hon. Secretary of State for Veterans to answer the question if he so wishes.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Secretary of State (Veterans)): Mr. Speaker, again in the absence of the minister, I will take it under advisement for the minister of defence.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FISHING QUOTAS

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister refused to admit in this House yesterday that he had encouraged Gaspesian fishermen to gear up for turbot fishing. Yet, at the very last moment, just hours before they were to cast their nets, the minister refused to authorize the transfer of turbot licences in addition to having slashed their quotas one month earlier.

How can the minister explain his decision to grant a turbot fishing quota to Seafreez, a company located in his riding which hires Russian trawlers, when he refused to grant the same quota to the Gaspesian fishermen, thereby forcing them to live off UI or even welfare?

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the member really ought to try to be consistent.

The issue here is cutbacks in quotas and whether or not new entrants would be allowed into the fishery. New entrants whether they were in Newfoundland, Quebec or anywhere else were not allowed into the fishery.

With respect to the allegation made for the second day in a row, and I admire the member's persistence and also his power to take a punch, that allocations to Seafreez increased or that allocations to Russian vessels increased, let me read the numbers.

The allocation in 1993 to Seafreez was 5,000 tonnes. In 1994 it was reduced to 2,200 tonnes. The allocation caught by Russian vessels under charter with Canadian companies, and they were doing this for years in advance of this government coming to power, decreased by 60 per cent last year.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that quota cutbacks may become necessary for reasons relating to the biological environment. But what we want to know is why the minister gave part of the available quotas to a company located in his riding, a company that used Russian trawlers to fish its quota? That is what we want to know.

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the member knows the answer. Not a single pound, not an ounce, not even a sniff of that turbot has been processed in my constituency, not one single job. It is processed in the great historic community of Canso, Nova Scotia, which is in a different province.

When all the members of the fishing constituency in every province in Canada recognize there is a resource crisis, when the world meets in New York and recognizes a fisheries crisis, when NAFO meets in Halifax and recommends a fisheries crisis, surely even the Bloc Quebecois should recognize a fisheries crisis.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

• (1435)

Last week I asked the minister if he would release the Nordicity study which recommends a new tax for the CBC. His ministry received the study in early March, fully six months ago, and still we have not seen it. This document has now been leaked to the press, but the minister continues to say there will be no secrets regarding the CBC.

When will the minister release the study his government has commissioned recommending a new tax for the CBC?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, our colleague will be very pleased. The report will be released but there is no recommendation by the government to impose new taxes. If there are recommendations they are contained in that report which I have read.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear that the minister has now read the report. However through the Access to Information Act I do have a copy of the contract between the minister and Nordicity and I quote: "a report to examine a tax on theatre tickets, video rentals, cable fees, TV sets, VCRs, radios, satellite dishes, pay per view services". This list goes on and on.

We have the contract and the media has the complete report. How can the minister now deny that he is planning a new tax to pay for the CBC?

The Speaker: Before the minister answers the question I would ask all hon. members please not to use papers or anything to wave around to make their point. The point is very well made with just your voices.

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, our colleague does not seem to be able to tell the difference between having studies carried out and making policy. Studies are being carried out day in and day out. Policy is an act taken by the government. When policy is made she will be informed.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The cleaning–up of sediments contaminated by dormant PCBs in the St. Lawrence River, across from the GM facility in Massena, New York, will begin in a few days. These sediments, which contain between 500 and 5,000 parts of PCBs per million, are a major threat to the environment. The clean–up will be carried out by GM and the American government.

Did the minister demand to participate in the preparation and monitoring of this operation, given the risks involved for those living along the St. Lawrence River?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm information from SVP to the effect that Environment Canada will monitor this extremely dangerous operation during only 10 per cent of the total time required to complete it?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, what SVP says is not accurate. The hon. member should know that SVP may no longer exist as an organization since it was on the brink of bankruptcy two months ago. It was mentioned in just about every newspaper that SVP is now bankrupt.

What the federal government did in co–operation with the former Quebec government was to develop an action plan precisely to solve, with the help of American organizations, the problem which exists in Massena. The previous Quebec minister, Mr. Pierre Paradis, was co–operative and I intend to write today to the new environment minister to make sure that we are ready to ensure that the clean-up is done properly. I expect the same degree of co–operation from the new Quebec minister.

[*English*]

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of the Environment.

As reported in the media, 40 fuel pipeline containers of DDT have been found at the former U.S. army pumping station in Rainy Hollow in the province of British Columbia.

• (1440)

Could the Minister of the Environment tell the House the present status of the cleanup of the site?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that all the barrels have been removed. They are on their way to Washington state. Frankly, with the co–operation of the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States and the Government of Canada we have not only succeeded in cleaning up the site, but we are sending the Americans the bill.

We have asked for an inventory of all similar sites across Canada to make sure that Canadian taxpayers are not forced to foot the bill for American problems with dumpage.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, it is time for accountability. The government promised to scrap the GST. When will the Minister of Finance announce a plan?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, we are currently in discussions with all of the provinces in order to obtain a harmonized tax, which is something that all Canadians including consumers and small and medium size businesses want.

Those discussions are ongoing. It is obviously something that we want and I am sure it is something that the members of the Reform Party want. I would remind the hon. member we stated that we would do this within a two–year period.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In the House and in the red book the government promised to scrap or replace the GST with no increases in tax levels to individual Canadians.

Could the minister stand in the House today and give assurance to Canadians that promise will be honoured in any new tax plan involving the GST or the introduction of other kinds of taxes?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, y–e–s.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GAY RIGHTS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, the gay community is still struggling to have its rights

recognized. Last week, the hon. member for Central Nova expressed in this House a rather controversial view concerning this community.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the view expressed by the hon. member for Central Nova reflects this government's policy concerning the recognition of gay rights?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in my party as in others, many opinions are expressed. Our members can speak freely. When the government introduces a piece of legislation, government members vote according to the party line or else a free vote is held.

If party leaders were to be responsible for all the opinions expressed in this House, they would have a lot of problems. This is a democratic country, and every citizen can express an opinion. The government listens to all views expressed, introduces legislation and then the party supports the government.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, following the unspeakable remarks made by a government member, will the Prime Minister demand a public apology?

The Speaker: Honourable colleagues, just this morning this matter was raised in a point of order. Inquiries will be made to answer this point of order. If the hon. member could put his question simply and directly, we will continue.

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister condone remarks any member of this House may make, challenging the rights of the gay community? Is the Prime Minister responsible enough to answer this question from his seat? That is the question.

The Speaker: No, that question is out of order.

* * *

• (1445)

[*English*]

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in response to my question the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans agreed to an independent review of management enforcement procedures of DFO on the Fraser River. Yet the terms of reference of the review released yesterday do not include fisheries management or enforcement activities.

Will the minister assure us that enforcement and management activities will be included in the stated terms of reference of the review?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, those conducting the review, and there are four independent individuals who are experts in their respective fields, are free and able to comment on any aspect of the matter.

I will personally ensure that the report they give, whatever it says, is made public and subsequent to that, remedial measures taken.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House and again today the minister promised a review of fisheries management and enforcement involving four individuals, none of whom is involved with DFO. In fact three of the four are associated with agencies listed in the DFO phone book.

Is this the minister's definition of independence?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I have no idea at this stage what the hon. member is referring to. If he is suggesting that these individuals have some involvement with fisheries management or have some expertise that has been called upon in the past and therefore because of their expertise are not qualified to participate at this time, I would be surprised. If an involvement in the fishery disqualifies one from commenting then I guess this fishermen critic would be disqualified from commenting for the Reform Party.

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[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle): Mr. Speaker, the government took office with a commitment to work with the provinces to cancel unnecessary programs, streamline the process and eliminate overlap.

What specific examples can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs give us of action taken to make Confederation more efficient?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, for a year, we had excellent co–operation with the Government of Quebec, which we hope will continue in the future.

Among other things, we concluded agreements on managing the environment, on environmental regulations for pulp and paper and on exchanging information between those responsible for financial institutions, to name only these.

* * *

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. In a very surprising statement last Tuesday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment announced that the government would present a comprehensive reform of the Canada Labour Code and that the matter of anti–strikebreaking legislation would be looked at within this reform. It is the first

time such a reform is announced, although anti–strikebreaking legislation is sorely needed.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development confirm that the government will undertake a reform of the Canada Labour Code as a whole and, if so, when?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member fully understands that having good industrial relationships in the country is one of the key elements in producing better growth, better productivity and having a prosperous economy.

As part of that overall initiative of the government we have undertaken a series of discussions with a wide variety of groups, with labour groups, with labour professionals and with employer groups to begin discussing what changes we might make to the labour code down the road when we come up with the kind of consensus or agreement that we think would be appropriate.

We are studying how we can modernize the labour code and move toward certain specific recommendations.

• (1450)

At this time I cannot say specifically what they will be because we have not finished those discussions yet.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, given the intolerable situation faced by Ogilvie Mills workers, does the minister not agree that he must urgently table an anti–strikebreaking bill so that the workers who are covered—I should say who are unfortunate enough to be covered—by the Canada Labour Code have the same rights as those covered by 75 per cent of provincial labour codes, including the one in Quebec, since 1977?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I met last week with representatives of the unions involved in the dispute between ADM Ogilvie and themselves. Certainly as a result of that I agree that there is proper room for filing a complaint or a grievance against the way in which the bargaining has taken place.

I have already sort of signed off a request so that they can go before the Canadian Labour Relations Board and table their grievance, which I think is a proper one. We have already taken action on that specific request and as part of the general examination I spoke about we are looking at the labour codes of other provinces and how they apply to replacement labour.

GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food commented that farmers exporting grain to the U.S. must obey laws that are in place.

Under the Western Grain Transportation Act railways face financial penalties for non–performance. These railways have continually broken this law for years without consequences.

How can the minister fail to enforce this law against non–performing railways and at the same time encourage law enforcement against farmers selling their own grain at the best prices available?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the situation pertaining to the railways to which the question refers, the hon. gentleman will know that while there are provisions in the Western Grain Transportation Act that deal with the performance standards of the railways, under the previous government the appropriate regulatory regime required under those legislative provisions was never implemented or enacted.

We have the draft regulations being prepared at the moment so that those provisions of the Western Grain Transportation Act pertaining to railway performance can be implemented and utilized in appropriate circumstances. The hon. gentleman can rest assured that there is no double standard.

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer.

As the minister knows very well, last May the subcommittee on transportation recommended that back tracking of grain was illegal, disruptive and should be stopped. In June the minister guaranteed that action would be taken. Now he is delaying this action six months at a time.

Would the minister explain to the House who is running this country, the railways or the Liberal government?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, since May 16 I have been meeting on a very regular basis with not only representatives of the railroads but also their unions, the grain companies and all the governmental institutions involved in the transportation of western grain in order to ensure the backlog problems that occurred in the last crop year are minimized and hopefully avoided altogether in the current crop year and for the future.

Those meetings through the spring and the summer have identified a range of actions, including the solution to the back haul problem that the hon. gentleman refers to, plus the matter of demurrage and storage charges on rail car, plus improvements

in the efficiencies of the system, plus the addition of private cars to the fleet and so forth.

All those measures are going forward and, as promised in the spring, those which require either a legislative framework or a regulatory framework to allow them to be implemented will be proceeded with in the House this fall.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint–Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs. Last February 25, the minister said, in answer to a question from the Official Opposition, that he would do his utmost to solve the problems at Davis Inlet and that he would support the relocation of the Innu community, which is experiencing a tragic and inhuman situation.

• (1455)

Now we are told that the whole relocation process has been put on hold. How can the minister explain this delay, on the part of his government, in relocating the Innu community other than by saying that it is to meet demands from the Newfoundland government, which wants to put pressure on these people?

[*English*]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, tremendous progress has been made in Davis Inlet. Right now as a result of the agreements we have signed alcoholism is down 25 per cent; six houses have been built; the lodge has been reconstructed; they are working out agreements with Labrador Inuit College; we have agreed to the move to Sango Bay; and we are looking at a road pattern.

I was very disappointed with what happened last month. Part of those agreements, at least the spirit of those agreements, was that an Innu court would be developed and an Innu policing system would be developed, only a small part of a major agreement.

Most ministries are still working with the Innu, health, fisheries, coast guard. We will continue to work with the Innu people because they are making good progress. Hopefully Mr. Roberts and the Solicitor General will reach an agreement on policing within the next couple of weeks and progress will keep on flowing.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the grain growers in Wild Rose my question is for the agricultural minister and his department. These farmers would like to know if the minister believes that in Canada they should have the freedom to sell their own produce as they see fit. Y–e–s or n–o.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, sometimes those who are trying to avoid all the facts like to reduce things to simple one line answers and that is thoroughly inappropriate to these circumstances.

Farmers in western Canada would tell the hon. gentleman that this is a critically important and vital subject. It is a subject that is exceedingly complicated in terms of the administration of world markets. I have undertaken that farmers will have the opportunity in a forum which I intend to commence this fall to explore all of the pros and cons of the issue so that all the facts can be fully known and understood and that the information available to farmers is fully complete and not partial or biased.

* * *

TUNA FISHERY

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Given that this year's quota of bluefin tuna on the east coast by the inshore fleet has been caught in near record time, resulting in the early closure of the fishery just last Friday, I have a question for the minister. Given that there still seems to be an abundance of bluefin tuna on the east coast and given the state of the Atlantic fishery, would the minister consider transferring some of next year's quota to this year's quota so that the fishery may remain open?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The short answer is, because this is run on a two–year quota cycle, that we are consulting with all the players in the industry. I met with senior officials today and once the consultation is completed, if such a transfer is recommended by the fleet itself, the majority of the fleet, we will look at it favourably. If not, we will stick with the current fish plan.

The bottom line is conservation will not be put at risk.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HAITI

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, we just learned that an American soldier was killed in Haiti. We do not have any more details about the incident and I want to ask the Prime Minister if, given the seriousness of the situation, he is being kept abreast of the latest developments and if he can inform this House accordingly?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that unfortunate incident. We believe that operations in Haiti are progressing rather well and that a much more serious bloodbath was avoided through the negotiating efforts of former President Carter.

• (1500)

We hope that President Aristide will be back in office in the next few days, and we intend to lift embargoes at the earliest opportunity, so that Haiti's economy can function normally and that the situation can go back to normal as quickly as possible in a country which has already experienced too much suffering.

* * *

[*English*]

LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the federal environmental review panel investigating a proposal to expand low level flying in Labrador. All the public interest groups, including the Innu, the group with the most at stake in the process, have withdrawn from the proceedings.

How can the Minister of the Environment continue to give federal government approval to the assessment process when she knows how unfair and insensitive it is to the Innu and the traditional aboriginal way of life in the area?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my reply to a letter I received from Ovide Mercredi earlier this week, the panel members include seven eminent people, the former president of the Canadian Geographical Society among others, who have impeccable credentials.

I also pointed out to Mr. Mercredi as I pointed out to representatives of the Innu community with whom I am organizing a meeting this week, if there is any evidence of a panel member showing any bias, I will be the first person to remove that member from the panel.

The panel needs to have an unbiased approach. It needs to have the necessary tools to hear all sides of the case. That is why I personally wrote to Ovide Mercredi asking him to encourage the Innu community, some of whom are continuing to participate, to participate fully so that their story can be heard by this impartial panel.

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, during question period, my colleague from Hochelaga–Maisonneuve tried to put a question to the Prime minister, but you ruled that question out of order.

I may have repeatedly been out of order and I would ask you to enlighten me because, like other members of this House, I have on many occasions referred to remarks made by one member or another and asked, as is proper, the government, the ministers whether they rejected, supported, agreed with or wanted to qualify such remarks.

My colleague from Hochelaga–Maisonneuve did the same thing, making a very general reference to the remarks a government member made about the gay community.

My question is as follows: What is the difference between referring to remarks made by the hon. member for Central Nova and asking the Prime Minister whether he rejected or supported her remarks and the questions we have being asking in this House so far, referring for instance to remarks by the hon. member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell or someone else on other issues?

Why in this particular case did you rule the question out of order, while such questions have always been allowed?

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, if I may, according to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, to citation 168 in *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* in particular, a member cannot appeal a decision by the Speaker nor consult the Speaker from the floor of the House.

Second, Madam Speaker, acting this morning on behalf of Mr. Speaker, took a matter under advisement. If I remember correctly, the Chair has not yet ruled on this matter which was referred to the Speaker this morning.

For these two reasons, I think it would be totally against the rules for anyone to question the Speaker's decision.

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the government whip has just spoken on a point of order I raised myself. I would simply like to remind him that, as the guardian of parliamentarians' rights, you have always agreed to provide guidance and information to ensure the smooth operation of this House.

The question I asked is very much in this spirit. I simply want to ask for the Chair's assistance in understanding the order of business and seeing that our behaviour is always in keeping with the letter and spirit of the rules and traditions of this House.

• (1505)

As far as the second part of my comments is concerned, please note that my point of order and the question from the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve did not deal at all with the problem now under advisement that was in dispute the other day. It is simply a point of order saying this: Why should a member not be allowed to ask the Prime Minister to confirm or deny remarks when it has always been allowed? That is it. So one should not confuse the facts, as the Government Whip seems to be doing.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to support the point of order raised by the Bloc Quebecois House leader. This morning, I raised a point of order pursuant to Standing Order 18. This has nothing to do with the point of order now raised by the Bloc Quebecois House leader.

The basic issue is whether or not a member of Parliament has the right to put a question to the Prime Minister regarding comments which are totally unacceptable and full of hatred. That is the issue. Mr. Speaker, I suggest you do not follow the Standing Orders during question period.

[*English*]

The Speaker: My colleagues, we in the course of our debates and our questions sometimes use words that the Chair considers at the time to be inappropriate. The hon. member points out that at an earlier time some questions were permitted. I would hope that the hon. member at a later time will let the Chair know when there is this inconsistency.

As for an explanation, I am loath to explain why the decision was taken. Yet so that the House can understand, if it has to do with the administrative responsibility of the government, in my view I have allowed the questions. Whether a minister will be responsible for any other member of Parliament or what the other member of Parliament said, I do not think this is admissible. That is why I ruled that question out of order, because it called on a minister to give an opinion with regard to another member.

Again I would hope that members would not call upon the Chair at every turn when there is a statement or question that is ruled to be out of order. If the hon. member wishes to pursue this with me in my chambers I will be happy to hear him at that point.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Earlier today during members statements I was ruled out of order presumably based on Standing Order 18. If I am wrong in that assumption I would appreciate your information to the contrary. Standing Order 18 states in part:

> No Member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the Royal Family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any member thereof.

Citations 485 to 492 of Beauchesne's talk about unparliamentary language. I would appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, that I did not use unparliamentary language in any portion of my speech.

The Speaker: The hon. member is absolutely correct. I was referring to Standing Order 18. I would call this matter closed now.

• (1510)

I know that many times hon. members would like to pursue and debate but at one point the Chair must rule. As I said to the member, I am referring specifically to Standing Order 18 and I would hope that in future all hon. members, my colleagues, would give the respect due to the other place and members in the other place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, first I want to say that I have no intention of challenging the decisions which you may make in this House.

However, you will recognize, as the leader says, that it is important in our role as members of Parliament to understand what kind of flexibility we have when it comes to asking questions. In my opinion, the issue raised by the point of order is this: When we tried twice to understand the comments made by an hon. member, we did so from a legal standpoint and in the context of the government's activities.

You are well aware that the comments made were paving the way for a review of the Canadian Human Rights Act. Allow me to point to your attention the fact that the question asked is closely related to a governmental responsibility of the Prime Minister.

The Speaker: Order. Dear colleague, the question was deemed out of order because of the way it was phrased.

[*English*]

If it was referring to a government policy then the question would have been permissible. That is what I based my ruling on and I stand by my ruling with all respect here.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, always in the interest of our proceedings, like the Bloc Quebecois House leader said, what we tried to see and what we are still trying to figure out, is the leeway we have when we address the Chair to raise—

The Speaker: Hon. members, the first question was in order but the second one was not.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed from September 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being after 3 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, September 22, 1994, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the second reading stage of Bill C–44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act.

Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 83*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allmand
Arseneault
Assadourian
Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bernier (Beauce)
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Blondin–Andrew
Bonin
Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Bélisle
Calder
Cannis
Caron
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crête
Daviault
Deshaies
Dhaliwal
Dromisky
Duceppe
Dumas
Easter
English
Fillion
Finlay
Fontana
Gaffney
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine)
Gallaway
Godfrey
Goodale
Guay
Harb
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Jacob
Karygiannis
Kirkby
Kraft Sloan
Langlois
Laurin
Lebel
Lee
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Lincoln
Loubier
MacDonald
Maheu
Manley
Marchi
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McKinnon
McTeague
Mercier
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Paré
Payne
Peters
Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pomerleau
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette–Maltais
Rocheleau
Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Simmons
Solomon
St–Laurent
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Taylor
Terrana
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Valeri
Venne
Volpe
Wappel
Whelan
Zed—199

Alcock
Anderson
Assad
Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing
Bachand
Barnes
Bellehumeur
Berger
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bethel
Bhaduria
Bodnar
Bouchard
Brien
Brushett
Bélair
Caccia
Campbell
Canuel
Catterall
Chan
Clancy
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
de Savoye
DeVillers
Discepola
Dubé
Duhamel
Dupuy
Eggleton
Fewchuk
Finestone
Flis
Fry
Gagliano
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin
Gray (Windsor West)
Guimond
Harvard
Hubbard
Iftody
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)
Loney
MacAulay
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Maloney
Marchand
Marleau
Massé
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney
Milliken
Minna
Murphy
Ménard
Nunez
O'Reilly
Parrish
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Proud
Regan
Rideout
Robichaud
Rock
Sauvageau
Serré
Sheridan
Skoke
Speller
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Telegdi
Tobin
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief
Verran
Walker
Wells
Wood

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Cummins
Epp
Gilmour
Grey (Beaver River)
Harper (Calgary West)
Hart
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jennings
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Penson
Ringma
Schmidt
Solberg
Stinson
Thompson

Ablonczy
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Chatters
Duncan
Frazer
Gouk
Hanger
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner
Johnston
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Ramsay
Robinson
Silye
Speaker
Strahl
Williams—44

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Bergeron	Dalphond-Guiral
Debien	Gerrard
Graham	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Pillitteri	Young

• (1540)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment of the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre to the motion of the hon. member for Richelieu relating to Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

PARTY FUND RAISING

The House resumed from September 22 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When you proceed with the vote may I request that the vote be taken by row as opposed to the traditional party vote, since this is a private member's item and there is no whip discipline.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I thank the government whip for his intervention. That will be the case with this division.

As is the practice, the division will be taken row by row starting with the mover and then proceeding with those in favour of the amendment sitting on the same side of the House as the mover. Then those in favour of the amendment sitting on the other side of the House will be called. Those opposed to the amendment will be called in the same order.

The question is on the amendment.

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

(*Division No. 84*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Arseneault
Assad	Bryden
Bélair	Harvard
Loney—7	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alcock	Anderson
Assadourian	Asselin
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand	Bakopanos
Barnes	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Berger
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Bodnar
Bonin	Bouchard
Boudria	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brien	Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Bélisle
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Canuel
Caron	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cohen	Collins
Cowling	Crête
Culbert	Cummins
Daviault	de Jong
de Savoye	Deshaies
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Discepola	Dromisky
Dubé	Duceppe
Dumas	Duncan
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	Epp
Fillion	Finestone
Finlay	Frazer
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gagnon (Québec)
Gallaway	Gauthier (Roberval)
Gilmour	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Gouk	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Harb	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hart
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoeppner	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Irwin	Jackson
Jacob	Jennings
Johnston	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lalonde	Langlois
Lastewka	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	Maheu
Maloney	Manley
Marchand	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney	Mercier
Meredith	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mills (Red Deer)
Minna	Mitchell
Morrison	Murphy
Murray	Ménard
Nault	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paré
Patry	Payne
Penson	Peric
Peters	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau

Ramsay	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Ringma
Ringuette–Maltais	Robichaud
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rock	Rompkey
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Serré
Sheridan	Silye
Skoke	Solberg
Solomon	Speaker
St–Laurent	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Taylor
Telegdi	Terrana
Thompson	Tobin
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Valeri	Vanclief
Venne	Verran
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Williams
Wood	Zed—206

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Bergeron	Dalphond–Guiral
Debien	Gerrard
Graham	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Pillitteri	Young

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I would move that the same vote be applied in reverse to the main motion.

• (1555)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): As we say in English, nice try.

The next vote is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion, the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): As is the custom, the recorded division will be taken row by row, beginning with the mover. Then I will ask the other members who are in favour of the motion and who are on the same side of the House as the mover to please rise. Then the votes of those who support the motion and are on the other side of the House will be recorded.

The votes of those who are opposed to the motion will be recorded in the same order.

(The House divided on the motion, which was negatived.)

(*Division No. 85*)

YEAS

Members

Asselin	Bachand
Beaumier	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bethel	Bodnar
Bouchard	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brien
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Bélisle
Canuel	Caron
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Cummins
Daviault	de Jong
de Savoye	Deshaies
Dubé	Duceppe
Dumas	Fillion
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier (Roberval)
Gilmour	Godin
Guay	Guimond
Harper (Calgary West)	Hayes
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jacob	Knutson
Lalonde	Langlois
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lebel	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Marchand
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McTeague	Mercier
Meredith	Morrison
Ménard	Nault
Nunez	Paré
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Ramsay	Robinson
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Silye	Solberg
Solomon	Speller
St–Laurent	Stinson
Taylor	Thompson
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne—85	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alcock	Anderson
Arseneault	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes	Bellemare
Berger	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bhaduria
Blondin–Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Bélair
Calder	Campbell

Cannis	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Clancy	Cohen
Collins	Cowling
Culbert	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Discepola
Dromisky	Duhamel
Duncan	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Epp
Fewchuk	Finestone
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Frazer
Fry	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gallaway
Godfrey	Goodale
Gouk	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)	Hanger
Harb	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart	Harvard
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner	Hopkins
Irwin	Jackson
Jennings	Johnston
Jordan	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kirkby
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Loney
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	Maheu
Maloney	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McWhinney
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Parrish
Patry	Payne
Penson	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Proud	Reed
Richardson	Rideout
Ringma	Ringuette–Maltais
Robichaud	Rock
Rompkey	Schmidt
Serré	Skoke
Speaker	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Tobin
Valeri	Vanclief
Verran	Volpe
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Williams
Wood	Zed—138

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Bergeron	Dalphond–Guiral
Debien	Gerrard
Graham	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Pillitteri	Young

• (1605)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the motion lost.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, in Bill C–48 before the House today, the federal government assumes rights and powers that directly encroach on the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces over natural resources. This is unacceptable. Apparently, the federal government is unable to read what is said in the Canadian Constitution and refuses to listen to Quebec's demands.

What we see in Bill C–48 is a federal government that continues to get involved in a jurisdiction that is Quebec's exclusively. It assumes the power to go over the heads of the provinces and Quebec, directly funding organizations and individuals.

• (1610)

The federal government prefers to ignore Quebec's demands, but I am willing to bet that many of my colleagues in the other provinces share my position. I would like to say the following for their benefit. These unwanted intrusions by the federal government lead to overlap between provincial and federal strategies for developing this sector, especially since many provinces have already set up their own strategies for promoting, regulating and developing their natural resources.

Quebec's forest management strategy tabled last May by the Quebec government is a good example. The strategy is entirely independent from the National Forest Strategy developed by the federal government and the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers.

The Government of Quebec has to provide funding for both strategies. However, successive federal governments have ignored what is said in the Canadian Constitution as well as the legitimate demands of the Government of Quebec.

Take, for instance, the report of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Forestry and Fisheries, in November 1990, about the struggle of provinces to defend their jurisdiction over natural resources. The committee says that in the course of the twentieth century, the government had on several occasions tried to affect national policy in the forestry sector but had sometimes met with resistance by the provinces to any potential encroachment on their jurisdictions.

The committee felt it was clear that the federal government had to play a more credible role to guarantee the success of all these national forestry strategies.

Although the committee suggests it is necessary to obtain the co–operation of the provinces, it is clear that the federal government has felt free to intervene in this area without the specific consent of the Government of Quebec.

Quebec protested, to no avail, against the creation of a Department of Forestry, quite properly seeing this as an intrusion in one of its jurisdictions. Quebec did not sign the National Forest Strategy. Since 1991, after the demise of Meech Lake, no Quebec ministers have been involved in the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. Quebec has just released its own strategy for forest management, as is its right in matters over which it has exclusive jurisdiction.

How can the federal government legitimately intervene in an area that falls under provincial jurisdiction? How can it claim to act in the best interests of Quebecers, when for years it has ignored both its own Constitution and the demands of successive governments of Quebec?

Obviously, the Liberal government's stated desire to put an end to overlap and duplication would be a perfect excuse for getting rid of the Department of Natural Resources or letting provinces opt out of federal programs that involve natural resources.

Perhaps I may compare the mandate of the Department of Natural Resources of Quebec with that of the Department of Natural Resources of Canada.

• (1615)

Based on the analysis of federal–provincial overlapping carried out by the Treasury Board of Canada in 1991, the activities of the federal Department of Natural Resources and its Quebec counterpart overlap to a large extent.

That is why I would like to propose an amendment to Bill C–48, an amendment respectful of the Constitution of Canada and respectful of Quebec's traditional demands. Here is my amendment. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Frontenac:

> That every word following "that" be struck out and replaced by the following:
>
> this House refuse to give second reading to Bill C–48, an Act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts, because the principle of the bill does not provide for granting the minister the power to compensate Quebec if the province decided to exercise by itself the exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources it was conferred under the Constitution Act of 1867 and 1982.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The Chair was consulted, and the amendment is in order.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the government for adopting Reform policy with respect to departmental consolidation. Since we are dealing with the legalization of a fait accompli I should probably be thanking the previous government for this recycled bill, a toast to absent antagonists.

Having said that, the government is pretty unclear on the concept. As a matter of fact the government is pretty unclear on almost every concept, but I will leave that for another day.

The object of consolidation is to increase managerial efficiency and save money. What has been accomplished? Instead of 10 assistant deputy ministers there are now seven, which is commendable. Minor economies have been made in human resources, accounting and so on, but the total decrease in corporate overhead has been only $16 million, 1.6 per cent of the department's annual budget. The elephant laboured and brought forth a mouse.

The department has expressed pride in the fact that the amalgamation was done with only minor staff reductions. The act states in section 8 that all employees in the old department will occupy their same positions in the new department. Perhaps this makes some sense in the short term with respect to clerks, typists, technicians and other lower rank staff who would merely swell the massive ranks of Canada's already existing unemployed. Is there really no scope for reducing the number of middle managers and technocrats to conform with today's economic reality?

• (1620)

This department, which deals almost exclusively with matters of provincial responsibility, has a $1 billion budget and about 5,000 employees, of whom 3,000 are right here in Ottawa. How can that be rationalized?

I know that the uncontrolled growth of bureaucracy is not a disease that attacks only governments. I have worked for or been associated with a few multinational resource companies and they have the same problems. They also have built–in safety valves which prevent such growth from destroying them, as it surely would if it went unchecked.

Every few years the boards of companies like Exxon, Shell or Noranda become aware that the ratio of payroll to gross revenue is grossly out of whack. Department heads are summoned to the CEO's office and the word goes out: too many engineers, too many planners, too many people engaged in redundant programs, too many assistant managers, too many professionals who never leave their offices, and so on.

The axe is swung and corporate survival is assured. It is not pretty and it is not nice but it preserves not only the company but also the jobs of the people who actually harvest the resources and produce corporate and national wealth.

Up to now Canadian governments have not responded to these same economic imperatives. With no apparent limits to their capacity to increase income and no real motivation for cutting expenses, they simply raise taxes, or more recently borrowed unimaginably large sums of money.

I know perfectly well that streamlining government operations will not in itself get us out of the awful mess we are in. It has been said many times in this House that the entire cost of government operations is less than half of the annual deficit. If we do not start there, where will we start and when?

Let me cite a couple of specific examples of where I believe that small but significant cuts could be made in departmental spending. The mining sector has 168 full time equivalent employees and a budget of just under $26 million. More than half of that budget represents contributions to mineral development agreements with the provinces, primarily with Quebec. These are sunset programs, most of which will expire next year.

Planning, observing and studying these MDA programs requires a substantial investment in time and resources. If the federal government must participate in these programs as a form of equalization, and I question the wisdom of that, it would be much more efficient to just send cheques. We do not need two levels of bureaucracy administering the same programs.

The mining sector's most essential functions are gathering statistics and helping to formulate government policy with respect to taxation, investment and trade. These duties could readily be handled by Stats Canada and by a few specialists in the various ministries responsible for the administration and execution of the policy.

At the end of the day the usefulness of this small sector of the Department of Natural Resources is open to question. Certainly the possible cost benefits of dismantling it should be considered.

Not all questionable department expenditures are related to overlap and duplication. The Atomic Energy Control Board is the sole agency in Canada which regulates the storage and use of radioactive material. This is fitting and proper. The agency suffers from a severe case of bureaucratic bloat. Between 1985 and 1993 the number of licences to sell, store or use nuclear materials decreased by 17 per cent, from 4,543 to 3,743, while the number of AECB employees rose from 252 to 373, a 48 per cent increase.

• (1625)

This organization is supervising only 10 licensees per employee. Senior department officials attribute this ridiculous ratio to increased public concern for health and safety. Really, now.

The AECB is now working on a partial cost recovery basis. All private licensees pay a fee for service. The AECB provides no service. It is a regulatory agency and its fees are therefore just another form of taxation targeted at small specialized industries that cannot duck. The system reminds me of the practice in China of requiring a condemned man's family to pay for the cartridges used for his execution.

If the agency got rid of one third of its employees it would not have to proceed with its well known plans to increase fees by an additional one third annually until 1997.

Before I conclude my remarks I want to tell the House my favourite civil service story. It concerns Charles Camsell, an early director of the Geological Survey of Canada. He and some young assistants were on a long canoe traverse of several weeks' duration. They came to a Hudson Bay post. They had been living on the usual diet of the day which was beans, bannock and fish for these many weeks. One of the young fellows got up the nerve to approach Mr. Camsell and ask him if they could get a little variety in their diet since there was a store near at hand. The old man reached down into his pocket, pulled out a quarter and sent one of the boys over to the Hudson Bay post for a can of tomatoes.

If we had one or two guys like Charlie in the Department of Natural Resources today we might see some action in the direction which the people on my side of the House would like to see.

In closing, the mandate in article 6 of this act is a motherhood mission statement which hardly anyone would disagree with. It looks great, but should there not be something in there about cost effectiveness?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Manicouagan—Canada Labour Code.

[*English*]

The first three members on Bill C–48 had a limit of a 40 minutes maximum. Now we will go into the next phase of debate during which members will have 20 minute interventions, followed by ten minutes of questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the House again today at the second reading of Bill C–48, an Act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related Acts.

I would like to add to the statement by my colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton Northwest and Minister of Natural Resources. The natural resource sector is tremendously important to Canada's economy, and the Department of Natural Resources should ensure that this sector remains a cornerstone of Canada's economic growth as well as a significant source of jobs.

As indicated earlier, Bill C–48 will establish the Department of Natural Resources and provide the legal framework within which it will operate.

• (1630)

The department's mandate will be defined in one document rather than in the two acts now in effect, namely the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act.

Sustainable development is very important. My colleague from Edmonton Northwest has indicated that one of the challenges facing the natural resource sector is Canada's progress toward sustainable development. Our ability to integrate our economic and environmental goals at all levels of natural resource management is essential if Canada is to become more competitive in this sector. Bill C–48 confirms the government's commitment to this objective.

[*English*]

The natural resources sector is important. The statistics quoted earlier by my hon. colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, proves that natural resource industries provide a major contribution to Canada's gross domestic product, our trade surplus and job creation in our country. Over 500 communities depend on natural resource activity to sustain their economy. As well, our natural resource industries are high tech industries. Canada has a well–deserved reputation as a leader in the development and application of technology to improve the productivity and competitiveness of mining, forest and energy industries. It is through our expertise in this area that new technologies have emerged.

New technology has also created new industries in Canada. For example, as the minister has pointed out, Canada's requirement for accurate information on our land mass, such as maps of our geography, has stimulated new industries like geomatics. Already, this burgeoning industry employs 12,000 Canadians and exports $100 million each year.

The role of Natural Resources Canada. The Department of Natural Resources has developed a solid reputation for its research and technology expertise over many years. It is this expertise that has and will continue to bridge industrial and environmental concerns facing natural resource industries. Over the years the work of Natural Resources Canada has led to improved resource sector competitiveness and environmental performance.

Earlier, my hon. colleague the minister described some of the department's work in forest development, innovative mining processes and energy efficiency. These examples demonstrate how Natural Resources Canada is positioned to bridge the industrial and environmental concerns facing the natural resource sector.

[*Translation*]

In summary, the Department of Natural Resources will continue to promote sustainable development practices, will apply its scientific and technological expertise to the enhancement of our international trade and will increase the natural resource sector's contribution to economic growth and job creation.

Bill C–48 will establish the Department of Natural Resources and help Canadians understand the department's role as an intermediary—that word is extremely important—in bridging industrial and environmental concerns.

Under Bill C–48, the Minister and the Department of Natural Resources will have a mandate to work with the provinces, industry, environmental and aboriginal groups, and other stakeholders to ensure that Canada's natural resource sector continues to prosper now and in future years.

I listened earlier to the speech by my colleague from Matapédia—Matane and I was very surprised, to say the least, by how he approached the presentation of this bill. First of all, he limited his comments almost exclusively to the constitutional aspect, that is, the Constitution as it applies to this bill. He accused the federal government of meddling in Quebec's business.

I would like to take this opportunity to put that allegation in context. To start with, there was the 1992 Canada–Quebec Agreement on Forest Development providing for $136 million over five years. The hon. member for Matapédia—Matane said that Quebec had never signed such a document. We are talking about an amount of $136 million made up of equal contributions from each government, that is $68 million.

• (1635)

In the case of the Eastern Quebec Development Plan, the total amount of $68 million was paid by the federal government, as was also the case with the $10.5–million Indian reserve land program.

My point is this: under the Charlottetown accord, the forestry sector was to become an exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces. But as you know, the province of Quebec rejected the accord.

The second point I want to make is that the two existing acts, namely the Forestry Act and the Energy Administration Act, remain almost intact. In other words, the federal government participates in the financing of management activities related to those two natural resources sectors, but does not in any way interfere with the actual administration of the two programs.

I have a message for the hon. member, who might want to transmit it to the new Quebec government. If the federal contributions which I just mentioned are unacceptable and are perceived to be a form of interference, then the Quebec government can send them back, because we can certainly use them elsewhere. I know what I am talking about; while Quebec

received $136 million, Northern Ontario only got $30 million, that is $6 million per year.

Consequently, last year, 45 million small trees were not planted because there was no money available. So, if Quebec does not want those federal contributions, I will be very pleased to accept them on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, in the Charlottetown accord, if that is what my hon. colleague is referring to, we did ask for total jurisdiction over forests. That is why we are going to have to hold a referendum: to obtain it. Quebec receives federal funding. It needs that money, and as long as we are part of this country, that is our money too.

As I said, Quebec did not sign the national strategy. We did not sign it. Sometimes deputy ministers travel. The fact remains that we did not sign. My hon. colleague from Ontario says that Quebec received millions of dollars, but then Ontario received transfer payments for regional development. So, there is compensation on both sides.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this: does he agree with me that the federal government has very long arms when it come to grabbing, controlling, strangling the provinces even more? We in Quebec object to that. We do not refuse the money. We need it. It is just that we should be compensated and that is precisely what Quebec has been asking for since Lesage and Johnson. That is what we are asking for, and we have been asking for this for over 30 years.

It seems to me that this bill goes beyond the purview of the Constitution. I would like him to comment on that.

• (1640)

Mr. Bélair: With pleasure, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to say that the amalgamation of two existing acts as in this case is always subject to Section 92(b) of the Constitution Act, 1867, which provided at the time that natural resources belonged to the provinces. That is exactly the point I was making earlier: these resources still belong to the provinces, but the federal government reserves the right to provide financial support to those provinces that want some.

Quebec benefits greatly from this, with the $68 million it received from the federal government corresponding to the 68 Conservative members it used to have in this House. Quebec received a very fair share indeed. Again, if my hon. colleague is convinced that when Quebec gets its independence, its will no longer need federal funds, by all means send the money back!

Coming back to the Charlottetown Accord, Quebec rejected it, with all the implications this had.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): So did Ontario.

Mr. Bélair: That is right, but we are talking about Quebec here. We are not talking about Ontario but Quebec. My colleague also raised the issue of regional development. This bill is not about regional development, it is about agreements on forestry. The figures just quoted were derived exclusively from forest resource development agreements.

Regional development is a different matter altogether. Must I add in closing that, with respect to regional development, Quebec's share is about $600 per capita, as compared to $133 for northern Ontario?

[*English*]

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–48 is a bill which in principle I support and the New Democratic Party caucus supports in—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. I would like to hear all the statements, everyone in turn. We are now listening to the comments of the member for Regina—Lumsden.

[*English*]

Mr. Solomon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to share with the House and the members that the New Democratic Party caucus supports in principle the taking of the bill to committee.

The bill when it becomes law will amalgamate, as I understand it, under one minister the powers, duties and functions of the minister in the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act.

The bill defines natural resources to include all areas covered in the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act. The definition clause contains a definition of sustainable development, the same definition apparently as in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

There is a requirement under the general duties clause for the minister to consider the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources in carrying out the minister's duties and functions. The general duties clause of the bill reiterates some modifications to the duties in the Department of Forestry Act to make these duties apply to all natural resources. It also describes current activities of the department and is consistent with federal government responsibilities and priorities in the natural resources area.

A reorganization bill usually has many objectives and opportunities: either amalgamation, centralization, efficiency, streamlining, expansion or in many ways hiding budgetary expenditures. During the report to the committee I will be looking at some of these objectives of the bill.

I have a couple of concerns I want to raise with the member for Cochrane—Superior. The minister in her remarks today said, and I quote: "Economic and environment concerns will continue to be addressed". She also said in the same statement that she will be committed to the market principles. It is my sense that these are contradictory, that you cannot be carrying out on behalf of the people of Canada an economic and environmental study to ensure that these are addressed yet leaving all of the elements of the responsibilities of the minister up to market principles.

I wanted to make the above point and I also have two questions. First, does the member not believe that these are contradictory, that the minister has indicated this previously? Second, has there been any provincial government response other than the members from the Bloc with respect to possible encroachments of provincial responsibilities in the energy sector, the forestry sector or some of the other natural resources sectors with specific reference to the province of Saskatchewan which is a province that I represent in this House?

• (1645)

Mr. Bélair: Mr. Speaker, to address the member's question directly, it is unavoidable today that the environment and the economy be together. We should strive to protect our environment while not being a nuisance to economic growth.

We should strike a balance between the two. We have seen many instances where environmentalists were representing an extreme point of view and industry was representing the other point of view.

I was really surprised and pleased that finally in the hearings of the natural resources committee, there seems to be movement on both sides. Industry has finally said publicly that, yes, there are environmental problems in Canada. The environmentalists are also saying that some progress is being made.

This is the object of the bill. It is the power and the duty of the Minister of Natural Resources to try to conciliate these two extremely important parts of our Canadian way of doing things. She will strive to do so.

The second part of the question concerned provincial jurisdiction. As I said a while ago to my colleague from the Bloc, amalgamating the two existing acts, the Forestry Act and the energy, mines and resources act, is totally in accordance with section 92(b) of the Constitution Act of 1867.

It is almost status quo, although it may not be the right thing to say at this point. Nothing has changed. The federal government still wants to be able to invest in provincial projects. They still want to establish those partnerships with the provinces, industries, recreational clubs, anglers and hunters, everybody as a matter of fact. It is doing so by financing those projects and is not directly involved in the administration of those projects.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, of course I support the proposal of my colleague, the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane, to delete some words from the proposal of the Minister of Natural Resources and to add to Bill C-48 the amendment presented in this House.

I would like to take this opportunity to show this House that the changes that these amendments make to the minister's proposal will simply make her proposal comply with the many requests expressed by all the successive premiers of Quebec for many decades, which this government is again trying to flout.

Indeed, we can go back to Premier Jean Lesage in the early 1960s who said, "Resource development is in provincial jurisdiction. It is among the priority rights and needs of the provinces, who are better able than the federal government to act effectively and in a lasting way in this field". He added: "It must be clearly established as a basic rule of our federal system that Parliament's exceptional powers must remain just that, exceptional, and must not be used to invade fields that are normally in provincial jurisdiction".

Daniel Johnson, Sr., who was also a premier, continued in the same direction as his predecessor and said that exclusive provincial jurisdiction includes "the exploration, conservation and development of resources" in particular.

Continuing with Jean-Jacques Bertrand, another premier, who in the same spirit said that Quebec also had to have jurisdiction over underwater mineral exploration, adding that Quebec could not accept the federal government acting unilaterally to manage provincial waters and control pollution in them, or acting with the provinces on the basis of the national interest, a concept which is very often invoked.

• (1650)

Even former Liberal Premier Robert Bourassa, who was a staunch federalist in Quebec, said that "in the energy sector, neither unilateral action by the federal government, nor uncoordinated measures by provincial governments will enable us to reach the necessary goals. This can only be achieved through concerted action from both levels of government and from all governments".

In its present form, Bill C-48 merely increases the federal government's role in an exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

Former Premier René Lévesque said that the Canadian economy was not an homogeneous thing which could be successfully controlled and regulated with a single policy or program. Provincial governments are in the best position to act, since they know better than anyone their own economic context as well as

all the relevant factors such as resources, industrial structures, domestic market, social climate, etc.

More specifically, Mr. Lévesque argued that provinces have the sole right of ownership over their natural resources, adding that "as regards minerals and other resources located outside the immediate provincial territory but within the 200–mile economic zone, Quebec favours a joint jurisdiction whereby a province's legislative authority would prevail".

Mr. Lévesque also pointed out that since mineral resources and their management come under provincial jurisdiction, it is up to the provinces to find the best way to ensure the survival and growth of their mining industry.

Even in the days when federalism was perceived as a *beau risque*, and those days are certainly gone, Mr. Lévesque suggested that each province should have exclusive legislative power over its natural resources and interprovincial trade. In that latter sector, provincial laws would have superseded federal legislation so that the federal government would not have been able to use its general power to oppose a provincial law.

As you can see, the bill before us does not comply with the wishes expressed by the numerous premiers who have represented Quebec over the last few decades. That is why I support the amendment proposed by my colleague from Matapédia—Matane, because that is the only way of ensuring that this government respects the will of the provinces, especially of Quebec, as it should under the relevant provisions of Canada's Constitution.

The Government of Quebec has always been opposed to the federal government's spending power, that is, its power to use Quebecers' taxes. Canada is not doing us any favours. What it gives us comes mainly from our own pockets. What we object to in this bill is this ability to spend, to take our money and manage our economy in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction according to all the laws of Canada and to Canada's Constitution.

[*English*]

Once again the federal government is going to extremes in its willingness to centralize everything in Ottawa.

[*Translation*]

That is what Mr. Bourassa used to call domineering federalism.

[*English*]

In its willingness to centralize everything in Ottawa, in attacking the exploitation, concentration and management of natural resources, a sector which is exclusively in provincial jurisdiction, we cannot endorse a federal process to which Quebec in particular does not entirely subscribe.

For us federal intervention in natural resources is totally illegitimate if the provinces are opposed to the project. Quebec, of course, and we have said it before, has always opposed the creation of a ministry of forests, for example, rightly viewing this as an intrusion into one of its exclusive jurisdictions.

As well, Quebec is not a signatory to the national forest strategy and no Quebec minister has participated in the work of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers since the Meech failure. It is Quebec that must exercise its full jurisdiction to determine its own policies, programs and priorities in the area of natural resources.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

To convince this House of the challenge facing us, I would like to close my remarks by repeating a statement made by a former Quebec premier, Adélard Godbout—this goes way back; we did not start fighting for our causes yesterday—who expressed this somewhat prescient or prophetic opinion at the time: "Full respect for provincial rights is essential to Canada's unity and progress. Any infringement on provincial rights would inevitably weaken Confederation". That is obviously a reality which this government and its predecessors have always refused to understand.

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question. When the forest management plan for Indian lands expires in 1995, when the Canada–Quebec agreement on the development of forestry resources expires in 1996 and the plan for Eastern Quebec expires in 1996 as well, will the hon. member for Anjou—Rivières–des–Prairies recommend to his caucus and their colleagues in Quebec City that they should not renegotiate and should turn down all potential funding?

Mr. Pomerleau: Mr. Speaker, the question is very apt, and I hope the answer will be as well. As long as we are part of Canada, as long as we pay our taxes and provide 25 per cent of Canada's income, we will insist that 25 per cent of any funding that is made available should go to Quebec.

[*English*]

Most Canadians actually believe in two assumptions concerning Quebec. We see it every day in the House. Most Canadians believe that we are a bunch of troublemakers who are never happy with what we get.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pomerleau: Well, you can see it is quite true.

The second assumption is that Quebec receives much more money from Canada than it puts in. Most Canadians believe that assumption. If it is really the truth, then what is the problem? Let us go. You are going to make money and you are going to solve the problem. That is what we want. But until that time, demo-

cratically speaking, we are going to stay here and we will ask to have 25 per cent of what is necessary for us because we give 25 per cent of our revenues to Canada.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in the region I come from in metro Toronto we look at natural resources in terms of attachment because we have so few of them.

It is interesting to note that in many municipalities we have a department of urban forestry. We do have a regional conservation authority of great significance. We have citizens' participation and action in the cleaning up of our rivers. In other words, we have an attachment to water, soil and the natural resources probably because we are urban Canadians.

We do not have obsessions about jurisdiction. We think that the few trees and the few rivers we have belong to us as municipal dwellers, as provincial dwellers and as Canadians as a whole. However, we have in common with everybody across the country the preoccupation about the future of these resources. This is what my intervention will focus on this afternoon.

• (1700)

I congratulate the minister for introducing this important bill. I praise her for including a reference to sustainable development in clause 6(d) under the powers, duties and functions of the minister.

I would urge the minister to consider a better treatment of the concept of sustainable development. In this bill it comes after the minister's duty of co–ordinating, promoting and recommending certain policies with respect to natural resources and explosives. It comes after assisting in the development and promotion of Canadian scientific and technological capabilities. It comes after participating in the development and application of codes and standards. It finally appears as the fourth item. It is in clause 6(d) in having regard to the integrated management of Canada's natural resources. That is where we find sustainable development.

I urge the minister, the parliamentary secretary and the committee to take a page from Bill C–46, the bill to establish the Department of Industry which we debated yesterday. Look at clause 5 of that bill where the concept of sustainable development is outlined in the first part under the powers exercised by the minister. It says that the minister shall exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions in a manner that will promote sustainable development. It comes as the number one overall consideration.

It would make sense because in clause 2 of Bill C–48 there is a very good definition of sustainable development. Actually, it is the word for word definition given in the 1987 Brundtland report. We applaud the minister and the government for having done so. This definition has become the turning point in our way of thinking, in our way of placing the environment and the economy in a new context.

Therefore it would make sense that in a bill of such importance relating to our natural resources that sustainable development would not rank as an afterthought in the fourth clause dealing with the powers of the minister. It should be elevated to the first and stand on its own without any reference to words like integrated management, the meaning of which we really do not know. There is no definition of integrated management in clause 2 but there is a definition of sustainable development. In that sense it is hoped that a suitable amendment will be moved in committee and the matter resolved along these lines.

What does sustainable development mean? It is important that we enter into this debate with some principles on what will be guiding future ministers and officials over the next 10 or 20 years when they apply this legislation.

Reduced to its basic elements, sustainable development is a concept that stresses the importance of integrating the economy with the environment. It means that when we pursue growth, we pursue it with environmental, economic, social and even cultural concerns in mind. That is what sustainable development is intended to imply.

• (1705)

From that general concept we would want to know what are the principles which come under that general heading. How should we be guided in the management of our resources when we say: "We accept the concept of sustainable development; it is in the act. We have a general definition. Now what does it really mean? Could you tell us?"

In search of these elements the first principle would be to integrate the economy with the environment and make those goals convergent rather than in conflict. They can be convergent and mutually reinforcing rather than in conflict.

Also, it would require applying accounting practices that would indicate to the nation that when we cut down a forest or when we fish, in other words when we reduce our stock of natural resources, that shows up in our national accounts as a loss and not just as a revenue. While there is definitely a revenue when a forest is cut down, that asset is gone for the next 95 or 110 years. Therefore, we must know of the loss in our national accounting of that asset. This form of accounting is badly needed.

Another principle that could be adopted is to ensure that the stock of natural resources is not drawn down from the present acceptable and desirable levels. The stock of our natural resources should not only be maintained but also improved. Its quality should also be improved wherever possible. This is not just for us and our requirements but for future generations. It is this preoccupation with the long term, this preoccupation with the years 2050 or 3000 which makes the concept of sustainable

development so important and so politically attractive. It looks at the long term, the future.

Another principle is an operative one. In the application of this act everything within the power of the minister should be done to prevent climate change. Why? Because we know that climate change means also a change in our natural resources. It would mean a change in the location of agriculture. It would probably mean a shift toward the north of our forests. It could have a profound effect on our fisheries. It impacts on our natural resources. I cannot think of another principle as important for the Minister of Natural Resources than that of preventing climate change.

If we look at the policies of today, it is legitimate to ask ourselves: Are our energy policies sustainable? If we look at the way we spend our public funds in terms of energy, we find that for every dollar the Government of Canada spends to promote energy efficiency, it spends over $100 in support of the fossil fuel industry. This support increases pollution and supports dependence on non–renewable resources. This support has a negative impact on climate change.

If we look at the 1990 accounts, the latest for which figures are available, what do we find? We find that the value of tax deductions by the oil and gas industry in Canada amounted to some $5.8 billion. With these deductions the government lost some $1.2 billion in revenue. The current expenditures by the Government of Canada to the energy sector are close to $700 million. Of that amount only 5 per cent goes to research and development on alternative energy sources.

• (1710)

I do not need to stress the importance of research and development in alternative energy sources and the importance of changing our dependence in energy from non–renewable to renewable sources. Everybody knows that.

That means that under this act and the new minister's commitment to sustainable development it is desirable to have a profound shift in the department's budget. It should move rapidly from a budget on which the emphasis is on non–renewable to renewable sources of energy and should move more rapidly to the implementation of policies that reinforce and accelerate the movement toward more efficient use of energy.

I am not talking of a carbon tax, although we all know that one day the concept of a carbon tax will have to be tackled if we are serious about the question of climate change. However, the political moment has not yet arrived.

An hon. member: Thank god.

Mr. Caccia: Well, that may be an expression of relief for the present, but the chickens are coming home to roost sooner or later and we will have to cross that bridge at the proper time.

Moving into forestry, we can ask ourselves: Are our forest policies sustainable? This is a sector in which we must apply the concept of sustainability. There is a considerable debate in Canada on what constitutes a forest and a sustainable forestry. Is the volume of forest really the best indicator of the state of our forest resources, one can ask. Does increasing the cubic metre figures make up for loss of forest and species diversity? Is volume really the only criterion we should be examining? Or does the loss of area of old growth forest not represent an important factor if we think of future generations, if we think of biodiversity?

All of us know that one tree does not make a forest, of course. Today many Canadians and many regions of the world are undertaking alternative and sustainable forestry practices. In that respect British Columbia is a fascinating example of new ideas. All of us know there are alternatives to large cuts which destroy forests. There are much better alternatives to clear cutting. There are alternatives which would permit the protection of wildlife habitat. There are alternatives which would permit the retention of biodiversity.

Perhaps this is not the time nor the place to open the debate on clear cuts, especially when one has only 20 minutes. However, we know that our past performance with clear cuts has earned us a very bad reputation abroad.

If the purpose of the new department as it is spelled out in clause 6(f) on page 3 is to participate "in the enhancement and promotion of market access for Canada's natural resources products and technical surveys industries, both domestically and internationally" then we must pay very close attention to our forest practices. Those practices are being watched from abroad and our future export opportunities in forest products hinges on them.

• (1715)

In that respect, I would like to pay homage to the forestry code introduced last spring I believe by the Government of British Columbia. I want to express the hope that this forestry code will not only be given the necessary regulations soon but also the necessary funds to be enforced effectively because it is through measures of that kind that we can establish for Canada a good reputation abroad with respect to forestry practices.

We can also ask ourselves what is the role of the forest services of Canada. Is it one to perform only scientific research? Is it one to look for industrial opportunities only? Is it one that is also to give guidance and leadership in forest practices for the

rest of the nation? Suddenly after all these years the time has come to examine the mandate of forestry Canada and to determine whether it is still adequate in a changing world as we approach the 21st century.

Moving on to mining, we can also ask ourselves whether our mining practices are sustainable. Obviously this matter needs to be given some close attention. It seems to me that instead of having policies that encourage our production and consumption, our policies should be focused on resource reduction, the development of new materials and greater momentum to recycling so that the results will be in decreased mining activities, mining wastes, water consumption, pollution, deforestation and erosion.

In this respect, in recent years the car industry in particular has made enormous progress with new materials and in general Canadian industry has made considerable progress, although not as good as other nations, in achieving energy efficiency in the consumption of energy per unit of production. We have come a considerable distance but we still have a long way to go if we want to emulate and do as well as Japan and other OECD countries. Compared with those countries we are not doing as well.

Having attempted to set out some principles that could guide us in the management of our natural resources and in the implementation of this bill once it is proclaimed, the Department of Natural Resources has a very important role to play. It would be desirable if it were to apply principles and practices that are sustainable and that apply the concept of sustainability for the long term.

We are, after the Rio conference of 1992, coming around the corner in an effort to ensuring that we have a sustainable development that takes into account the economy and the environment. We must make sure that this agreement by the global community which took place in Rio de Janeiro two years ago is implemented and brought into the legislatures of this country.

I will conclude by again congratulating the minister for having introduced this bill. It is of paramount importance. It is good to see that the concept of sustainable development has somehow found its way into it but it must be given greater prominence; actually, it should be given primacy. Once that is done important principles of the application of that concept will need to be fleshed out so as to give direction to the department in the decades ahead.

• (1720)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before proceeding to questions and comments I would like to remind all hon. members that as mentioned this morning Private Members' Business will be delayed by 20 minutes due to minister's statements. Proceedings on Private Members' Business will therefore commence at 5.50 p.m. this evening.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the hon. member opposite, the member for Davenport. I recognize his very longstanding, very real commitment to the environment and to sustainable development. This is not a recent conversion. This is as we know a very real, longstanding and very genuine commitment to conservation.

Given the position of stature of the member opposite within his own caucus and given the gravity of the consideration of fossil fuels to that part of the country that I represent, I would like to ask the member to respond to this question specifically.

Would the member recommend an immediate tax on fossil fuels to ensure conservation and to induce consumers to shift away from fossil fuels? Because of his influence within his own caucus, if the hon. member for Davenport had his way today would we have a tax on fossil fuel to conserve energy and to induce people to switch to other fuels tomorrow?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, if the member for Davenport were on an ego trip he would certainly want to tackle this question fully and give a very comprehensive answer.

We do already have taxes on fossil fuels. Every time we buy gasoline at the pump we pay some hefty provincial and federal taxes; those taxes already exist.

If the thrust of the question of the hon. member is whether I would recommend policies related to the introduction of a carbon tax then we are talking of something completely different. A tax on gasoline or on coal or on gas as I said exists already and it varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. An additional tax would not be a carbon tax. It would be a fake carbon tax. It would be more of the same. It would be nothing new.

A carbon tax is a massive change from the present system of taxation that we have on income and labour and investment and flow of capital to a system of taxation that would be taxing consumption and mainly anything that relates to consumption of fossil fuels.

It is an enormous political somersault, if I may use that term. It would be a big step for which we are not ready and so since we are all more or less realists, and in my caucus I do not have the reputation of being a great realist but I still have my feet on the ground, to recommend a carbon tax would be asking for something for which we are not equipped politically or otherwise.

Sooner or later we will have to cross that bridge if the trend identified by scientists continues. These are not Marxist or left–wing scientists, these are meteorologists at the United Kingdom University of East Anglia, for instance, who have recently produced a map indicating that over the last 30 years

there has been a change in annual temperatures. There has been a change in average winter temperatures.

• (1725)

I would be glad to show the hon. member a map to that effect, which in essence shows that the increase in average temperatures that has taken place over the last 30 years shows a considerable warming in certain parts of the world.

This warming has led to the melting of the Arctic and Antarctic caps. This melting has produced a certain flow of cold water into the northwest Atlantic and some other oceans, which could be an explanation for the fact that certain fisheries have disappeared.

I am saying that if this trend continues and we have over the next 30 years another +1.5C as an average increase—thus amounting to +3C—we will be in for some big problems because the water levels of our coastal cities will be higher. We will have to do some basic coastal public works.

The livelihood and the survival of millions of people in certain parts of the Pacific where the islands rise only a metre or a metre and a half above sea level will be in serious danger. Scientists are speaking about the flooding of some one–quarter of Bangladesh.

We will see the movement toward the north of agriculture and of forests. In other words, we will have a completely different set of natural resources and of problems resulting from that. It may be for the next generation of politicians.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Davenport for his comments regarding sustainable development. The member talked about the important need for sustainable development, particularly in the industry of forestry.

I wonder if he would consider that one of our most important natural resources we have in this country is our resource of top soil for farming. Top soil gives us the ability to produce food but is being eroded at an alarming rate.

Since the beginning of organized agriculture on the great plains we have lost about one–half of our top soil. Yet we have government farm policies that encourage this practice to continue. Where would the hon. member rate this in his overall scheme of sustainable development?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be treated as an expert when you are not one. Coming from the great agricultural riding of Davenport, one would perhaps expect more from me. The most important natural resource we have is the human resource in this country. We all agree on that.

Whether top soil for farming should be the next one—it may be so—I do not know. I know that the Senate in 1983, particularly Senator Sparrow, produced a very interesting report on the losses in top soil. That report has been languishing since 1984. He even went so far as quantifying the yearly losses in dollars in top soil, which was a unique feat by our historical standards.

I should urge the hon. member to get a copy of Senator Sparrow's report and perhaps ask questions of the minister tomorrow.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–48 has been described by many as a housekeeping bill, to combine the federal Department of Forestry with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In my opinion Bill C–48 is far more than that. Today I want to begin by praising Bill C–48 while also raising a few concerns. First, I wish to praise the government for continuing with this integration started by the former government, both from a standpoint of tax dollars saved and new understandings included in Bill C–48. From a recent departmental briefing I see that this amalgamation is expected to save something in the range of $41 million over a four–year period starting in 1994–95 primarily through streamlining at the corporate level, including such things as putting together financial services and human resources of what formerly were two cabinet level departments.

• (1730)

The jobs of the rank and file public service generally were spared the axe although the downsizing did remove a cabinet minister and three assistant deputy ministers.

The preservation of those other jobs is perhaps due to the fact that the Canadian Forest Services—and I would like to comment on the forest services here—is already one of the most decentralized of all in the federal government with some 90 per cent of the people not in Ottawa.

Another reason for praising this legislation is the new understanding presented by Bill C–48 of what principles and methods should be used to manage the nation's natural resources. For example under "interpretation", Bill C–48 defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The bill's list of the minister's duties in clause 6, items (d), (e), and (f) are as follows:

> The minister shall:
>
> (d) have regard to the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources;
>
> (e) Seek to enhance the responsible development and use of Canada's natural resources and the competitiveness of Canada's natural resources products;

(f) participate in the enhancement and promotion of market access for Canada's natural resource products and technical surveys industries, both domestically and internationally;

Although day to day management of natural resources falls under provincial jurisdictions these directives in Bill C–48 should lay to rest many longstanding public concerns that the federal government might either encourage the so–called rape and destruction of our natural resources on the one hand or collapse before extremists advocating only recreational and tourist use of natural resources on the other hand.

The legislation makes clear that the minister must have regard for integrated management and sustainable development. That is good for everybody.

Another reason to praise Bill C–48 is that it will help counteract an unfortunate tendency by some people to speak of our natural resource industries as though they were so–called sunset industries, as though their time had somehow come and passed. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The role of science and technology in the Department of Natural Resources is widespread with the scientific establishments at numerous sites from Victoria to Resolute Bay to St. John's as part of a science and technology budget at Natural Resources Canada in the order of $432 million projected for 1994–95.

Among the minister's duties are that the minister shall, and I quote clause 6, sections (b), (c) and (i):

(b) assist in the development and promotion of Canadian scientific and technological capabilities;

(c) participate in the development and application of codes and standards for technical surveys and natural resources products and for the management and use of natural resources;

(i) gather, compile, analyse, co–ordinate and disseminate information respecting scientific, technological, economic, industrial, managerial, marketing and related activities and developments affecting Canada's natural resources.

Another indicator that our natural resource industries are continually elevating in addition to the specific growth in science and technology is the modernization of their insights, their principles and the managerial techniques as the world moves toward sustainable development, in part pushed by the new wave of green consumerism.

As a prime example of such integrated resource management the federal government has been a major participant in the Whitehorse mining initiative whose report presented September 13 included a set of more than 150 recommendations in light of 16 principles and 70 goals voiced by more than 140 individual participants in the process.

For all these reasons I applaud the government for uniting these departments into one through Bill C–48. However, I also want to voice some concerns.

• (1735)

Bill C–48 helps to spell out the federal role and relationship with provincial jurisdiction over forestry and mining. Despite much talk about the so–called new economy, the $40 billion forest industry remains number one in Canada, providing some 777,000 jobs or one in every 16 in 1993 with approximately 350 Canadian communities dependent on forestry for their financial existence. It also adds a $19 billion contribution to Canada's net balance of trade, by far the largest of any industry in Canada.

Although the mining industry has been hard hit in recent years, there are some 150 communities across Canada that depend on mining and mining related activities. This contributes 4 per cent of our GDP, 17 per cent of our exports and a net $11 billion surplus to our balance of payments as well as being the source of 60 per cent of rail freight and 55 per cent of port traffic. Directly and indirectly, mining provides some 300,000 jobs.

Clearly, forestry and mining are two of the most essential contributors to our national economic health. Therefore I would have preferred to see clause 7 of Bill C–48 say that the minister shall co–operate with the provinces and municipalities rather than may as it now does. These economic sectors are simply too important for us to tolerate government duplications or squabbles regarding jurisdiction. As a Reformer I am especially concerned that there should be as little overlap as possible between the levels of government and that no activity be undertaken by the federal level if the provincial level can handle it.

I also have questions on clause 35, subclauses 7 and 8, which detail other things the minister may do.

Subclause 7 says that the Minister of Natural Resources may make grants and contributions and, with the approval of the Governor in Council, provide other forms of financial assistance. I am told that Parliament can exert control here by simply refusing to appropriate money to the minister for such purposes. But once the funds are voted, the minister does not even need to consult with cabinet before making grants and contributions.

I believe Bill C–48 should have included some procedure to build into the granting process public accountability and transparency as well as requiring at the minimum consultation with cabinet.

Subclause 8 provides that:

(1) The Minister may co–ordinate logistics support and provide related assistance for the purposes of advancing scientific knowledge of the Arctic region and contributing to the exercise of Canada's sovereignty in that region and its adjacent waters.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the Minister may

(a) make grants and contributions; and

(b) make recoverable expenditures on behalf of any other department, branch or agency of the Government of Canada or a province or any university, organization or person in respect of its share of the cost of any logistics support or related assistance.

I have the same concerns as mentioned above about the authority for grants but I would would like to ask some additional questions.

First, is this Bill C–48 the appropriate place to authorize a minister regarding contributing to the existence of Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic? If there is doubt regarding Canada's sovereignty in that region, it seems that a so–called housekeeping bill on natural resources is at best an inappropriate place to bolster such authority.

Second, in view of the tradition that natural resources north of 60 degrees latitude fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, why is the Minister of Natural Resources given this twin function of asserting Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and authorization to recover costs from groups performing exploration or research, maybe filming a movie or leading a tour group?

I look forward to hearing the government's explanations for what look to me to be shortcomings in a bill which otherwise deserves the praise and support of the House.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the hon. member's intervention, I was wondering about his thoughts on the future of Canada's forests since he comes from an area where the forests are so well managed and where an experiment was carried out by the Vernon provincial district in the marketing of lumber.

• (1740)

As you know, Mr. Speaker, until 1985 the forestry department was part of the Environment Canada department. It was put in that department because it was felt that forestry seen from an environmental perspective is managed with concerns also for wildlife, water and biodiversity considerations. That holistic approach was valid then as it is today.

Would the hon. member favour a move whereby the department of forests would again become part of Environment Canada?

Mr. Stinson: No.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take what little time is left to congratulate the minister on this bill. I hardly think that it is merely housekeeping. By defining sustainable development in accordance with the Brundtland report and by putting it into the part of the bill under the clause which says "the minister shall", it has given this principle of sustainable development some validity. The other aspects of the minister's duties should be considered in light of that statement. I want to refer to one or two of them. Subclause 6(c) states:

The minister shall participate in the development and application of codes and standards for technical surveys and natural resources products and for the management and use of natural resources.

Subclause (d) as we have noted and as my hon. colleague from Davenport pointed out so well states:

Having regard to the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources.

Subclause (c) says:

To seek to enhance the responsible development and use of Canada's natural resources.

It seems to me that it makes it pretty clear that the minister has a twofold purpose and that they must be integrated. Further in the bill we get to subclause 3(2):

The minister may enter into agreements with the government of any province or with any person for forest protection and management or forest utilization and for the conduct of research related thereunto or for forestry publicity or education.

It seems to me that this allows the minister considerable leeway in assisting all Canadians who desire to preserve or enhance or continue our natural resources to be accommodated.

Personally, 24 years ago I entered into an agreement with the province of Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources, under its Woodland Improvement Act and established forest on my property. It was a joint venture. I must say it is a pleasure to walk through those trees now, 24 years later.

The minister is also empowered to collect and publish statistics for the mineral explorations development and production of the mining and metallurgical industries of Canada. The words 'exploration and development' have been added. I think that suggests that the minister has some responsibility for not only maintaining that industry but for maintaining it in a sustainable way.

• (1745)

With respect to some of the comments of my hon. colleague opposite, I find in clause 6 that the minister must co–operate with persons conducting applied and basic research programs and investigations. I have had concerns for some time that much of our research money tends to go to applied research and not basic research. We need to pay some attention to basic research.

My colleague from Davenport talked about biodiversity, old growth forests and some of these rather intangible and not fully understood benefits of the conservation of our natural resources. I notice that again in clause 6(b) the minister can keep under review and consider recommendations with respect to transportation, distribution, sale, purchase, exchange and with respect to matters relating to the sources of these resources within

or outside Canada, which hopefully would mean that disasters such as the *Exxon Valdez* might be prevented in future.

In clause 7(1) the minister may formulate plans for the conservation, development and use of resources specified in that section and for related research. The word related has been added and it adds a world of meaning to that clause.

I mentioned the woodland improvement act. Our forest resources need protection, development and sustainable development if we are to continue to be a world leader in these things.

With respect to a carbon tax I have a few comments. If we adopt green accounting in the resource industries, it might serve the same purpose. It might put in the hands of the captains of industry the kind of techniques, the kind of information that they need in order to make the kind of decisions that will continue to sustain us in the fields of forestry and mining.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Oxford on his speech and the points that he raised in his rather brief address. I realize he was trying to give other hon. members an opportunity to speak.

I would like to ask him a couple of questions. First, what is his opinion of the inclusion of a definition of sustainable development in the legislation? Second, maybe he could confirm the rather strong position taken by the Prime Minister with respect to a carbon tax.

Mr. Finlay: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the definition of sustainable development is in the bill. It would be very shortsighted at this juncture not to include that definition in the bill.

If we do not move wholeheartedly in that direction, and I mean at this level of government as well as provincially and municipally, we are going to be in a bad way.

I must apologize, I did not catch the hon. member's second question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.50 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1750)

[*English*]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North) moved that Bill C–229, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (registration of political parties), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first I wish to thank the House for allowing me this opportunity to speak on Bill C–229. I also want to say that I am a bit disappointed that this bill will only have one hour of debate and will not have a chance to be voted on. However, that is how the system works and that is what we have to live with.

Before I speak about the changes I want to apply with Bill C–229, I want to briefly describe to members of the House the present situation existing in the Canada Elections Act.

The law reads that if 50 candidates are nominated in any region of the country they qualify as a national party. That is a very narrow definition of the law. It has to increase in order for democracy to work.

The changes I would like applied to the act are the following: first, to be a national party, that party should be running candidates in seven provinces at least. Second, representation should be from 50 per cent of the population of Canada. Third, 50 per cent of the candidates should be from each of the seven provinces in order to qualify as a national party.

In last October's election we had 15 political parties running for office. At the top of the list were the two national parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals who had 295 candidates nominated, next were the NDP, followed by the Natural Law Party of Canada which nominated 231 candidates, and the lowest party was the Marxist–Leninist Party which nominated 51 candidates.

Some people will argue that Bill C–229 restricts Canadians from practising their right to become a candidate or to form a political party. This is far from being true. In effect, what this bill does is it allows people in all regions of the country to participate in the change. For example let us take one of the principles of this bill. It states that the party must run 50 per cent of its candidates in seven provinces in accordance to population.

Today in the House we have an opposition party that ran 75 candidates in only one province. Out of the 75 candidates it won 54 seats and became the official opposition. By tradition the official opposition is the government in waiting and the leader of the official opposition is to be the Prime Minister in waiting. Can you imagine this country and this House which has a political party whose sole purpose is to break up this country and a Prime Minister in waiting whose sole purpose is to implement that break–up? That is not democracy.

I live in Ontario. I am the member for Don Valley North. People in Don Valley North never had a chance to vote on who the opposition is in this House. That is not democracy. We in Ontario have the right to decide, as much as the people in Quebec have the right to decide, who will be the opposition party. People in B.C. have the same right as do the people on the

east coast. The way it is, this right is denied to the citizens of this land.

Two opposition parties is the way it is today. One of them is headquartered in Quebec City claiming to be a national party. The other party is headquartered in Calgary again claiming to be a national party. If a national party is to be in this House of Commons, their headquarters should be located in the nation's capital in order to facilitate their activities.

Seventy–five per cent of Canadians did not participate in choosing this opposition party. It is only fair that we would also be asked. Twenty–five per cent of the population in this case should not decide the opposition party of this House.

• (1755)

When I was campaigning in the 1993 election campaign I saw a big sign, 4 by 8, in front of the Reform Party candidate's headquarters which said: "We will run the country the way we run the campaign". The Reform Party ran the campaign without Quebec.

I am very happy that Reformers are thinking of expanding into Quebec. This is very good and I commend them for it. I also hope that with the changes I am proposing in this bill the Bloc Quebecois will have a chance to run candidates in other provinces, in other regions, next time around. I am sure they are going to be here and I hope to be here so we can have constructive discussion about the future of our country.

I return to the point I made about the 15 political parties that ran in this election. One of the benefits of being a national party is that you get reimbursement from the federal government.

For example the Conservative Party spent $10,398,101. They received $2,339,752.72. The Canada Party had the lowest expenditures in the last election campaign and had 56 candidates. They spent $172.72.

Surely today's opposition party spent more than $172. Surely it can spend more than that in order to have a proper opposition, a good opposition in this House, so the system can work and function.

Without implementing these changes I think we will lose the unity of this country.

I want to conclude my remarks for the time being, but pick up again toward the end. If we intend to have strong central government we have to change the law in order to achieve it. When we change the law we can achieve a united, indivisible Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C–229, which would amend the Canada Elections Act with respect to registration of political parties.

This bill, which would oblige a political party to put forward candidates in a minimum of seven Canadian provinces that have, in the aggregate, 50 per cent of the population of all the provinces, is, in our opinion, undemocratic and contrary to one of the provisions of the Parliament of Canada Act.

The least that can be said about Bill C–229, introduced by the hon. member for Don Valley North, is that it targets the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party, among others. In our opinion, it is an insult to democracy, as it denies Quebec, a distinct society, the right to its own representatives in the House of Commons. It must be pointed out that the people of Quebec are true believers in democracy.

The hon. member for Don Valley North, in introducing such a bill, shows a very poor knowledge indeed of the Canadian political scene and of its diversity. The social, economic and cultural make–up of Toronto, where the member hails from, does not apply to every part of Canada, to Quebec in particular. It must be pointed out that Quebecers do not, any longer, feel comfortable with the old national parties, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, whose policies always sought to champion the interests and pursue the objectives of a mythical Canadian nation, with a total disregard for regional specificity.

Quebec chose to be represented by the Bloc Quebecois, and it is certainly not a member from the Toronto region who is going to stand in the way of the political representation of one fifth of the citizens and taxpayers of Canada in the House of Commons.

• (1800)

This bill is completely inconsistent and does not respect Canadian political tradition. Since the passage of the new Canada Elections Act in 1970, there has been provision for the registration of political parties. However, the multi–party system appeared in Canada well before then. As early as 1920, members of other parties began to be elected to the House of Commons in sufficient numbers and with sufficient support and credibility to influence the system.

I would remind the members that, in the 1930s, Social Credit and the Commonwealth Co–operative Federation represented very special interests, with demands and hopes that were not at all national in scope. They were movements formed by Western producers to protest the excessive taxation authority of a highly centralizing federal government. None of them were represented in seven provinces or by a total of 50 per cent of the population of Canada. This is an important point to remember.

In the early 1960s, these movements, which evolved into political parties, became important elements in Canadian party politics, hence the inconsistency and irrelevance of Bill C–229.

In the past, a number of political parties that sprang up on the Canadian scene were limited to a single province. Why then, today, is there a wish to take extreme action and amend the Canada Elections Act, except to stop the democratically elected Bloc Quebecois from demonstrating its repudiation of the old national parties and thus seeking to attain political autonomy. Nothing in the existing elections act mentions the need for a political party to nominate candidates in more than seven provinces to qualify for registration.

The act mentions only that in order to be registered and thus officially recognized nationally, a party must nominate more than 50 candidates, whether in one province or in the whole country, for the purposes of consistency, credibility and visibility.

This bill is a flagrant contradiction of the Parliament of Canada Act regarding the official status of political parties in the House. May I remind the member for Don Valley North that there is a rule whereby a political party must have at least 12 members elected to be recognized in this House.

Therefore, I ask the hon. member: How is it possible to recognize, in the House of Commons, a party which might not even be registered at the next general election? Even if the Elections Act requires that a given party nominate at least fifty candidates to be registered—which increases the probability of it being present in at least seven provinces—we consider that Bill C–229 is in net violation of the Parliament of Canada Act and the Canada Elections Act. In 1990, although the House had by then 295 seats, 12 members were still enough to be recognized as a party. The New Democratic Party's current status is a case in point: it wanted to be recognized, but it failed.

Let us be clear, the inclusion of such provisions in the Elections Act would mean the end of the multiparty system within the Canadian electoral system and the emergence of a "one–way" political system in which two parties, largely dominated by two parliamentary executives, would alternate serving the same interests and the same vision of a highly centralized Canada.

I should add that this bill lends credence to the argument that Canadian diversity is just a myth and that the distinctiveness of the Quebec society is gradually eroding. This is what we read recently in the *Globe and Mail*. That editorial said that Canadian society was one of the most homogeneous in the world. This is not what was reflected in the results of the last general election. In fact, the real myth is the notion of Canadian nationhood; to believe that one day there will be only one culture from coast to coast is ludicrous.

• (1805)

We could say that somehow the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois are the political arm of Quebec's culture, fighting to protect its originality and distinctiveness.

We believe that Bill C–229 introduced by the member for Don Valley North is a sham since it does not take into account cultural diversity or the legitimate position of the party forming the Official Opposition. I will remind you, Mr. Speaker, that as the opposition we have behaved in a responsible manner and according to parliamentary rules. We have dealt with issues of interest to Quebec and Canada and used question period with efficiency and respect, no matter the issue. We have proven to be efficient, transparent and respectful of fundamental democratic principles.

Therefore, we strongly denounce the bill introduced by the member for Don Valley North as being undemocratic in its very intent.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, for those who are watching the parliamentary channel instead of *Wheel of Fortune* or *Jeopardy*, the purpose of this private member's bill is to change the Canada Elections Act so that a party can only be a legitimate registered party here in Canada if it is running candidates in at least seven of the ten provinces, one of which has to be either Quebec or Ontario.

Of course, the purpose of this bill is very clear, and that is to knock the Bloc. I suppose there would be a lot of Canadians who would have a sneaking sympathy for the intent behind this bill. A lot of Canadians I have talked to, a lot of Canadians all of us have talked to are pretty ticked that we have in this House, making laws for our country, deciding or helping to decide how our money is spent, shaping the future of our country, a group of people essentially intent on the destruction of Canada as we know it.

A lot of people are asking is there not a way we can stop this. They are particularly exercised, particularly angry, when a group of people in this House who call themselves Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition have interests in mind, have an agenda in mind, which again is adverse to the interests of the national unity of our country.

A lot of Canadians would sympathize with the member for Don Valley West and the intent behind this bill to try to stop regional parties from forming and coming forward.

Sometimes the cure is a lot worse than the disease. Although the disease is bad, this cure is a whole lot worse. It is kind of like those ancient dragons. You cut off one head but two worse heads, more fierce with larger teeth, spring up in its place.

What this bill really does is abrogate a lot of democratic rights in this country. Canadians should be aware that the reason a party has to run 50 candidates somewhere in order to be registered as a party is really designed to make sure that taxpayers' money is not totally and frivolously spent. What happens, as most of us know, is if a candidate is successful half the candidate's election expenses are returned to them courtesy of the taxpayer. A lot of people think that is an abuse of taxpayers' money but it would be a lot more of an abuse if anybody could run and expect to have half their expenses paid by the rest of society.

The law was designed so that there had to be at least some threshold of support for a group or a party before they could expect to receive some funding from the taxpayer. That is the real reason why the present act says that a party must run 50 candidates somewhere in Canada in order to qualify as a registered party.

The law was not designed to limit the right to association of Canadians and limit the right of Canadians to get together for purposes of political activity.

• (1810)

I would suggest that it is very important that we not limit the right of Canadians, not make it more difficult, not put onerous requirements on Canadians who want to participate in the political process. This is a subject that obviously is very near and dear to my heart because for the last seven years of my young life I have spent building a new political dynamic to inject into a hidebound and reactionary system. We need change sometimes in democratic society and democratic politics.

That change usually starts small. It starts with a vision and support for it grows. It does not sort of arrive full blown from the soil. I am here to tell members that because I have participated in that kind of exercise.

If we insist that a political movement, a political dynamic, only has legitimacy if somehow it has instant support so that it can have registered candidates right across the country, and lots of them, it simply is going to limit the change, the newness and the renewal that we allow in our political system which is very unacceptable in a democracy.

The hon. member for Don Valley North when he spoke made two statements that I take very grave exception to. First of all, as a westerner I am absolutely outraged that he would say that you are only legitimate as a political party if you have an office in Ontario.

Somehow the arrogance of certain assumptions just overwhelms me. To say that only something rooted in Ontario has legitimacy in our political system is outrageous. I would suggest to the hon. member that the political renewal that has its base in western Canada is every bit as useful to this country, is every bit as positive a dynamic in our political system as a political party that has its roots in Newfoundland, Montreal or in Yukon. It does not matter where your head office is, it matters where your head is and that is the important thing.

I also take exception to the continual distortion by members opposite of the Reform Party and its policies. Here is another example that we just heard a few minutes ago. The member for Don Valley West said that the Reform Party signs during the election campaign said this we will run the country the way we run our campaign. Then he went on to say since we ran our campaign without candidates in Quebec, obviously we would run the country without Quebec.

What an abuse, what a distortion of what Reform really said. For the record, the Reform signs said, and I hope everyone is listening, that we will run the country the way we run our campaign, debt free. I challenge the member to indicate whether his party ran the campaign debt free. We sure know it is not running the country debt free. It is running this country into debt $110 million every single day. To it, success is placing a debt on our shoulders of another at least $100 billion in its term of office.

I would like to have less distortion and more facts from the other side about what the Reform Party has to offer this country.

The real problem in this country is not political parties and who they represent and where they have their head offices. The real problem in this country is that the status quo, the old system, the old thinking, the old way of approaching issues does not work for us any more. We need renewal. We need change.

What we see in this House with a party which represents only one province and whose agenda is to break up this wonderful country is not something that should be corrected by suppressing legitimate political concern and discontent, but by addressing the root of the problem that caused this situation to begin with. The root of the problem is that status quo federalism does not work. We are faced with an opportunity staring us in the face to fix this system, to acknowledge that changes are needed for the benefit of all Canadians. It is not just the province represented by the members beside us that are discontent with the way this country has been run. There are people in all parts of the country who are saying we need change.

• (1815)

We need to serve notice that there has to be an honest debate about renewing our federation so that it works better for all of us. We do not need bills to suppress legitimate political expressions and democratic involvement. We need a government that will put ideas on the table to renew the way we operate as a country.

We need solutions and we need a resolution of this problem, not to hide it, not to suppress it, not to make it illegal, not to push it under the rug but to say we need change and the kind of changes we need.

We need changes where governments live within their means. Not only the province represented by the Bloc but all of us are staggering under the load of a huge mortgage on our country which is getting bigger every single day. We need a federal system that lives within its means, where we pay for our programs today and we do not offload our spending on to our children. That is what is needed in this country.

We need a country where citizens are treated equally regardless of race, language and culture or where they have their head office. We need a system where all Canadians are treated equally. It is very important that we get those kinds of systemic changes.

I challenge the hon. member not to bring forward bills that suppress legitimate democratic participation but really have solid proposals to get to the root of the problem, fix the system, renew our federation and let us go on together as a country.

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I support my colleague from Don Valley North wholeheartedly in this most welcome legislative initiative, Bill C–229, a bill to amend the Canada Elections Act.

We did not have a mechanism like C–229 in place last October. Now we have a situation in this House where the Official Opposition party is dedicated to a proposition which can tear Canada asunder and whose agenda can monopolize this Parliament and eventually paralyse this government.

The Bloc members have been given all of the privileges and power that go with such a status. This party could constitutionally be called upon to govern the entire nation. How many nation states no matter how democratic or tolerant would accept as their official opposition, even as a legitimate national party, a party whose sole purpose is to rupture the country?

The answer of course is very few unless they have a collective national death wish. Surely it is not too much to ask that any party that aspires to represent Canadian citizens in this federal Parliament should reach out beyond the narrow parochial confines of its regional power base or of its own special interests.

My voters in Nova Scotia elected me to represent the interests of Cumberland—Colchester here in Canada's Parliament. They also expect me to bring a perspective to this job that extends far beyond the boundaries of my riding. After all, the voters of Cumberland—Colchester realize that my salary is paid by all taxpaying Canadians and that as their member of Parliament in this national capital I also have to serve the larger national interests.

In 1982 the former member of Parliament for Hull, Mr. Gaston Isabelle, with incredible foresight introduced Bill C–661 that would have required any party to receive registration in Canada to nominate at least 50 candidates in a majority of the provinces.

The purpose of this bill was to, as he put it and I quote: "remove any trace of ambiguity as to the national character of political parties desiring to operate at the federal level".

• (1820)

At second reading in March 1983 Mr. Isabelle noted:

> It is easy to understand why a political party, if it wants to operate at the national level, should be obliged to field candidates in a majority of the provinces, that is in five out of six. These are candidates who will be working on the federal scene—Without this obligation, regional or provincial groups, which I prefer to qualify as local, will use Parliament as a platform for their own special interests.

Unfortunately Mr. Isabelle's bill disappeared and died inside a parliamentary committee and 11 years later what he prophesied has come to pass.

We have a chance once again to redress the great deficiencies he saw over a decade ago in the Canada Elections Act. The Bloc Quebecois got its present pre–eminence in this Parliament simply because it received 1.8 million votes that were distributed across the electoral landscape of Quebec only.

It won 54 seats in this Parliament, 54 seats of Quebec's 75, and yet the Bloc did not win the majority of the Quebec vote. There were over 3.7 million valid ballots cast in Quebec and the Bloc won less than 50 per cent, 49.3 per cent in one province only, yet they form the official opposition to the Government of Canada.

Compared to other parties in this House, the Reform Party received over 2.5 million ballots from Canadians in 9 out of 10 provinces and yet won two fewer seats. The Progressive Conservatives received more than 2.1 million votes across Canada yet won only two seats. The Bloc Quebecois based solely on the number of seats won has formed the official opposition of the Government of Canada.

It seems to me that the Bloc's claim to pride of place in the opposition benches based solely on the first past the post outcome is far from secure in terms of either ideal democratic practice or equitable electoral outcome.

No, I am not preaching for some kind of proportional representation to elect our MPs. Given our expansive geography and scattered population it is just not practical. Moreover it has been tried in various forms in various places in Canada in the past and each time has failed as too exotic a graft on the trunk of the Canadian body politic.

My daughter who is a master of political science tells me I must stress the importance of natural democracy rights. That is that we do have rights of the individual to mobilize parties in this country and to participate in government.

However, we must recognize the fact that Canada is very regionally diverse. Extensive country breeds regional political

parties. At the last election we had 14 or 15 registered political parties and our tendency is to divide and distinguish ourselves regionally.

This is not a trend we should encourage in a national Parliament. Yet we have as our official opposition the regional party the Bloc Quebecois whose sole purpose in being here is to take its one province out of this Canadian family.

I believe we should also have the humility as parliamentarians to recognize that many of us as individuals got to this place not as a result of any sweeping mandate from the voters but, given the multi–party nature of Canadian politics, through the grace of plurality.

During the Liberal sweep of Canada I got 42 per cent of the votes cast in Cumberland—Colchester and my next closest opponent took 36 per cent. In the Reform heartland a member from Calgary had a 44 per cent plurality. The list goes on across the country.

There are many of us in the same situation. We are not only a regionally diverse nation, our electorate is also very diverse. We mislead ourselves and do them and this country a disservice when we see our constituents as distinct little tribes.

There is no such thing as a homogenized Nova Scotian, nor is one in Quebec where one size fits all. I take great pride and satisfaction in knowing that there is unity, there is oneness in the diversity that identifies Canadians.

We should recognize our duty as parliamentarians to provide a focal point for Canada here in this House. We can best do that by ensuring those who enjoy this House's privileges do so as members of registered parties who reflect the entire Canadian spectrum and not narrow regional interests.

• (1825)

This bill in no way impedes the right of any member of any party to sit in this House now or in the future. What it does ensure, however, is that if they want to sit in this House as a member of a registered party enjoying the benefits that flow from registration their party must nominate candidates in at least seven provinces representing an aggregate of 50 per cent of the population.

That is not an onerous requirement for any party that aspires to run this country. As an Atlantic Canadian, I have a vested interest in regional special interests. However, I feel that this country and Atlantic Canada benefit from a strong national government.

We are best served by a strong national Parliament and this bill is intended to live up to the diversity and the multiculturalism of Canada. It is intended to represent the national character of Canada.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, the intended purpose of this bill is to stop single interest parties from being established.

The manner in which it is written could also stop multiple interest regional parties from forming. There is a realistic purpose in establishing a restriction on financial assistance in the form of a rebate or a portion of the election expenses.

However, this restriction now exists by way of a requirement to field at least 50 candidates in order to qualify for that election expense rebate. On one hand, it is understandable to want to prevent the emergence of political parties that advance the interests of a single province. This bill, however, is not a very democratic way to achieve that goal.

Many people have suggested that democracy really only exists for about one minute every four years when one enters the polling booth. That is not good enough. This country clearly does have different regions and from time to time problems in those regions give birth to new political movements.

Sometimes those regional parties disappear early in their existence, such as the Progressive Party. At other times, a party such as the Reform Party of Canada which saw its start in a region grows to become a contender to form the next Government of Canada.

I would point out to members that this can also work in reverse as we saw in the last election when the Conservative Party went from being the government to a non–party status in a single election.

Forcing political bodies to run in areas where they have no interest is more likely to create regional alienation than it is to present it. A far better solution would be to create a more responsive political system that would tend to address these regional problems before they could spawn a new local interest party.

Consider the problem created by a single issue like fiscal responsibility. The have provinces are having their financial resources stripped from them to finance irresponsible government spending while the have not provinces are getting less from the concept of wealth sharing because of that same lack of federal financial responsibility.

In this case, provinces on either side of the equation could spawn a regional party when the real solution should be found in a new sense of financial responsibility on the part of the government.

An issue could be much smaller, like the firearms legislation. Ill conceived legislation such as that currently proposed by the justice minister could conceivably result in the emergence of a group from a particular area wishing to ensure that we focus on control of criminals instead of persecution of law–abiding citizens.

A combination of issues could cause problems that might cause non–federalists in a particular party or province to form a party, such as what happened in Quebec.

My discussions with the Bloc Quebecois suggested that its biggest issues are the financial ruin of this country and its desire not to go down with the ship and the need for a province, the Bloc's, to have more say over policies and issues that affect it in a different way than it does other provinces.

Had the federal government addressed these genuine concerns which affect all provinces and the people in them, the Bloc may never have emerged. As members can see, it is not hard to create an environment in which the emergence of a single interest or regional party can happen.

There is another aspect to this bill that must also be examined. If passed, this bill would tend to ensure that no new parties ever got started again.

• (1830)

Given that the emergence of the Reform Party wiped out one old line party of the past and threatens to continue the existence of the one remaining party of the past, it is not too difficult to see the real reason for this bill. That is neither fair nor democratic. At any time if the party of the day loses touch with the people it is supposed to be serving, the capability of the system to give birth to a new political movement to replace outdated ones must not be suppressed.

There is yet another flaw in the drafting of this bill. The requirements for registration of a party include the number of provinces in which the party must nominate candidates, seven, and the need for those provinces to comprise at least 50 per cent of the Canadian population. It would be possible for a party to run in Ontario and east, including one of the territories, without any representation in any of the four western provinces. If that did not create regional alienation I do not know what would.

The hon. member from the government side of the House would be better to withdraw this bill. He should concentrate instead on getting his government to get on with addressing the real reasons for regional alienation and general dissatisfaction with the way the old line parties of the past have run this country into the ground.

The governments should deal with the pressing issues of runaway spending, out of touch immigration policies, an out of control criminal justice system, and social programs that are facing financial ruin. If it does not know how to do this, we do, and you know who we are. We are the party that started off as a regional party and grew to our current national status because the other regions were fed up with the old line parties just as the west was.

If the real needs and desires of the people of Canada were met there would be no reason for this bill to be discussed.

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay special tribute to my colleague from Don Valley North. I commend him in this House where we have members opposite with simplistic answers to some very difficult questions.

I hear the proposals they put forward, that there is no vision. The people of Canada spoke in the last election and they elected 175 Liberals. They asked us on behalf of all of Canada to come forth with a vision.

This private member's bill is there specifically to deal with the problem that has arisen in this House. Never in the history of Canada have we ever had the arrangement where the Leader of the Opposition did not want to be Prime Minister of this country.

We are reviewing this bill today, a bill that puts forth a challenge to our democratic process. However it does not challenge the definition of what constitutes a party in a federal election and the obligation that party carries to all Canadians.

Members opposite may say to be careful of regionalism. I say that perhaps we should challenge the definition of a party in a federal election. After all the taxpayers carry a heavy burden for the election and the benefits the official parties are allowed.

Presently the system allocates a spending level for parties which directly relates to the number of candidates in the field in any given election. If that party spends more than 10 per cent of its spending limit it is entitled to 22 per cent return.

Should the taxpayers pay for parties which either fail or refuse to represent themselves on a national scale? How can we ask the entire country to support a party that has no desire to represent the views of Canadians from coast to coast? Our Parliament assembled here in the House today strives to achieve the best for all Canadians, or at least that is how it is supposed to work.

It leads us to ask the question: What is an effective Parliament? Does an effective Parliament have an opposition that fails to effectively scrutinize the government's actions in the interests of the majority of Canadians? I would say no, no indeed. There is an important role to be played by the opposition to any government. The government needs to be asked tough questions and be made to answer them.

• (1835)

However what happens when the questions being asked are continually only for the benefit of one interest group and not in the interests of all Canadians? In that scenario I do not think the Canadian people get a fair bang for their buck.

In this proposed amendment a party or an individual can certainly enter into the political process, which was mentioned a minute ago as not being the case. The fact is that they can, but they must be obliged to offer up their ideas to a majority of Canadians if they wish to be supported by the taxpayers' money as well as receive all the benefits of the House of Commons.

This bill proposes that if a group applies for party status in an election and cannot fulfil the requirements as stipulated under the amendment, then that said group cannot enter into the House of Commons as an official party and subsequently will not receive the rights and privileges normally ascribed to official parties. That does not preclude the fact that parties can begin.

In summary, we have to ask: Can regional parties be permitted to dominate a national Parliament? Can our country remain united if the presence of single issue parties grows in size and consequently further hinders the chance for effective consensus? Finally, can the government continue to afford the money it provides through political taxation deductions to those parties which fail to provide a national platform?

I am glad to have had the opportunity to speak in favour of this bill. I believe these are changes that will benefit our national process and better the value of government to the people of Canada.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I am rather amazed at some of the commentary I have heard today and the great naivety of some of the members opposite when they talk about starting off with a full–blown political party that can go out and do battle from sea yea unto shining sea.

I worked for seven years trying to build a party. We started with a few hundred members and pulled it up to 120,000. If we had the type of legislation that is proposed in this bill, the Reform Party would not exist. It is just absolutely impossible. It is not physically within the realm of possibility to do this.

I am also a little surprised at the rather tenuous grip on Canadian history which is held by members opposite. All of the parties in this country, save the two old parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, grew out of small beginnings, usually because people felt disenfranchised and angry in small areas of the country.

I could cite first the Progressive Party, which was at one time by the way the official opposition here and was founded under those principles. There are also the CCF, Social Credit and of course Reform. None of this could ever possibly have happened if this bill had been in place 40, 50, 60 years ago, depending on the particular political movement we are looking at. It is absolutely out of the question.

Finally, I am sorry that the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain has left because I did want to comment specifically—

• (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I want to remind colleagues of the practice of not mentioning the absence of members. Each one of us recognizes the demands on our time, of course, whether here on duty or from interest.

Given all the other demands on our time, we do not reflect or make mention of the absence of members. I want to make sure we are all cognizant of that.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I assure you there was no pejorative intent. It is just that I wanted to speak to my opponent, if you will.

One of the justifications for this bill, if I understand correctly, is that taxpayers' money is handed out to officially recognized political parties and candidates of officially recognized political parties.

To me, the solution is quite obvious and quite simple. We do not kill the democratic process. We do not do away with the parties. We do away with the grants. We do not have to use federal money to support politicians. Let each support his own. Let 10,000 flowers bloom, if you will, but if a political party does not have the stature to get people, to give them money to pay for their election expenses, then it does not deserve to exist.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Not seeing other members wishing to speak there has been an indication from the mover of this private member's bill that he wishes to speak. I recognize him to close off debate.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to respond to some of the questions and points put forward by the opposition members.

First of all, the member from the Bloc Quebecois says the bill is not democratic. I do not understand what his definition of democracy means. If he means democracy is decided by 25 per cent of the population, certainly he is right. Democracy for me means the majority of the population.

He also accuses this bill of being Draconian. I wonder which is more Draconian, the bill itself or the intention of the opposition party here today to separate Quebec from Canada. The answer is very simple. All you have to do is walk around the country and find out how Canadians feel.

My colleague from the Reform Party said that the bill restricts individuals from running for any political office. That is not true. You can run for a political party or a political office, whatever you want. Nobody can take that away from you. That is in the charter. What I am saying in this bill is you cannot be recognized as an official party during the campaign.

I never said the nation's capital must be in Ontario. I said this nation has one capital. That capital happens to be Ottawa. Ottawa happens to be in Ontario. So I invite the federal parties to join us and other parties by bringing their headquarters to Ottawa.

Recently there was a property for sale. The NDP was selling its national headquarters. I hope one of the parties will take advantage of that and purchase the property so it could be here.

I have one more point. If anybody is worried about our representation to this House, we won election in October 1993 by 41 or 42 per cent. Today we are 60 per cent. Obviously we are doing something right. People in the west, people in the east and in central Canada approve of our position. We are very happy for it. We thank them and will continue to provide the best government we have ever had in the last 127 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We have closed debate on this private members' bill. If there should be any doubt or questions in your mind, we followed Standing Order 44(2) and (3) giving the final word or the final reply to the mover of the motion. Consequently the order is dropped from the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Bernard St–Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, on January 14, I denounced the fact that more than 300 employees in my riding were locked out by a mining company which was deliberately using overlapping federal and provincial jurisdiction in Quebec on the issue of anti–scab legislation.

Quebec law forbids the use of strikebreakers, but federal law does not cover this very important aspect of collective bargaining and allows companies to hire strikebreakers to do the work done by those with whom the companies do not want to negotiate.

I have already referred to my statement on January 14. However, on April 21, I asked the Prime Minister in this House whether he agreed that the lack of federal anti–scab legislation was the reason negotiations with the companies were deteriorating, in particular with QNS & L at the time, which was negotiating with the union in my riding. On April 21, I did not get an answer.

However, on May 5, concerning the same question, the parliamentary secretary responsible for the issue was kind enough to answer me, but in his answer he said that more than 90 per cent of collective bargaining negotiations are settled without a work stoppage, so a law was not really necessary.

An anti–scab law is not made for the 90 per cent of cases where things go well but for the 10 per cent where things break down and the danger in the negotiations rises enormously.

On April 29, the President of the Public Service Alliance, Mr. Bean, wrote to me that he agreed. According to Mr. Bean, the Public Service Alliance of Canada recognizes the importance of this kind of legislation, and as it found in Quebec, which has some people experienced in this area, it feels this bill will have a beneficial impact on labour management relations in the federal public service. That is quite a testimonial.

On June 17 at a regional meeting of the Steelworkers Union in Sept–Îles, delegates demanded anti–strikebreaking provisions that would apply to federal jobs. Regional co–ordinator Jean–Claude Degrasse said that the harsh conflict to which his members were exposed following the lock–out at QNS&L—I referred to this in my first example, January 14 in Sept–Îles—demonstrates the urgent need for anti–strikebreaking legislation. The company's use of strikebreakers disturbed the industrial peace that had lasted for 16 years, since 1978. The union's demand is supported by the entire population of Sept–Îles.

Quebecers working under federal jurisdiction and all Canadian workers are affected by this serious gap in the labour code. The government has a national responsibility to provide for healthy labour relations. It is in the regulations.

On June 21, I presented a petition signed by many people who asked for the introduction of anti–strikebreaking legislation at the federal level, in order to do something about labour relations in the case of the 10 per cent where things do not always work out.

Today, I repeat my question because I feel I was not given a satisfactory answer. I hope to get one, however, and my question is this: Does the minister intend to introduce in this House amendments to the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act that will bring employees under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and introduce anti–strikebreaking provisions at all federal levels, in order to improve labour relations which are so important to the well–being of this country.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, the question of restricting the use of replacement workers during legal work stoppages raises a number of complex issues, includ-

ing the need to ensure that necessary services are provided to the Canadian public.

Protecting the public interest is of particular relevance in the federal jurisdiction, as the Canada Labour Code governs many industries which are essentially public interest in nature. Although the code does not prohibit the use of replacement workers, it does provide protection for workers engaged in legal work stoppages. The code prohibits an employer from disciplining an employee for engaging in a legal work stoppage. As well, an employer cannot discipline an employee for refusing to perform the duties of another employee who is involved in a legal work stoppage.

Once a work stoppage is terminated, employees are entitled to return to their employment in preference to any persons hired to replace them.

The existing system generally works as intended. Most collective bargaining negotiations are settled by the parties in direct negotiations. Of those that do require conciliation officer assistance, more than 90 per cent are settled without a work stoppage.

This said, the minister is currently reviewing all aspects of the Canada Labour Code, including the issue of replacement workers, with a view of modernizing and improving it so it can better reflect today's realities. There are also ongoing consultations with employee and employer groups to seek their views.

With reference to the dispute between ADM Agri Industry Limited, formerly Ogilvy Flour Mills Limited and the Syndicat national des employés des minoteries Ogilvie Ltée, the minister recently gave his consent for the union to file a complaint with the Canada Labour Relations Board alleging that the company has failed to bargain in good faith.

The minister also met last week with union representatives from the company and will continue to closely monitor the dispute so it can be resolved as quickly as possible.

The union and the company recently agreed to meet with the assistance of the mediator on October 12 and 13, 1994. The minister is encouraging both parties to take advantage of that opportunity to settle their differences.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.53 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 28, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, 12 university students from my riding of Restigouche—Chaleur had a chance to live a wonderful experience this summer in the young entrepreneurs program.

Each of these students created a business plan and next year during the second phase of this project they will create their own small business.

[*Translation*]

Under a Canada–New Brunswick agreement on the development of entrepreneurship, 16 young people had the opportunity to put into practice some of the skills needed to set up a business. I congratulate these young people on their desire to contribute to the economic future of our country.

[*English*]

I would also like to congratulate the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Department of Human Resources Development and the New Brunswick Department of Advanced Education and Labour for participating in this important program. Education and training are the key factors in the development of young people in Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAX REFORM

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Minister of Finance has suggested that provincial sales taxes be transferred to the federal government, and the provinces be given a larger share of income tax in return. It is ridiculous to think that Quebec would agree to give up the area of taxation and its $5.7 billion in provincial sales taxes.

It is also ridiculous to think that all the provinces share the same economic reality. Blanket solutions will no longer work. Furthermore, some provinces, such as Alberta and Newfoundland, have already pointed out that Ontario's proposal did not reflect their situation. The Bloc Quebecois is proposing a much more flexible solution, which would make it possible to eliminate considerable overlap. They suggest transferring the GST to those provinces who request it, with an equivalent reduction in provincial transfer payments.

* * *

[*English*]

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to address a very serious issue, the current threat to freedom of speech in this Parliament.

We are witnessing the decline of dialogue when a member in this House can be accused of hate mongering for expressing what she feels are the views of the majority of Canadians and which are rooted in her personal convictions.

No member of this House should be afraid of expressing their point of view because of a threat of being labelled as a bigot. Nothing shuts down dialogue and the freedom of debate more quickly than labelling.

It is extremely important to all Canadians that in the shaping of public policy alternate points of view must never be suppressed but must be allowed free expression.

Members of this House must never fear to speak out in defence of the views of their constituents, the convictions of their conscience or on behalf of the concerns of Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, a young high school student in Montreal was sent home because she was wearing a hijab, the traditional Islamic veil, and a long tunic not considered acceptable according to the school's dress code.

[*English*]

Our schools play an important role in teaching our youth tolerance and acceptance of individuals regardless of race or culture.

[*Translation*]

All Canadians, regardless of their ethnic origin, religion or political affiliation have the right to have access to public institutions, including schools. The Parti Quebecois government must take the necessary action to ensure a climate of tolerance and harmony for all citizens of Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

DAVIS INLET

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank 217 constituents of the riding of Oxford for taking the time to sign a petition relating to the conditions in Davis Inlet.

These petitioners are asking that the federal government honour the commitment it has made to improve housing, sanitation, and education in order to enable a community healing process to occur and thus realize the vision of the Innu with respect to relocation to Sango Pond.

I am pleased with the work the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is doing to improve the living conditions for all those who live in the Davis Inlet community.

* * *

SELWYN TAM

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to recognize the accomplishments of Selwyn Tam of Vancouver East.

At the recent Commonwealth Games in Victoria, B.C., Selwyn led the Canadian wrestling team to one of its finest showings ever with an outstanding gold medal performance in the 52 kilogram weight category.

Selwyn, the defending national senior champion, had a stunning 10 to 0 score in the final bout.

Selwyn is to be commended for his hard work, talent and dedication. Selwyn's contribution to the sport of wrestling has been generous and exemplary. He has given much to further the ideals and principles that sport embodies.

Selwyn is a truly remarkable athlete. We are all very proud of the entire Canadian team and of Selwyn Tam particularly.

Congratulations again.

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should not worry so much about how foreign investors perceive the Quebec sovereignty issue. He told us repeatedly that the sovereignists were responsible for the increase of interests rates in Canada.

• (1405)

Yesterday however, members of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal were told otherwise by two renowned American analysts. Mr. Ravi Bulchandani, vice–president of the New York brokerage firm Morgan Stanley, and Mr. George Russell, editor of *Time International*, said that the Canadian debt was a greater concern to American investors than the sovereignty of Quebec.

I suggest to you that the Prime Minister should stop blaming the sovereignists for the economic problems of Canada on the erroneous basis of foreign investors' concern and get down to the task of resolving the debt problem.

* * *

[*English*]

LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Justice expressed his total disregard for the principles of democracy that govern this country; the we know best attitude still prevails. You can change the name from Tory to Liberal but the game seems to remain the same.

The GST, FTA and NAFTA, to name a few, were shoved down the throats of Canadians by virtue of the fact that the we know best attitude was a hallmark of the Tory government. Now the Minister of Justice has effectively put his government in the same category by publicly proclaiming that any proposed gun legislation will not be determined by a head count. The justice minister does not take a head count. He is not influenced by numbers nor the message behind them.

Democracy does not prevail because the philosophy of the Liberal cabinet is that it and not Canadians knows best.

What can Canadians do about this atrocity? Their only recourse is to wait until the next election and remove this government from power as decisively as they removed the Tories from office in the last election.

* * *

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, October 2, I will have the honour of taking part in

a walk for schizophrenia. This event which coincides with National Mental Illness Awareness Week has been organized by dedicated volunteers in my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants.

The goal of this walk is to generate greater public awareness for schizophrenia, an illness that affects one in 100 people. I had the pleasure of working in the psychiatric mental health field for 27 years and am pleased to have the opportunity to extend my support to this worthwhile cause.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating those who have made this event a reality. I urge all of my colleagues to work in their ridings to bring greater awareness to schizophrenia and to promote mental health issues.

* * *

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues and to all Canadians the recent StatsCan statistics on spousal assaults.

Domestic violence is a harsh reality which we can no longer choose to ignore. The report published by Statistics Canada found that one in three abused wives said they feared for their lives at some point in their relationship and that one in five abused women said that the assaults occurred while they were pregnant.

These figures are horrifying. A man who uses his size and strength to assault or otherwise abuse a woman is not only a coward but a criminal. I challenge all Canadians to speak out at every opportunity, declaring that there is no excuse for abuse.

It is time all Canadians worked together to eliminate spousal abuse once and for all.

* * *

ARGENTIA NAVAL BASE

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, this week the U.S. naval base at Argentia, Newfoundland closed its doors. The negative impact of this closure on the historic town of Placentia will be far reaching. In addition to the number of people who will lose their jobs, we will have to deal with the severe economic impact on the business community as well as social and, last but by no means least, the environmental concerns.

I want to express my gratitude to this government and particularly to the minister of fisheries for their positive response to my efforts on behalf of the people of Placentia area.

I want also to assure the residents of Placentia that I will continue my efforts on their behalf in making sure that there is a very rigorous campaign to address the redevelopment and reuse of the base facilities.

[*Translation*]

PARTY FUNDRAISING

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, my hon. colleague from Richelieu introduced a motion to make party fundraising healthier in Canada. Our motion was somewhat successful in that it was supported by members from all parties. I wish to thank them for their support.

• (1410)

Nevertheless, I was shocked and even outraged to see members of the Liberal Party of Canada representing Quebec oppose this motion. They are familiar with the provincial public financing legislation in operation in Quebec since 1977 and should appreciate this basic democratic tool. By voting against the motion we tabled in this House, they show how little they care about the democratization of politics in Canada, which certainly does not do them credit.

* * *

[*English*]

ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to two worthy initiatives that will help guarantee Canada a place in the new economy.

Recently the Royal Bank of Canada committed $25 million to a venture capital fund. Along with its partners an alliance was formed that will provide capital to bring neuroscience breakthroughs to the market. This commitment marks the first time a pool of venture capital has been raised to fund the neurosciences.

In addition, the Bank of Commerce appointed a vice–president of learning organizations and leadership development. The function of this position is to provide a means of measuring intellectual capital.

We have reached the time when banks and other institutions will not measure worth exclusively in terms of tangible assets. Rather, the assets of the future will also be based on intellectual innovation and invention.

As of 7.32 this morning the national debt had reached $532,190,587,211.96.

* * *

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to child poverty in Canada the latest statistics produced by the Canadian Council on Social Development are startling.

The child mortality rate is twice as high among poor families as among richer families. The high school drop–out rate for

children from poor families is 2.5 times that for children from non–poor families, the list goes on and on. The statistics are getting worse, not better.

Tomorrow this House will discuss my motion M–261 which states:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reaffirming its commitment to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

This motion was passed unanimously in 1989.

It is my hope that this Parliament and this government will once again reaffirm its commitment to the national fight against child poverty. It is important that Canadians know there is a commitment to this fight as well as policies which will seriously address it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River): Mr. Speaker, last week, thousands of farmers, hunters and sportsmen, including many Quebecers, came to Parliament Hill to express their concern about new firearms legislation which would affect legitimate gun owners.

Members of the Bloc Quebecois were notably absent. Nevertheless, I know that at least ten members privately oppose such controls, but they do not have the nerve to stand up and defend their constituents' rights and privileges. They prefer to toe the party line and follow their leader blindly. Who will defend the interests of Quebec's rural regions in the House of Commons?

I call on all farmers, hunters and sportsmen in Quebec to put pressure on Bloc members.

* * *

[*English*]

THE REFORM PARTY

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, last night CBC "Prime Time" exposed secret documents from Reform Party brass which seek to impose the party's right wing agenda on its membership at Reform's national convention in Ottawa next month.

While no surprise to me, no doubt the membership of the so–called party of reform will be alarmed by evidence of such old style politics. Reform campaigned on a promise to speak for the grassroots. Less than a year later the Reform Party brass has reneged on that promise, choosing instead to impose on the grassroots of the party resolutions and policy.

The Reform Party inner circle will impose its secret right wing agenda on its membership, like abolishing the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As I recall, or is that recall—oops, a bad choice of words—such old style politics was to be strictly verboten.

• (1415)

The party of teledemocracy stands exposed. To abolish free speech press one. To abolish free assembly press two. To recall your Reform MP press three.

The Speaker: Welcome to wonderful Wednesday.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said in the House last week that, and I quote: "no trace of any commitment was found" to reimburse Quebec for the expenses incurred in the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord. The truth is that there are not just traces but documents, including a letter dated December 15, 1993, from Mr. Bourassa, the Premier of Quebec at the time, to the then Prime Minister of Canada. This letter followed three other letters on the same subject to the federal Minister of Finance.

Why did the Prime Minister hide these letters from the House and the public?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did not hide anything from the House. I said that in the government's files I found no commitment by Mr. Mulroney's Conservative government indicating that it would compensate the Government of Quebec. I was aware that requests had been made, and I did not make a secret of that. Some were made publicly. I knew that Mr. Bourassa had talked about this in the National Assembly. But what I did not find is a commitment from the federal government. I got in touch with Mr. Mulroney to ask him whether he had made a commitment. I wrote him a letter about this, and I am waiting for his reply.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I may refer everyone to *Hansard* for September 22, where the Prime Minister says that no trace of any commitment was found. He knows perfectly well that to prove the existence of a commitment, one needs witnesses, and when the witness is one the parties, the case is clear. The letter dated December 15, 1993, which Mr. Bourassa sent to the Prime Minister, contains clear and irrefutable evidence of an agreement between Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Mulroney.

For the benefit of the Prime Minister, I will read an extract from this letter, in which Mr. Bourassa says: "The Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec has established that the direct cost of the referendum for the Government of Quebec as $47.2

million. That is the basis of our claim for federal compensation, which was transmitted to the federal Minister of Finance by Mr. Gérald–D. Lévesque on May 7, 1993." The letter goes on to say: "Unfortunately, no payment could be made before Mr. Mulroney left." Now for the crucial passage: "although Mr. Mulroney indicated last March that Quebec would be fairly compensated in this respect". How can the Prime Minister deny the existence of an agreement, considering Mr. Bourassa's own very clear testimony which he put down in writing?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Gérald–D. Lévesque wrote to the government about this. I am aware of that. The Minister of Finance also discussed the matter with the Minister of Finance of Canada. This is about a request, a claim made by Quebec. It is not a commitment. A commitment exists when the federal government agrees to pay. However, there is no indication in any document that the government agreed to do so. If conversations took place between Mssrs. Mulroney and Bourassa, I would be delighted to know what they were about. I called Mr. Mulroney, who did not give me an answer, but perhaps the Leader of the Opposition, who knows Mr. Mulroney very well, could call him and ask him whether he gave his consent, yes or no.

• (1420)

The Speaker: I would ask hon. members to make their questions and answers as brief as possible.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Robert Bourassa, in the course of his duties as premier and bound by his oath of office, testifies in this letter to the existence of an agreement and a commitment made by his counterpart, the federal Prime Minister. That is the truth.

On September 22 in this House, the Prime Minister challenged the Bloc Quebecois to give him, and I quote: "proof that my predecessor and the previous government made a commitment, and we will gladly pay". Here is the proof. Now, pay.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would not advise the Leader of the Opposition to go back to practising law, if he makes statements like that.

He says that Mr. Bourassa said that Mr. Mulroney—whom you know very well, who took you at your word and then you went back on it—told him such and such a thing. I do not doubt that Mr. Bourassa wrote the letter, since I read it. However, I asked the Privy Council to go through all the documentation. Was there anything in writing? Did a discussion take place in cabinet or elsewhere to confirm this letter? I was told that nothing could be found.

I called Mr. Mulroney and I told him: Mr. Mulroney, I am sending you a letter with a request to clarify the situation. He said that he would reply very shortly. I said in the House that if there was a commitment, it would be respected, and if there was no commitment, you can blame Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, on December 15, 1993, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa wrote the Prime Minister of Canada, the hon. member for Saint–Maurice, to confirm the existence of a verbal agreement between himself and the former Prime Minister of Canada. This letter was signed and dated December 15.

Following the questions Bloc Quebecois members have been asking in this House for several months on this subject, could the Prime Minister not have shown good will by checking with Mr. Mulroney, right after Mr. Bourassa made the request, if he really wanted to be fair to Quebecers? Should he not have done so a long time ago instead of waiting for the opposition to force his hand a few days ago?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the opposition says that there was an agreement. In my opinion, any agreement requires the consent of both parties. We found no evidence that the former government gave its consent. We recently asked Mr. Mulroney. We asked Privy Council officials and others who worked with these former first ministers, and they told us that there never was a commitment.

I went one step further: I called Mr. Mulroney himself. I talked to him on the telephone and he told me that he would confirm his position in writing. Once we know his position, we will take action. If he made promises to Mr. Bourassa, I will be very happy to honour them. If he did not make promises at the time and personally refused to pay when he was leading the government, I am not responsible for the actions of another government that did not want to pay. I was not involved in this matter.

I would like to say to the opposition that Alberta and British Columbia also wanted to hold provincial referendums but, under the circumstances, they preferred, to avoid the costs involved and to be sure they would get paid, to have the referendum held under federal legislation.

• (1425)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, given the attitude of the officials surrounding the Prime Minister who have been playing hide–and–seek for several months in this matter and the fact that the Prime Minister of Canada questions the very word of the former Quebec premier, does the Prime Minister not agree that his attitude, far from being a sign of co–operation with Quebec, points to a conspiracy against that province?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a prime minister cannot act alone. The opposition would be the first to blame me if I took on financial commitments without cabinet and Treasury Board approval. Of course, if I give my word, they will honour it; on the other hand, legally, without a cabinet decision and Treasury Board approval, there can be no government commitment.

If Mr. Mulroney made a personal promise to Mr. Bourassa, I will go before my Cabinet to ensure that the word of the former Prime Minister is honoured, even though he did not act prudently. If he promised something without having it approved by Treasury Board and the government then in office, I will not act illegally without the approval of cabinet, Treasury Board and my party.

* * *

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, may I divert the attention of the House to something Canadians really care about?

Canada's social programs are not sustainable at their current levels. In fact estimates by the Auditor General and the Superintendent of Financial Institutions show that within only 15 years Canada's social security system plus interest will exceed 100 per cent of all government revenues.

Is the minister going to reduce spending on social programs or raise taxes?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, the money that the federal government spends, along with funds spent by provincial governments, is the most important investment we can make because we are investing in the people of Canada.

We are helping young children to have a better life by making sure they are nurtured. We are helping young people get an education so they will have the skills for the future job market. We are providing security for older workers and we are helping our senior citizens.

As a country we have to stay strongly committed to the provision of an effective and improved social security system. This is the reason we will next week be putting forward a series of options, directions for Canadians to take a look at so they can become involved in the important debate as to the kind of social programs we want, how we will pay for it and how we make sure we improve them. That is the reason we are doing it.

I hope the hon. member will actively participate in that debate, unlike some of her colleagues who are saying let us not have a debate at all.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, seniors and those planning to retire want to know if their government pensions are safe and secure and who will pay for the programs that retiring Canadians have been counting on?

Will the minister's action plan deal with the reality that there will be a 40 per cent increase in the number of senior citizens in the next 15 years?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the social security review that we will be launching next week deals primarily with matters of the workplace, with matters of lifelong learning and income security.

• (1430)

The hon. member should recall we made very explicit in last February's budget that programs pertaining to the question of old age security and the Canadian pension plan were not being touched as part of this review.

The Minister of Finance clearly indicated that we would be preparing and releasing a discussion paper to show what the demographic changes would be and what the long term impacts would be on some of our income security papers. That kind of analysis is now under way. It is the kind of thing that has to be shared with all Canadians to make sure we can reason together on very important issues.

Once again I invite the hon. member to participate in a constructive way in that debate.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, the minister should realize that Canadians cannot prepare an informed response to his action plan unless they understand the financial consequences.

Will the minister help all Canadians deal with this reality by providing detailed financial projections next week with all the elements of his action plan?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I could begin right at this moment to give Canadians one set of analyses. I heard the hon. member, in a press conference the Reform Party held, talk about a cut of $15 billion in social programs. A $15 billion cut would mean the total elimination of all assistance for children, all social services for seniors and all assistance for higher education from the federal level.

In other words, the Reform Party's fiscal program would wipe out assistance for children, young people and workers. We do not need that kind of fiscal program.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHILD POVERTY

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In its report released yesterday, the Canadian Institute of Child Health says that one child out of five lives in poverty in Canada. The Institute, which conducted a similar public study in 1989, concludes that child poverty and its harmful effects have increased.

Will the Prime Minister recognize that, beyond all the nice rhetoric, the only measure taken by his government was to contribute to the impoverishment of Canadian families by substantially reducing UI access and benefits, thereby forcing the unemployed and their families to rely on welfare?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to inform the House that one of the major results of the changes we made to the unemployment insurance system in the legislation last spring was to provide assistance for an additional 27,000 low income families with children. We substantially increased their UI benefits.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about children's health. My question is: Does the Prime Minister realize that his social reform, which is designed to cut into these programs—and that is the only measure announced—will in fact impoverish families already living below poverty level, in very difficult conditions, and also have harmful effects on children?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I have asked members of the House to wait until we table the paper before they begin making judgments on the various propositions.

However I can tell the hon. member very clearly that the issue of child poverty is a very central concern of the government. It will be seriously addressed in the discussion paper. We will use that occasion to engage Canadians from one end of the country to the other in a major debate on how we can better mobilize resources to put an end to child poverty by the end of this century.

• (1435)

It is a commitment this party made when it was in opposition. It is a commitment we make as a government to begin to bring Canadians forward on a serious debate about how we can deal with the problem of children and their parents.

I would ask the hon. member to use her best offices as a member of that party to provide a constructive and positive contribution to that debate.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked for an explanation of questionable practices within the defence department. Most glaring was a $327,000 contract in connection with the deputy minister's office.

This figure could in fact be much higher. A departmental answer to an access to information request suggests that additional costs have been camouflaged by splitting invoices between several agencies.

Does the Prime Minister agree that this is an unusual practice? Will he tell us how much money was involved in these purchases, and if those figures are not now available will he commit to making them public when he has them?

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the allegation and the question are centred around the Lagueux report, an audit done in national defence in 1992. I was briefed on it and I have to report to the House.

On the evidence that I received this morning I have to report that there is no evidence of wrongdoing whatsoever.

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, there are many discrepancies revealed in the Lagueux report that indicate poor management practices within the department. People inside and outside the department are aware of the allegations and are unhappy with the implications.

In the interest of morale and confidence in the system will the parliamentary secretary commit the government to commissioning an outside, unbiased, professional investigation to settle the matter once and for all?

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if you accept my answer to the first question then obviously the answer to the second question has to be, I regret, no.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

In the report on poverty, women's health problems are mentioned. The Minister of Health announced the establishment of a centre of excellence on several occasions: during the throne speech, in January; during the budget speech, in February; in the House, on March 8; in Montreal, before the Canadian Medical Association, on August 16; and finally last week, at the gynecologists' convention.

When will the Minister of Health stop announcing that the centres of excellence will be established shortly and act?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as soon as the plans are finalized, I will be delighted to let everyone know.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, are we to understand that the delay in implementation is due to the fact that the minister is unable to convince her colleagues to allocate the funds for centres of excellence for women's health?

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the centres of excellence for women's health are well on the road to being announced. The terms of reference are being worked on. I will be very happy when they are all completed and the centres are operational across the country.

* * *

LAND ENGINEERING TEST ESTABLISHMENT

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, for 50 years the land engineering test establishment, known as LETE, has provided one–stop shopping for Canadian army design, development and testing.

In 1993 the chief of defence staff gave LETE a departmental commendation for the completion of 50 high priority tasks supporting peacekeepers in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia.

LETE has saved Canadian soldiers. Will the Prime Minister confirm that in fact there are no real savings in the closure of LETE and that others will fill LETE's crucial role at the potential expense of Canadian lives?

• (1440)

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in response to his question I assure the hon. member that the Canadian forces have not and will not place their troops at unnecessary risk with inappropriate or unsafe equipment.

As the member knows, the closure of LETE on September 1 will not result in reduced standards or reduced responsiveness to the army's needs.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian public is demanding accountability from the government; it wants the facts.

The remarks of the parliamentary secretary do not represent the facts. The facts are that DND is sending some of LETE's sophisticated equipment as a gift to the United States army test and evaluation command, according to their fax which I have in my possession dated September 22.

Will the Prime Minister tell us how defence can justify LETE's closure as a cost cutting saving when we will now have to pay the Americans to use our own equipment?

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the thrust of the hon. member's question is very good. He talks about the facts. I will give him the facts.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mifflin: If he wants the answer he is going to have to listen. The fact is that the essential activities previously conducted by LETE are being carried out in house and through separate contracts. For contracted work, where feasible, Canadian companies will be considered as a matter of course.

I again assure the House the closure of LETE, if he wants the facts, is expected to save $11 million annually.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In spite of constant questioning on the part of the official opposition about what his plans really are regarding RRSP taxation, the Minister of Finance still refuses to rule out that possibility. His attitude gives more cause for worry to middle–class taxpayers who rely on RRSPs to prepare a decent retirement for themselves.

I give him yet another chance to put their worried minds to rest. Why does he refuse to undertake not to tax RRSPs, in order not to further increase the tax burden of the middle class?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, one can wonder who is causing worry—I believe this is the third time this week that the hon. member has asked the same question. The Bloc Quebecois must have run out of questions to ask.

I was very clear on this issue. If there is to be a pre–budget consultation process, the Minister of Finance must not rule out any possibility or idea. We do not want to hinder the process. I made it very clear that if I answered this question, it would lead to another and another, eventually rendering the consultation process useless. So, I do not intend to comment on specific suggestions because I want to give the people of Canada the chance to tell us what they want.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, questions arise because there are no clear answers. Does the Minister of Finance not recognize that by taxing RRSPs, he would actually be creating inequity between those workers who have registered retirement savings plans subsidized in part by their employers and those who have none, such as self–employed workers, farmers and fishermen?

[*English*]

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, it is very important to preserve the integrity of the consultation process.

All of us in the House are involved in a unique experiment. We are opening up the whole process of budgetary consultation. We are getting rid of budget secrecy.

That really means the Minister of Finance should not comment on individual suggestions. If he does so, he will eventually make the process impossible because the budget will have been given well before its official date.

I do not intend to make specific comments on specific suggestions because I want the process to work, and that is what Canadians want.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, my question is with regard to the Canadian military personnel that served in the Persian gulf war. It is reported that Canadian personnel were administered a drug to combat potential nerve gas attacks. Many are now complaining of severe side effects referred to as gulf war syndrome.

• (1445)

Can the minister please inform the House of the progress being made to help these deserving Canadians.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this question because it involves the long term health and welfare of the Canadian forces personnel.

In direct response to the question, we have had 12 people with symptoms similar to those voiced by the United States forces personnel. They have been seen by a Canadian forces doctor and are currently experiencing no difficulty whatsoever.

As the minister has previously stated in this House, we have not been able to determine a causal link between the chemical biological warfare agents used in the gulf and the symptoms experienced by the Canadian forces members. In fact we find evidence to the contrary.

I want to reassure the House that there is no scientific evidence that the drugs that were administered to the Canadian forces members had harmful effects. On the contrary. In fact, the body of evidence that exists would show that everything attests to their safety and their use.

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Once again we are seeing the federal government playing politics with the economic well–being of Canada. The users of terminals one and two at Pearson airport are languishing in outdated and overcrowded facilities while the government's fatally flawed Bill C–22 is passed back and forth like a football between the Liberal dominated Commons and the Tory–run other place. This is economic planning at its shameful worst.

Can the minister advise this House what action he is taking to ensure the economic well–being of Pearson airport while this political football game continues.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I and I am sure many members of the House and especially people who understand the importance of Pearson International Airport to the economy not only to that area of Ontario but to the entire country are looking forward to this afternoon and tomorrow because I understand that members in the other place have already indicated that they are looking very much to the position of my colleagues in the Reform Party.

I think if they support this bill we will be able to get it through the Senate and do what we have to do with Pearson which is get on with the business of running Pearson.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister's response did not tell us what he has planned for Pearson.

Under the minister's national airport plan we will not see the commencement of construction on a new facility until at least 1998. This is not acceptable. I cannot believe the minister is prepared to tell Toronto it will have to wait until past the turn of the century for needed facilities.

What is the minister doing to shorten this unacceptable delay?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken with the premier of Ontario with respect to this matter. As the hon. member will know, the new Canadian airport authority at Pearson will have representation from the Government of Canada, from the province of Ontario and from various municipalities in the metropolitan Toronto area.

We have done that now. We will have concluded the transitional requirements but we are faced, and I want to tell my hon. colleague this, with a very serious problem. We have identified the people. We have the structure all set to go but our friends in

the other place would like to stick Canadian taxpayers with a bill for $445 million and I want to see this afternoon if the Reform Party is going to put its votes where its mouth is.

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

On March 9, the minister indicated in this House that he wanted to review old–age security programs. Following the general outcry caused by this announcement, the Prime Minister decided that the review would be limited to the Canada Pension Plan and RRSPs. This review was to be tabled last June but the government has clearly delayed it.

My question is this: Can the minister tell us why the government has delayed announcing its intentions by tabling the review promised for last June?

• (1450)

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we are presently speaking with a number of groups and organizations throughout Canada, particularly as they represent seniors, to get their point of view.

I want to use the opportunity to correct one very mistaken statement I know the member made inadvertently and that is that we said that we would be doing anything about old age pensions. We never said that. We said we would be preparing a paper to look at the long range income security issues facing Canada.

That was a commitment made in the budget and that is it, period.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Does the minister still intend to slash programs for seniors in order to finance other federal government programs? Will we have to wait until after the Quebec referendum to know the answer?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it never was our intention, it will not be our intention, *la réponse est non.*

* * *

HAITI

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister's government committed to send troops and RCMP to Haiti. Yesterday RCMP chief superintendent Mr. Pouliot stated that retraining the Haitian police force would take from seven to ten years.

Since the Prime Minister is asking Canadian soldiers and police to risk their lives in the chaos of Haiti and Canadian taxpayers to finance it, will he at least tell us his plan, the costs and how long we can expect to have Canadians in Haiti?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that Canadian commitments through the United Nations are well known and well supported by the overwhelming majority of Canadians.

Indeed it is clear that when Canada responds to a request by the United Nations we follow the longstanding practice to serve wherever we are asked and particularly to serve in an area close to our own country in our own hemisphere.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, there is not enough maple syrup in Canada to cover the waffling of this government.

Since we cannot get an answer on any kind of a plan for Canadians, we do not know what it is going to cost and we do not know how long they are going to be there, could we at least find out the commitments, who they have been made to, what we have committed and why those commitments cannot be explained to the Canadian people?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the hon. member has all the numbers he wants. In fact they have been part of the estimates. There have been witnesses before a parliamentary committee who gave all the indications. For the benefit of the hon. member I will send him a letter giving all the numbers that he has already.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TURBOT FISHERY

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, on several occasions, the Minister of Fisheries encouraged Gaspé fishermen in their plan to catch turbot; last March, at the Boston Seafood Show; in April, with his Quebec counterpart and in July, the minister himself admitted it in an interview with the Canadian press. However, on July 20, with only a few hours' notice, the minister denied the Gaspé fishermen access to the resource, even though they had just invested more than $700,000.

Does the minister admit that his about–face alone is responsible for this summer's turbot saga, which led to the arrest of the Gaspé fishermen, their being fined and losing investments of hundreds of thousands of dollars?

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the member continues to make an assertion that he knows to be absolutely false; that is the notion that the Government of Canada ever gave any consent or ever requested that people expend funds in anticipation of or with a guarantee of a licence to be subsequently let to fish turbot. The member knows that, not just because I have dealt with it publicly and in the House but because the member was privately briefed by me three times and on four occasions was briefed by my officials. On each occasion he expressed an understanding of the need for conservation.

• (1455)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, clearly, the minister did not answer the question. Since the minister cannot deny having supported the plan, does he promise today to fully compensate the Gaspé fishermen who spent more than $700,000 and whose only mistake was to take a man at his word?

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday the whole planet recognizes the need for conservation. The whole planet acted on that need at a UN conference. All the members of NAFO acted on that need at a NAFO conference. All the people associated with the fishery in Canada, current stakeholders, people who are already in the turbot fishery, have taken anywhere from 60 per cent to 100 per cent cuts in that stock, yet this member continues to insist that one group of fishermen only in Atlantic Canada, and there are hundreds affected in many provinces, ought to be compensated.

The member knows that the proposition he has put is laced more with a concern out of political advantage than with a concern for conservation. The member ought to grow up and be responsible.

The Speaker: My colleagues, we should be very careful not to attribute motive of any kind, at least motive which is less than acceptable. I would ask that in the questions and in the answers that perhaps we carry a greater amount of respect one for the other.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Is it the intention of the government to introduce legislation to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include freedom from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation as promised in the red book?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this government remains committed to exactly such an amendment and we will introduce a bill to that effect.

I should say in response to the member's question that in doing so we will not only fulfil a commitment and provide for a matter of fundamental justice, but we will also bring the federal statute into conformity with eight provincial human rights acts, some of which date back to 1977 on that topic. We will have the federal law conform with what the courts have in any event been reading into the act for many years.

In the view of this government it is about time that our federal statute reflect the reality in Canada.

* * *

PNEUMONIC PLAGUE

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, pneumonic plague has been a problem in India. Can the health minister tell us what she is doing to reassure Canadians?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the hon. member's question and to inform the House of the steps that have been taken to respond to this issue.

Last Friday night I and my department issued a travel advisory to all Canadians pertaining to travel to India indicating that they should not travel in certain areas or that if they absolutely have to, they should see their doctor prior to leaving the country.

I have been meeting with my officials to make sure that we continue to be very vigilant and monitor what is happening. I have asked that all flights from India be met at international airports. There is an emergency response plan in place.

• (1500)

That being said, there is a very small risk to Canadians at this time. I have asked that a yellow card be issued to all international passengers on flights originating in India, and to ground personnel at airports in order that they may have the proper information to deal with this issue.

* * *

AIDS

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, we have the Minister of Health taking action on a disease that is treatable and not likely to spread in Canada. Canadians expect that.

However, I find it ironic that the minister of immigration has refused the Reform Party's repeated calls for HIV testing for immigrants, a disease that is fatal, invisible and costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to treat.

When will the minister of immigration stop treating HIV AIDS as a politically protected disease and put the health and safety of Canadians at the top of his priority list.

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of Canadians is already at the top of the list for all ministers and government departments. That is our first priority.

Second, the member of Parliament knows that after 18 years where the medical inadmissibility chapter of our process has not been touched that I have asked for a full review.

It is blatantly unfair and irresponsible for this member to simply select one element. The government will proceed with a full review in a comprehensive and factual way.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Edward Roberts, Minister of Justice and the Hon. John Efford, Minister of Work Services and Transportation from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the joint parliamentary delegation's visit to Australia from June 26 to July 4, 1994.

This visit took us to four communities: Canberra, Longreach, Brisbane and Sydney. As guests of the Australian Senate and House of Representatives, we were provided with the opportunity to meet and discuss matters with numerous parliamentarians, many of whom were ministers, both at the federal and state levels. Our discussions covered a wide range of topics: international affairs, including APEC, GATT, NAFTA, UN peacekeeping, economic and taxation issues, including the GST, aboriginal affairs, federal–state relations and employment, agricultural and educational issues, just to name a few.

I know I speak for all the members of the delegation when I say that we felt as if we were still at home in Canada because of the numerous similarities between our two countries.

Let me conclude by drawing the House's attention to a recommendation put forward by an Australian counterpart, the hon. Andrew Peacock. Mr. Peacock felt very strongly that because Canada and Australia have so much in common and so many areas in which expertise can be shared and exchanged, some form of mechanism or association should be created to ensure that this type of exchange between Australian and Canadian parliamentarians takes place on a more frequent and regular basis.

• (1505)

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to express our gratitude to the Hon. Michael Beahan, President of the Senate and your counterpart, the Hon. Stephen Martin, Speaker of the House of Representatives for being such gracious hosts; Mrs. Carol Richardson, Australian Parliamentary Officer, who worked so hard and successfully on our program; and finally to Mr. Michael Berry, Canadian High Commissioner, and Mr. Gardiner Wilson, Canadian Deputy High Commissioner, who provided the delegation with much appreciated advice and support.

The Speaker: Now that is what I call a comprehensive and fine report.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with its responsibilities under the standing orders I am pleased to report to the House that the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has studied private members' business and has reported that one motion and one bill should be made votable.

Accordingly, I have the honour to present the 33rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs which is deemed adopted when it is laid upon the Table.

I also have the honour to table the 34th report of the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs which deals with the allocation of rooms for the day for the presentation of the Auditor General's report for 1994.

If the House gives its consent, it is my intention to move concurrence in the 34th report later this day.

* * *

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES ACT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–275, an act respecting the protection and rehabilitation of endangered and threatened species.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is to protect biodiversity. It is aimed at identifying, protecting and rehabilitating endangered and threatened species and is a step toward the overall protection of Canada's biodiversity.

In addition to identifying, protecting and rehabilitating flora and fauna in Canada when threatened or endangered by human activity, the Minister of the Environment would also have powers to develop and implement programs to restore the

populations of threatened and endangered species to self-sustain the numbers.

Combined with the Canada Wildlife Act, strengthened by amendments in June of this year, this bill is intended to help ensure the protection of Canada's biodiversity and to enhance the biodiversity convention adopted at the UN Conference on the Environment and Development held in Rio de Janiero in 1992.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed).

* * *

LESTER B. PEARSON DAY ACT

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-276, an act respecting Lester B. Pearson Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling a private member's bill, the purpose of which is to honour the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson for his contribution to Canada, the international community and world peacekeeping by designating the second Monday in February of each year as Lester B. Pearson Day.

I hope that all members will support this bill which aims to recognize a truly remarkable Canadian.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

• (1510)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent I intend to move concurrence in the 34th report of the committee. I believe there would also be consent to dispense with the reading of the report.

I move that the 34th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That the members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and the required staff be authorized to travel to Toronto, Quebec City, Montreal, Akwesasne, Bathurst, Halifax, Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg between October 17, 1994 and December 2, 1994.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Northwest Territories during the month of October 1994 to undertake a study of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and that the necessary staff accompany the sub-committee.

The Speaker: Does the parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am proud to present a petition containing 2,600 signatures on behalf of the constituents of Wild Rose.

These petitioners pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection that is enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

I respectfully submit this petition on this day.

DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I have a very extensive petition signed by hundreds of people from all across Ontario, including places like Kemptville, Vanier, Nepean and so forth.

The petitioners call on Parliament to recognize the public threat of dangerous offenders and to amend the Criminal Code to have such offenders detained indefinitely on warrant expiry, when it is believed they may cause serious physical or psychological harm or death of another person.

It is a pleasure for me to present this petition today.

• (1515)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions I would like to present under Standing Order 36.

Whereas the majority of Canadians believe that the privileges which society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships, and whereas societal approval including the extension of societal privileges would be given to same sex relationships if any amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act were to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation as a ground for discrimination, these people petition Parliament not to amend the Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would

tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibitive grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

ABORTION

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my next petition to Parliament is with regard to abortion.

The petitioners pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is with regard to euthanasia and concludes by saying that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow aiding or abetting suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

LIBRARY BOOK POSTAL SUBSIDY

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my final petition comes mainly from the constituents in the Stockholm area of my riding who have a concern regarding Saskatchewan's public libraries.

They would like to draw the attention of the House to the following: that the library book postal subsidy is necessary for the continued operation of interlending services among libraries and plays a vital role in the distribution of cultural materials; that cancellation of the subsidy or changes in the amount of the subsidy would result in severely hampering public access to information housed in libraries outside the resident's immediate area; that maintaining the subsidy is a more effective, more efficient use of public funds than any other alternative. Therefore your petitioners call upon Parliament to continue the library book postal subsidy and ensure that there be no further erosion in the resulting library book postal rate.

LAW OF THE SEA

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, this is a petition signed by a large number of Canadians from many provinces including Ontario and Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia.

It calls upon Parliament to urge the Government of Canada to ratify the law of the sea. Among the many reasons given for this very important step, Canadian failure to ratify the law of the sea by November of this year would jeopardize Canada's eligibility to participate in the law of the sea dispute settlement tribunal and decision making council.

ABORTION

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the privilege to table two petitions from my constituents in the riding of Lincoln pursuant to Standing Order 36 and duly certified by the Clerk of Petitions.

The first petition calls upon Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code of Canada.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, my second petition requests that Parliament retain the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide or euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to present petitions signed by over 100 constituents from Williams Lake, 100 Mile House, and Lillooet, British Columbia.

My constituents call upon the government not to amend the Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or homosexuality.

They also call upon the government not to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation in the prohibited grounds of discrimination.

I present this petition with my concurrence.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my honour to table a petition signed by 196 people from the town of Maple Creek in my riding. The text is that whereas except in police states there is no evidence that the incidence of criminal or suicidal misuse of firearms is impeded by restrictive legislation, whereas Canadian citizens are already overburdened by unnecessary and ineffective gun control legislation, we humbly pray and call upon Parliament to desist from passing additional restrictive legislation with respect to firearms or ammunition and to direct its attention to the apprehension and adequate punishment of those who criminally misuse firearms or other deadly weapons.

I heartily concur with this petition.

• (1520)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my duty and honour to rise in the House to present three petitions duly certified by the Clerk of Petitions on behalf of the constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands and surrounding area.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms prohibiting amendments to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships, homosexuality and the undefined phrase sexual orientation remain in force.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I wish to present two petitions today on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe Centre.

The first is on the issue of euthanasia. The petitioners request that current laws regarding active euthanasia be enforced.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is requesting the Government of Canada not to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners are concerned about including the phrase sexual orientation. Refusing to define the statement leaves the interpretation open to the courts, a very dangerous precedent to set.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the pleasure to present the attached petition. It has been signed by 4,801 of my constituents.

These petitioners draw the attention of the House to the following: that everyone has to be accountable for the mounting debt burden; that members of Parliament should demonstrate self–restraint to the citizens by cutting back on their lavish pensions; that the qualifying time period for an MP's pension is far too short; that the eligible age to receive an MP's pension is much too young; that by MPs setting such an example of restraint the tolerance of the citizens would be more forthcoming.

Therefore your petitioners call upon Parliament to enact legislation to change this pension plan.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions from Simcoe North totalling 100 petitioners supporting the status quo with regard to firearms ownership.

[*Translation*]

The petitioners ask the government not to impose any new restriction regarding firearm acquisition certificates. They also ask Parliament to instruct the judicial system to implement current laws more strictly.

[*English*]

I believe we should all focus our attention on the real root causes of crime which are embedded in discrimination, poverty, familial dysfunction, inadequate parental responsibility and a myriad of other socioeconomic problems rather than focus on firearm control, the effectiveness of which is very questionable at best.

[*Translation*]

While the safety of our communities concerns us all, I think that the problem is put out of proportion. The fact remains that Canada is no more violent as a society than before and that criminal acts against people are not increasing uncontrollably. To instill fear in people's mind without any regard for the facts is despicable.

[*English*]

LEONARD PELTIER

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from more than 400 persons from all over Ontario collected by people in Peterborough riding which concerns the extradition of Leonard Peltier from Canada to the United States.

These petitioners point out that the information provided at the time in the mid–seventies with respect to Mr. Peltier's case was fabricated by the U.S. authorities and that since that time new information has emerged that indicates that Leonard Peltier was not guilty of the crime for which he has spent the last 18 years in prison.

Therefore these petitioners request that Parliament hold an external review of the 1976 extradition hearings and that Mr. Peltier be brought back to Canada for asylum.

I am pleased that in response to this and previous petitions the Minister of Justice is conducting a review.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in my place pursuant to Standing Order 36 to deliver two more petitions on the subject of gun control.

The petitioners are seriously concerned about the lack of respect the government is showing for the integrity of law–abiding responsible gun owners. They are opposing further legislation for firearms acquisition and possession and call for strict guidelines and mandatory sentences for the use or possession of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime.

I concur with my petitioners.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, question No. 61 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 61—**Mr. Axworthy:**

Does the government plan to spend money through public and private agencies, on communications relating to initiatives undertaken by the Department of Human Resources Development from January 1, 1994 to December 31, 1994, and if so, how much?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Yes; $13.95 million.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The question as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the notice of motion for the production of papers stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall all notices of motions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AGREEMENTS ACT

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport) moved:

That a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that this House disagrees with the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C–22, an act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport.

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I am proposing that the House of Commons respond to the Senate's message, which proposed amendments to Bill C–22, by indicating the complete rejection by this House of its amendments to a bill which seeks to cancel the contracts entered into by the previous government concerning the redevelopment and ownership of terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport.

Bill C–22 was designed to cancel the agreements between Her Majesty and the T1 T2 Limited partnership. These arrangements were entered into, as everyone knows, during the dying days of the last government now nearly a year ago. The agreements turned over the development and operation of terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson international for 57 years to a group of private developers.

The agreements were examined and were found not to be in the public interest. The facts in arriving at this determination can be stated very succinctly. The agreements as I indicated were signed just weeks before an election. They did not contain a cancellation clause when the government of the day had to know it was going to lose the election and the deal was being widely questioned. The agreement was for 57 years, 20 years more than the normal amortization period for buildings and the time normally associated with the recovery of this kind of an investment.

The after tax rate of return has been estimated by some at 14.2 per cent. However, this figure does not take into account profits the individual partners would have realized on contracts they held with the partnership. The actual rate of return for the partners in this deal would be more in the order of 28 per cent.

The original tender period was for 90 days, then it was extended to 120 days. The submissions that were received covered thousands of pages of technical and financial information because the process in effect had granted an enormous advantage to those companies that had lobbied the government for the project. They had made their preparations and they were ready when the tender call was issued.

One of the proponents had commenced lobbying to achieve the privatization of these terminals in mid–1989, had submitted an unsolicited proposal, offered policy advice to then ministers of the crown. Surely this is not a normal tendering process or acceptable practice.

The Leader of the Official Opposition, now the Prime Minister, indicated clearly before the election and while this deal was being consummated that the deal would be reviewed.

I could go on with the list of unusual elements in this process that Mr. Nixon described in his report as flawed. I do not really think it is of much use at this stage. We have gone through it over and over again.

I want to point out today that Canadians generally and voters in the metro Toronto area particularly understood the flaws in the deal were enough to reject it, and they did so massively. That is one on the major and principal reasons why the Liberals took every seat in metro in that election last fall. If no one else understood it, the voters knew a tender process is generally designed to provide a winner and some losers. The previous government cooked up a process which produced a winning loser and losing winner. Rather than permitting the merger of a financially strapped winner with a wealthy loser, as it turned out, a new tender call obviously would have been what was appropriate.

• (1530)

One of the hired guns for the consortium has described Bill C–22 as an act worthy only of a banana republic. I contend quite the contrary because Bill C–22 provides for the correction of actions that are characteristic of what goes on in so–called banana republics.

[*Translation*]

The government is firmly committed to reject the ways of the former government. This transaction is riddled with interference by lobbyists, favouritism, behind–the–scenes wheeling and dealing, manipulation of legitimate private interests and disregard for public service impartiality. As a whole, it is unacceptable.

The government intends to protect the country's interests and the tqaxpayers' dollars. We believe that matters that can jeopardize our economy and our competitiveness as a country should be negotiated under a transparent and accessible process.

In legislating an end to these agreements, the government took several factors into account: the need for a quick decision on future requirements at Pearson, once these agreements were set aside; the government's commitment to put public interest before favouritism and the quest for excessive profits; and the fact athat the private sector would have gained control of one of the most important assets in the field of transportation by means of an arrangement that would have generated unreasonable profits for a favoured few.

[*English*]

On July 13 I announced a national airport policy that would ensure the existence of a safe, efficient, competitive network of airports across the country and would be managed in the best interest of Canadian taxpayers and the travelling public.

However the opportunity to benefit from the advice and competence of dedicated people representing regional and local interest is being denied to Lester B. International Airport, owing to the cloud that these agreements cast.

There are some in this place who would have us believe that if the matter is before the courts for years somehow we could do what would be done in the other airports across the country through Canadian airport authorities. One would have to be very naive to think that any group of citizens would take on the operation of terminal 1 and terminal 2 while all the threat of litigation and all that could imply hung out there for months and in fact years, knowing the size and the magnitude of the problem.

Terminals 1 and 2 at Toronto Pearson airport need upgrading. I agree with my hon. friend opposite on that. The parking garages are in a deplorable state. Safety and security are being put in question. The list is long of what has to be done at Pearson. The opportunity to provide travellers with newer, safer and more modern services is being denied to users of Pearson.

We have stated time and time again that it is our intention to treat the T1 T2 Limited Partnership in a fair and equitable manner considering the circumstances. We have recognized that not all the partners were involved to the same extent in this flawed process and that private sector companies not part of the consortium should not be unduly penalized.

We have asked that the partnership submit their out of pocket expenses as well as those of third parties. We wish and we undertake to see to it that all parties are repaid funds they have spent consistent with good business practice, but we will not compensate for lobbyist fees and charges.

• (1535)

I am aware of the need for public accountability on the matter. I know members of the House of Commons, the Auditor General, the public accounts committee and the interested parties, the people who have the taxpayers' interest at heart, will review whatever decision is made by the government to pay those legitimate out of pocket expenses. I welcome that thorough review because I understand my responsibilities in the matter.

Members of the House of Commons must understand that the out of pocket expenses were for financiers, planners, engineers, managers and designers. Not a single dime was spent on steel, concrete, lumber, escalators or other services normally associated with airport operations. Clearly the out of pocket expenses did not enhance the value of the property or provide any benefits to the taxpayer or the traveller.

Responsibility to the taxpayer and fairness toward T 1 T 2 Limited Partnership and third parties is what Bill C–22 is about.

Let us take a look at the amount of the bill the Tory majority of members in the other place want to foist on Canadian taxpayers. The consortium has replied to our request for its appropriate out of pocket expenses by submitting claims to the Canadian people for approximately $445 million. Of this amount, $415 million represent loss of profits to the consortium or its partners in various third party capacities. The consortium is not interested

in fair compensation; it wants to sting the Canadian public for over $400 million.

I have to ask all colleagues in the House and Canadians if they think the Conservative majority in the other place is being responsible when it says it is not concerned about the consequences of its action as far as money goes. It claims that all it is interested in is the principle of the bill. How can anyone be so irresponsible with taxpayers' dollars?

I thank my Liberal colleagues in the other place. We have been through a lot on the bill; a lot has been said. I have the greatest respect for those members in the other place, including independent members who mounted a stout defence of the legislation and have spoken eloquently to protect the interests of Canadian taxpayers. I know those people with their hearts and their heads in the right place will rise to the occasion again.

As for those who presently hold the majority they cling to in the other place, their method of dealing with the issue does not improve my opinion of them, which should not come as a surprise to anyone.

I sincerely believe Canadians in every part of the country who support every political party represented in the House will be outraged when they understand the size and the amount of the bill the Tory majority in the other place is planning to drop on them. The bill for their defeat of Bill C–22 will be $445 million.

An hon. member: What is the Reform Party going to do?

Mr. Young: Since my colleague refers to it, are my friends in the Reform Party prepared to go along? I have listened carefully in the months we have spent in the House together. Time and time again we disagree on some issues, but on one issue I think we have a lot in common. I have tried to do some things at Transport Canada that will improve services to the Canadian public but reduce the burden on the Canadian taxpayer. I think we understand what we are trying to achieve together.

It is not just a question of principle or of letting people go to the courts or of trying to have due process and all the rest of the things we hear talked about. We are talking about Canadian taxpayers faced with cuts being levelled at them by every government in the country, no matter what their political stripe. Cuts are being requested of us by members of the official opposition and the Reform Party. We understand that.

I cannot believe anyone would agree with those in the other place who say they do not care that their amendments would put at risk hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. Do they believe or does anyone believe Canadian taxpayers should be asked to compensate developers for 57 years worth of lost profits because they cooked up a deal with the Conservative government that days later lost every seat in the greater Toronto area and only held on to two of them in the whole country? Tory senators do not want us to settle for out of pocket and reasonable expenses. They want $445 million on this last trip to the trough for their friends.

• (1540)

I cannot believe that at least some of the Conservative senators in the other place will not understand that Parliament cannot condone this outrageous raid on Canadian taxpayers.

[*Translation*]

The leader of the Liberal Party, now Prime Minister of Canada, warned all the parties not to sign the agreement. If the promoters were so sure that this was a good deal for Canada, why did they not wait and try to convince a new government and the public? Was it because they knew their friends were going to lose if there was no cancellation clause in the contract?

[*English*]

Our government is pledged to dealing with the private sector in an open, fair and responsible manner; but we will always take the taxpayers' interest into account. Our decision to cancel this contract came after a clear and absolutely unequivocal signal to all parties that abuses of the political process and practices we consider to be unacceptable would not be tolerated. Last minute deals worth hundreds of millions of dollars rammed through the system in many instances against the will of members of the public service will not be rubber stamped.

The facts I have outlined today and the details we have learned in our negotiations to compensate out of pocket expenses have all contributed to my resolve to see the bill passed into law unamended.

The House passed Bill C–22 to ensure the future of Pearson International Airport. The government is willing to consider paying an amount up to $30 million. It is a lot of money. We understand our commercial obligations and the need for the crown to respect appropriate undertakings.

We have looked at the claims and we think a fair analysis of reasonable business practices will allow us to compensate up to $30 million to both the developers and third parties for the reasonable out of pocket expenses that are at the core of the bill.

The majority in the other place wants the Canadian taxpayer put in the position of having to fork over maybe $445 million. The distinction is simple. The House recognized the need to right a blatant wrong. The House recognized the need to formally make the odious contract null and void. The House recognized the need to return the parties to their pre–contract status and to cover their legitimate out of pocket expenses incurred in the ordinary course of business.

The other place, I regret to say, in its majority decision to bring in these amendments has ignored the interest of Canadians. It has amended the bill so as, if we accepted those amendments, to force the dispute into the courts where no one in the House or in the other place would then have anything to say about them. Then it would be a matter for the courts to decide on legal interpretation and on argument how much the bill would be for Canadian taxpayers.

I am not prepared to run that risk. I hope a majority of my colleagues in the House and a majority of senators in the other place will not run that risk either.

One has to ask whether the Tory scheme all along was to ignore what was patently obvious in October 1993 and to set the scene to make one last snatch at the public purse. Quite a money grab it would be. If the majority of the other place perseveres and wins this case, this scheme could result in the biggest rip–off in Canadian history, $445 million of taxpayers' money.

• (1545)

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my friends through you that the government is not going to play Russian roulette with the Tory majority in the other place with half a billion dollars of Canadian taxpayers' money on the table. That is simply not an option.

This deal resembles what might have been done in a banana republic by a dying government during its last gasps. There is no doubt and I readily admit it that this bill is an extraordinary measure to bring before Parliament but I do not believe that anyone in their right mind would deny that this was an extraordinary deal and it has to be undone.

It is time to get on with the business of providing the country with a safe, efficient and affordable national airport system with Lester B. Pearson International Airport at Toronto at the centre of this hub.

It is time to get on with the future of Canada's largest and most important transportation facility and it is time that the Conservative majority in the other place recognized that Canadians understood that this was a bad deal and agreed that it has to be dealt with resolutely.

We intend to ensure that Canadian taxpayers are not going to get a $445 million bill from the consortium and their friends in the other place.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House of Commons from all parties to join with us in sending a clear message to the Senate that Parliament will protect the interests of Canadians and that Bill C–22 must be passed without amendments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to address a few comments to the minister before he leaves. I hope that he will find it in his code of ethics to hear what I have to say despite his busy schedule. I would like to address three points of his speech.

First of all, if it were not for the calendar in front of me confirming this is September 28, 1994, I could have sworn we were back in 1990, when the Liberal opposition in this House was criticizing former Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney for appointing new senators to ram the GST bill through the other place. An action considered offensive.

Now the shoe is on the other foot, with the Conservatives in the majority in the other place. The Liberals did make use of their majority in the Senate when the time came to oppose the GST bill. This is the first comment I wanted to make.

My second comment is that throughout the election campaign, the Bloc Quebecois candidates stressed repeatedly—I know I did 250 times a day in my riding of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans—the fact that Liberal or Conservative, it is one and the same. We have proof of that today in this debate and when we hear the minister's remarks about the Conservative majority in the other place.

The third comment I wanted to make concerns the answer the minister gave me when questioned in a meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport. He said I knew full well that as part of the Auditor General review process, all compensation granted could undergo scrutiny. I just want to point out to the hon. minister that all this auditing by the Auditor General takes place after the fact. After irregularities have been detected, the Auditor General tables three books confirming they took place, but nothing can be done about it. That is why the Bloc Quebecois called for the creation of a royal inquiry commission that could have shed light on this whole matter.

• (1550)

The minister revisited this issue in his speech today and apparently said that various institutions would shed light on this but only after the fact, after compensation has been paid. Of course, if no compensation is paid, the problem vanishes.

On June 14, I addressed this House at the second reading of Bill C–22 and asked that a royal commission be mandated to shed light on the contract awarded to Pearson Development Corporation. I put all my heart and energy in that speech, because I really thought it was my last opportunity to sensitize the House to this deal which was, if not illegal, at least highly questionable.

Although I disagree with the amendments proposed by the Senate, I am still happy to have another opportunity to rise in this House to try once again to shed light on a deal the current Prime Minister himself promised to cancel before he was elected, but I cannot understand how the deal can be scrapped without getting to the bottom of this, once and for all.

I must tell you that I had several opportunities in the Standing Committee on Transport to state, and I repeat it in this House, we heard a few witnesses who agreed to appear before us, before the transport committee. Still, even today, Canadians, Quebecers and transport committee members cannot really say that all the light has been shed on this deal.

My argumentation will revolve around three main themes. First, the interference of an unelected house in an elected house's decisions; second, the compensation to be paid to Pearson Development Corporation; and third, the steps to be taken to shed light on this shady deal.

Since the beginning, since Bill C–22 was tabled, the Bloc Quebecois, of which I am the transport critic, has been against paying any compensation to the developer before we find out the truth about this deal.

Under the bill passed by the House of Commons, the developer cannot go to the courts to obtain compensation from the government. The Minister of Transport—remember the clause in Bill C–22—reserved the right to set the amount of any compensation to be paid. That is why we are still opposed to the principle of Bill C–22.

The other place rose up against this bill and declared that the position taken by the House of Commons was unconstitutional. It has asked that Clauses 7 and 8 of the bill be deleted. As you may recall, these clauses prevent the developers from initiating court proceedings. What right does an unelected house such as the other place have to reject the democratic decisions made by this House whose members have been democratically elected by the people?

I could perhaps take this opportunity to comment on the actions of a representative of the other place appointed by the government party, a former president of the Liberal Party, former leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba, former Leader of the Opposition in Winnipeg, former killer of the Meech Lake accord, who bluntly stated that the elected members of this House were people with little education or at least less education than the members of the other place. I say to this representative of the other place that we at least have been elected by the people and not appointed because of our friendship with the Liberal Party of Canada, as she was.

That is outrageous and offensive. It really shows the urgent need to abolish the other place, especially since it has been using senators appointed by the Conservative government that was repudiated by the people in the last election to prevent democratically elected members of Parliament like myself from making essential decisions.

• (1555)

I mentioned earlier that the Bloc Quebecois is opposed to any compensation to Pearson Development Corporation as long as all the facts surrounding this issue are not known, and I want to tell the members of this House why it is important to shed light on this case.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I represent my party on the Standing Committee on Transport. It is important to point out that, contrary to what Mr. Greg Weston wrote in the *Ottawa Citizen*, it is the Bloc Quebecois which submitted to the transport committee a list of 18 witnesses to appear before that committee, this after our request for a commission of inquiry was turned down by the House of Commons.

Contrary to what Mr. Weston wrote in the same newspaper, the Bloc Quebecois is also the one which tabled motions to subpoena those who had refused to appear before the committee. It is unfortunate that a journalist would not recognize the good work done by the Bloc Quebecois in its role as Official Opposition. Instead, that person chose to give the credit to the Reform Party which, as the hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke admitted, simply could not believe what was happening.

I want to confirm once again that the Bloc Quebecois did submit a list of witnesses that it felt should be heard by the transport committee. That list contains 18 names. Here are those names, as well as the reasons why we wanted these people to testify and shed light on the whole issue.

The first person on the list is Mr. Peter Coughlin, President of Pearson Development Corporation. The second one is Mr. Leo Kolber, a Liberal representative in the other place, who was an administrator of Claridge when the agreements were signed, this according to the *Financial Post Directory of Directors*. Mr. Kolber had organized, at his residence in Westmount, a $1,000–per–guest reception attended, among others, by Mr. Charles Bronfman, where the current Prime Minister of Canada showed up, in early October of last year, right in the middle of the election campaign.

The third person we wanted to hear was Mr. Herb Metcalfe, a lobbyist with Capital Hill, as well as an official of Claridge Properties and a former organizer for the current Prime Minister of Canada. There was also Mr. Ramsey Withers, a Liberal with close ties to the current Prime Minister who was Deputy Minister of Transport when the call for tenders was made for Terminal III at Pearson airport, as reported in the *Ottawa Citizen*, on September 26, 1993. And there was Mr. Otto Jelinek, a former Conservative minister who is now president of the Asian affiliate of the Matthews group.

Then, there was Mr. Don Matthews, who was president of Brian Mulroney's nomination campaign in 1983; he is also a former president of the Conservative Party and a former president of the Conservative fund–raising campaign, as reported in the *Ottawa Citizen*, on September 29, 1993. We also wanted to hear Mr. Ray Hession, a former Deputy Minister of Industry and senior civil servant at Supply and Services, where

contracts are awarded—sometimes, maybe, to friends of the government, since it might be helpful during an election campaign. He was appointed president of Paxport and hired all the lobbyists who were to work on the privatization project for Paxport Inc. This Mr. Hession left his job as president in December 1992, after Paxport's bid was accepted by the federal government. He was to be replaced by Don Matthews's son, Jack, as reported in the *Ottawa Citizen*, on September 26, 1993.

There was also Mr. Fred Doucet, a Conservative lobbyist and Brian Mulroney's former chief of staff. He was also a senior advisor during Kim Campbell's campaign and was hired by Jack Matthews five days after Mr. Hession left his job as president. Three weeks later, Paxport created a consortium with its rival, Claridge Properties. Then there was Mr. Jean Corbeil, a former Conservative transport minister, who signed the agreement while all the attention was focused on the leaders' debate, during the election campaign. He had been Minister of Transport for less than three months but, already, there were information leaks to the effect that he was bent on privatizing Pearson airport.

Then there was Mr. Robert Nixon, the investigator appointed by the current Prime Minister, who recommended that the contract be cancelled and who is a former Treasurer of Ontario under the Liberal government of Mr. Peterson, as well as a former leader of the Ontario Liberal Party.

• (1600)

There was also Ms. Kim Campbell. Internal documents given to her last August supposedly described the risks associated with the transaction, and in particular the fee increase for carriers, which would have cost taxpayers a lot of money.

We also asked the Standing Committee on Transport to summon the current Minister of Transport, and this request was agreed to.

We made all those requests not only to get the information I referred to earlier, but also to prove that, despite the fact that lobbyist fees are not compensated under this bill, taxpayers will still have to pay part of the expenses incurred by the corporations to make up for the lost tax revenues due to the corporate tax exemption for lobbying services.

What we wanted to ask the minister and what we did manage to ask him was: How can you justify the involvement of taxpayers in a patronage transaction? This fact alone justifies a public inquiry.

Also, the Minister of Transport himself stated that lobbying services should not be tax deductible, as reported by the *Ottawa Citizen* on March 9, 1994.

We also wanted to hear from Air Canada representatives, who were involved in this deal, since the government negotiated a decrease in rent for the next few years in return for a commitment by the corporation to remain at terminals 1 and 2 at the Pearson airport in Toronto.

We asked to hear from Mr. William Rowat, assistant deputy minister at Transport Canada, who was appointed by the past Clerk of the Privy Council to help move things along. You have to remember that he was appointed in March of 1993.

We also asked to hear from Mr. Bob Wright, closely tied to the Liberal Party of Canada, who is negotiating, secretly of course, the compensation to be awarded to the consortium.

We wanted to hear from the Toronto Airport Authority, a public agency similar to the Aéroports de Montréal organization, which wanted to be considered as a potential manager for Terminals 1 and 2, but claims to have been intentionally overlooked by the Conservatives.

We asked to hear from Ms. Huguette Labelle and, finally, from Mr. Robert Vineberg, Pearson Development Corporation's lawyer and board member.

In each and every one of these 18 cases, there were discussions in the committee on transport as to whether or not to call these witnesses before the committee. If the Liberals have nothing to hide, why did they refuse systematically to summon the people on our list so that we could clarify this deal?

Let us start with Mr. Robert Nixon, a key player in this issue. Mr. Nixon was the one who carried out the inquiry into Pearson Development Corporation at the request of the current Liberal Prime Minister. Last November, he recommended that the deal signed by the Conservatives and the Pearson Development Corporation be declared void.

Yet, the Liberals have refused to ask Mr. Nixon to appear before the committee on transport. Our resolution was defeated, four to two, by the Liberal majority. Is this normal? Do they have something to hide?

As for Mr. Robert Wright, who is no less important than Mr. Nixon, the answer of the Liberal majority in the committee was the same: "No." Believe it or not, only six of the 18 people I invited were heard by the committee. These were Mr. Ray Hession, the current Minister of Transport, Mr. Peter Coughlin, Mr. Don Matthews, someone from Air Canada and Mr. Robert Vineberg, representing Pearson Development Corporation.

I have used up all arguments to convince my colleagues from the committee to subpoena people on the Bloc Quebecois's list of witnesses. At that time, I remember very clearly the chairperson of the transport committee, the hon. member for Hamilton West, telling me: "Come on, sir, you know perfectly well that this is a procedure which has not been used in Canada since 1917 or 1918". But that was totally false. I sincerely hope that the chairperson of the Transport Committee did not knowingly try to mislead me because I checked and I found that that procedure was used in 1989, in 1990 and in 1992 to summon witnesses.

• (1605)

There was even one instance, in 1989 or 1990, when the present government House leader used that special procedure to summon witnesses to appear before the committee. I sincerely hope that the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Transport was not acting in bad faith.

I will give you another example. I told the committee members that since Leo Kolber was a parliamentarian from the other place, he would surely co–operate with us given his duties. Furthermore, at the time the contracts were signed, the *Ottawa Sun* reported that on October 10, 1993, that parliamentarian was a member of Claridge's board of directors and owned 60 per cent of the shares in Pearson Development Corporation.

You have to admit that he was a key witness who could have helped us shed some light on the matter. On top of that, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported on November 9, 1993 that the same member of the other place had given a reception at $1,000 a plate in his Westmount residence at the beginning of October, a reception attended by Mr. Charles Bronfman, among others, and by the present Prime Minister who, at the time, was in the middle of his election campaign.

If I had the time, I could also talk about the cleaning up of political party funding. We saw again, as recently as yesterday, that some people preferred to receive contributions from large firms rather than to have a clean election fund. The Bloc's position is clear and that is why the hon. member for Richelieu moved such an amendment.

I could give other examples. All those arguments that I put forward were useless since my request was denied by the Liberal majority on the committee. I could also mention the case of Mr. Otto Jelinek, a former Conservative minister who is now president of the Asian subsidiary of the Matthews group. The answer was the same as in most other cases. The Liberal members on the Transport Committee told me that it would be premature to subpoena Mr. Jelinek since he intended to appear voluntarily.

You will understand that, given the refusal of my Liberal colleagues to summon the people who could have helped this House understand the situation, I have no choice but to say that this matter is not transparent. I wonder if the Liberals are protecting the same people as the Conservatives or some other people. I also wonder if it is possible that the friends and backers of the system contribute to the election funds of both old parties.

What is troubling is that Canadians still do not know all the facts as to why the contract was awarded to Pearson Development Corporation. And I find it sad that the Liberal majority is enjoying hiding the truth.

It must also be pointed out that if the Bloc Quebecois does not know all the facts, it cannot be expected to decide on the validity of the financial claims made by each of the concerned groups.

When we look at the Nixon report, some words leave us with a bitter aftertaste. We could wonder what Mr. Nixon meant when referring to malversation in connection with lobbyists. Did he have any real evidence of this? Do you know anything about it, Mr. Speaker? If you do not know, I do not know either. No witness knows. Nobody but the opposition seems to want to know about it on the Hill. But then, who does know? We are being asked to make a decision involving the expenditure of tens of millions of dollars when nobody really knows what the Nixon report meant.

The Minister of Transport spoke about criteria governing compensation claims. Could the minister make these criteria public? If he has nothing to hide, I am sure he will not hesitate to do so.

Mr. Speaker, you are a lawyer and you know very well that due process was not followed by Mr. Nixon. In French law too there is the rule of audi alteram partem, the right of both parties in a case to be heard. I am sorry, but this rule does not seem to have been followed, no more than due process, by Mr. Nixon.

• (1610)

It is unfortunate that the minister should rely on a report full of half–truths to request—and that is what he is doing under clause 10 of the bill—the authority to spend tens of millions of dollars.

When will the minister launch a public inquiry to get right to the bottom of this matter? Several Liberal members approved of this inquiry, but they were gagged and had to toe the party line.

If the government motion is passed, obviously the bill will be passed too, but would the Minister of Transport agree? For want of a public inquiry, I ask him once more to have the Standing Committee on Transport examine any agreement and make recommendations before he signs it. If the minister says that the agreement was rejected because it was not acceptable for Quebecers and Canadians, why not give elected representatives the opportunity to make the necessary recommendations? The government would demonstrate its openness. Otherwise, a feeling of frustration will linger, and doubts will remain in our mind and that of the public in Quebec and Canada.

The best way to protect reputations is visibility and openness, and a public inquiry. Of course such an inquiry will be costly and will take time, but I ask this House if democracy costs something. Is democracy too costly? Are the costs more important than living in a democracy? I am sorry, but democracy is priceless. You cannot put a price on getting the facts and spending taxpayers' money wisely.

However, if the minister refuses to conduct a public inquiry because of costs and delays, he could ask a parliamentary committee to do it. Does the minister realize that the whole tendering process was botched? Consequently, will the minister take the necessary steps to prevent such a fiasco from happening again?

The government could refuse to order a parliamentary committee or the Standing Committee on Transport to conduct a public inquiry; this would bring us back to square one. If that happens, can the minister tell us how long the compensation claims process will take? As we know, the Nixon Report mentioned obscure dealings by lobbyists. Since these schemes were not revealed to the public, can we fear that such scheming will taint the compensation process?

At the transport committee hearings, when Robert Vineberg, Pearson Development Corporation's lawyer, appeared before us, I had prepared some very tough questions. If you do not believe me, you need only refer to the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Transport. It is an aberration. We had written to the representative, Mr. Vineberg's client, who told us that Mr. Vineberg would answer for him. I asked Mr. Vineberg over and over again if he was speaking for his client and he assured me that he was not, that he was speaking in his own name and that he could not speak for his client.

What happened was that two people were not only mocking us to our faces, but were arguing back and forth and we never got an answer. Mr. Vineberg is a well–known member of the legal profession here in Canada and I asked him four questions: Should an already flawed contract— because the rules of assent were flawed from the beginning—provide for compensation in case of cancellation? Would he agree with a public enquiry? Would his firm willingly submit financial analyses? Finally, I made a brief comment saying that those who live in glass houses should not cast stones.

• (1615)

I will not quote the answers because not one of them is worth repeating in this House. We would also have liked to get answers to other questions. For example, while he was involved in the case, had he ever been aware of any malversation in connection with lobbyists or of civil servants or political personnel being too closely interested in the Pearson issue? Also, did he agree with the profit analysis in the Nixon report which indicated a 14 per cent profit after taxes? I also asked him if he did not find it a little bit strange that bidders were only given 90 days to prepare their bid for a 57–year contract worth $1.6 billion? Are such things normal and reasonable in a democratic society? We have to wonder. The answer is obvious. There is not one Canadian who will find that it makes sense.

I am only relating some of the juiciest parts of what Mr. Vineberg said. I understand that Canadians and Quebecers will be able to read the whole thing in the minutes of the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Transport. It is a jewel in its own right, but the answers are not worth repeating in this House.

I could go on talking all day long about this famous Bill C–22 and the proposed amendments. I have already spent a lot of the taxpayers' money to convince this House to satisfy Canadians by keeping them informed of ongoing negotiations between the government and Pearson Development Corporation.

When I talk about money spent, I am talking about the transport committee's hearings, and the salaries of federal civil servants, researchers and MPs. This is a lot of money spent to achieve very little. I would like to add that my party and I agree with the government's motion to reject all the amendments presented by the other place. I am in agreement with the government but for different reasons.

First, as I mentioned earlier, I cannot accept that non–elected individuals try to have the upper hand on decisions in this country. Second, I cannot accept that the Pearson Development Corporation be given compensation for any loss incurred before April 13, 1994 since the circumstances surrounding the awarding of the contract were flawed to start with. This being said, if we reject the amendments proposed by the other place and adopt the government's motion, a doubt will always linger in the minds of Canadians for lack of a public inquiry.

Once again, I plead with my hon. colleagues to allow a royal commission of inquiry to get to the bottom of this so that trust in our leaders may be restored.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We will now proceed to the other stage of debate where members will have 20 minute interventions, subject to 10 minutes questions and comments.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Liberals may not have as much support in caucus for this motion as they might like us to believe. I am sure being good members of the old style party of the past that they will vote the party line as they are told. I understand that they cannot find anyone else to speak to this debate. I am really sad if that is the case because I have some questions I would like to ask and have answered here today. We will have to make of the process what we can.

This whole business of Bill C–22 and the Pearson development contract was a very questionable process at best. We question the type of lobbying that was done, the allegation at least that there was an excessive amount, the close links that those lobbyists had with the Prime Minister's Office and a lot of the actions that the government itself took, the short duration, using one of the bidders to provide a lot of the parameters for the bid in the first place, the way it was signed at the last minute when it was known that the Tory government was on its way out. It was a very questionable deal. There is no argument on that at all.

We have a backroom deal. One of the problems is the government is offering us a backroom solution to this problem. That is not acceptable.

• (1620)

We have not heard a single piece of evidence stating specifically what improper, illegal action was taken by the bidder in this process. That is what we are trying to get to the bottom of.

My colleague in the Bloc tried to get to the bottom of that. We tried to get witnesses in and had very little luck with it, either co–operation from the witnesses or for that matter co–operation from the government in subpoenaing those witnesses.

On the other hand, it is said that during the time this was signed the leader of the Liberal Party said that if he got in this deal would be cancelled. That is not what he said. I want to clarify that. He stated that he would hold an independent public inquiry into this entire process.

I have talked to the principals involved in this consortium. They said that did not hold any fear for them. They welcome a public inquiry into this. They will open their books to anyone, as they did when this so–called public inquiry took place. They said the have nothing to fear, they have done nothing wrong.

What happened with our independent public inquiry? The government hired Mr. Robert Nixon. Is it really an inquiry when from start to finish in finished report the whole thing took 20 days? It took place largely behind closed doors. We were not able to suggest who he might talk to. Several of the people the industry thought would be the obvious people for Mr. Nixon to talk to did not get called in. There was no opportunity to cross examine the evidence that was put in. Whether or not it was a fair inquiry or a public inquiry does not seem to be answered.

To decide whether the inquiry was independent we have to look at who Mr. Nixon is. Mr. Nixon is the former leader of the Ontario Liberal Party. Mr. Nixon was the chairman of the 1987 Liberal task force on Pearson Airport. Mr. Nixon is the father of a sitting Liberal member. Immediately after he put in his report in 30 days, Mr. Nixon was named as chairman of the atomic energy commission. Independent?—I hardly think so.

There is another allegation. I think it is fair to bring the allegations into this House because all we have heard about this contract are allegations. In Mr. Nixon's so–called independent public inquiry there was no evidence. There were only allegations of possible improprieties, of possible wrongdoing. There was not one shred of hard evidence brought forward by Mr. Nixon.

The allegation that is floating in industry right now from many sources is that there are two Nixon reports, one Mr. Nixon actually wrote and one that was written for him and actually submitted. Do I have proof of this?—no, I do not, any more than the proof we have seen of the wrongdoings by the Pearson consortium in this whole deal. Allegations are all we have seen.

Then the Standing Committee on Transport decided it would hold hearings and we would have a chance to air all this out and find out what went wrong. As my colleague in the Bloc stated, many people were asked to come before the committee but very few of them showed up. This did not help the case of the consortium.

I was not very pleased that a lot of these people who claimed that they were hard done by did not come forward to defend themselves. We also did not get very much co–operation from the Liberal government in trying to ensure that we got those people in.

There were a couple of other interesting events. Aside from the people we asked who did not come there were several principals who asked specifically to come to the hearing and were denied. These were people like William Pearson, the president of Agra Engineering, George Ploder, president of Bracknell Corporation, and Scott McMasters, president North America, of Allders International Canada. One of the principal investors in this whole contract was denied the right to come before the committee. Why is the government trying to hide what truly happened in this whole process?

The topic of the return on investment being excessive has been brought up, while we have heard figures that are all over the scale.

• (1625)

The government was first alleging 18.5 per cent. Today we heard some figures going up to 28 per cent. The reality is this was examined by a firm I think the House would agree is credible. I am so overwhelmed by some of the stuff the government has done that I am at a loss for words on some of this. The firm I am talking about is Price Waterhouse. I do not think anybody here is going to question the integrity of Price Waterhouse. It said 14 per cent return.

It is really interesting that the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce was one of the tentative investors in this. It invested at what looked like a 18.5 per cent return on that investment. When it dropped to 14 per cent, which is exactly what Price Waterhouse says it was, CIBC pulled out because it was not a good enough return for the risk involved in this type of investment. Maybe the government wants to suggest that CIBC is not credible, I do not know. It has not answered that.

Included in this particular bill is the fact that there should be no compensation for lobbying fees. If there was something illegal about the way this corporation lobbied the government then certainly it should not get compensation for any illegal activity whatsoever, no matter what.

If the lobbying was legal according to the government and we like many others do not like the fact that there is lobbying, then until such time that the rules are changed it is the same as somebody driving down the street at 90 kilometres an hour in a 90 kilometre zone and someone pulls out from a side street in front of them and gets hit; an investigation after deciding that 90 kilometres is too fast on that street. You do not charge the person who was doing 90 kilometres because he was doing it in accordance with the law, even if it was too fast for that street. That was not his fault. You change the speed limit but you do not do it retroactively. That is what the government is looking at in this particular case.

It talks of third party contract liability. It is going to allow a few dollars to compensate the principles in this for third party contract liability. Third parties do not have a contract with the government. They have a contract with the Pearson consortium. They can sue in court for whatever amount they care to sue for. It could well exceed $30 million figure the minister threw out here today and there is absolutely no way for the principals in this to pay it. They have that much money out themselves, whether it is by regular and proper activities or whether it is some proper activity, notwithstanding they have already spent in excess of that. Now all of these third parties are supposed to be included in the settlement of $30 million. It may or may not be appropriate. We have not seen the figures.

There is an ongoing problem with terminal 1 and terminal 2 and the government has not told us what its alternative to this contract is. I tried to find that out from the minister today in Question Period. We did not get an answer, which of course surprises me. It is Question Period, not answer period. That seems to be a very common thing, we do not get answers from the government to our questions.

This is something that should be brought out if we are going to deal properly with this entire business evolving around the Pearson airport.

We are looking for something that is very open, very public and very honest. The government is looking to make a secret compensation deal behind closed doors. The minister was asked when he came before the standing committee if he would make this process visible.

I proposed an amendment both at committee and at third reading here in the House to say we would support this bill if instead of hiring another independent person linked to the government who was going to collect all these claims from the consortium, the minister could decide whether he was going to pay, who he was going to pay and how much he was going to pay them. We asked if he will make these figures public, if we will be privy to these figures and the process used to get to them. His answer was about as vague as it was here today dealing with T1 and T2.

He said they might be able to release some of the figures, but they are not sure because cabinet is involved. The minute we involve cabinet we could wrap the figures up for 20 years and know absolutely nothing about what went on. Under those circumstances there is no way to ensure fairness has taken place.

• (1630)

Today in his address the minister said that the threat of litigation was holding up a new solution. No, it is not. We can have all the solutions in the world telling us what to do. There is absolutely nothing that is holding up some alternative solution to the Pearson airport problem with terminal 1 and terminal 2. All the minister has to do is agree with what is being proposed in the House back from the other place. The contract will be cancelled; it will be over. The fact that litigation is going on in court will not hold up new solutions.

We are looking for a court review of the entire process. That was not our solution; that was not what we desired. We wanted it done in the House through the Standing Committee on Transport where the entire process could be brought forth.

One of the risks that actually happens if it goes to court is that the government could end up reaching a settlement and we would never know the true story about what happened in the Pearson bid process. That is not something we desire.

To turn around at this point and simply close the door, to let the minister decide he will pay what he wants and there will be no recourse and no argument, the public will never find out who was at fault in the process.

Was it the people who bid? Was it the Tory government and the way it was done? Or, do the Liberals have a large part in some of the problems that went on here? As it turns out they talk about the Tory cronies coming to the trough, but in the later stages of the proposal there were as many, if not more, Liberals involved in both the consortium and the lobbying. Is that what the government is really trying to hide?

The salvage value of the work being done has not been answered. We want to know what the government has for an alternative process to deal with the problem at Pearson. All kinds of money have been spent on plans, drawings, engineering, passenger load surveys, negotiations with users and tentative contracts that could still be honoured by a new contractor. There is a tremendous value in that, but until we know what it is we do not know what compensation the government should pay out for those things specifically and what the Canadian taxpayer will be able to recoup through the process.

The minister suggested that taxpayers are faced with cuts and therefore we should not consider going into court and allowing the contractors from Pearson to get a large settlement. Is that not interesting? Does that not send a wonderful message out to the business community?

It says that the Liberal government is in trouble with its overspending. The Liberal government has to make some cuts somewhere. It does not particularly care if they are fair or normal as long as they will save a lot of money and as long as someone else can be blamed. That is where some of these cuts will come from.

I do not want to see money wasted by the government any more than anyone else other than probably the government. We bring forward financially responsible proposals and the government seems to want to waste money. It is strange that it would suddenly turn around and want to be financially responsible. It is not proposing financial responsibility.

The matter has to go back to the courts. The courts will decide what went wrong in the process. They will discover whether there was any illegal or improper conduct on the part of anyone involved in the process and they will set the compensation accordingly.

If there was something wrong with the way the consortium lobbied the government it will be identified. The principals will not be compensated for illegal, improper type conduct. If they conducted themselves properly, just because we do not happen to like the way the rules work we cannot punish private enterprise for following the rules of the government. If that happens it sends out a message that no one should do business with the government, and that is not the kind of message we want to send out.

As far as what is going to happen to the bill, the Liberal government has an absolute dictatorship for the next four years. Obviously it can pass anything it wants as long as it can keep its backbenches in order. So far it has been able to do that. We do not know how long it will be able to maintain that, but for now at least it has managed to keep its members voting the way they are told. We have to suppose that it will go back to the other place.

How are we going to deal with it? I am going to meet with the Senate. It is very clear we want a triple E Senate, but as long as we have a Senate there has to be some function for it. If it provides the chamber of sober second thought, which is the function of the Senate, we will work with what we have to work with until such time as we can improve it. We will try to find a solution or an alternative way to bring the matter back to the House yet again until the government deals fairly and properly with the whole matter.

• (1635)

We will not support the government's motion.

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I was listening very passively to the hon. member's speech until I heard the word "dictatorship". It was like being hit over the head with a two by four. It brought me to attention.

Mr. Silye: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Quorum, please.

Mr. Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that it is fine to call for quorum but we have many members in committees right now and doing House duty as do other parties. If we start these shenanigans about quorum, we are going to be spending taxpayers' money.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. A request has been duly made by the member. He has asked for quorum. By recognizing the other member on his intervention I believe we were getting into a matter of debate.

Mr. Reed: The time the House was shut down with a quorum call probably resulted in another $100,000 being added to the national debt.

My comments will be brief. The hon. member mentioned a four–year dictatorship and the government keeping the backbenches in line. He should know that the government was elected in the most democratic process existing on the face of the earth. Whatever he may think about that election forming a dictatorship, I suggest he is dead wrong. If he wants to compare what happens in this country with what happens in any other country on the face of the earth he is welcome to do it. I think he should do it before he makes accusations of the kind.

I assure him the backbench is totally united on the issue. As a member who comes from the metropolitan Toronto area or its periphery and whose constituents work at Pearson, at ancillary industries at Pearson, in the airline industries and so on, I say that a successful outcome to the bill is very important.

Mr. Gouk: Mr. Speaker, the term dictatorship suggests when those in power can do whatever they wish. That is exactly what we have. Any time we have a majority party it is the equivalent of a temporary dictatorship. It can be a benevolent dictatorship, if it wishes to get re–elected, but it has absolute power nonetheless. That is where that particular term comes from.

The hon. member mentioned the people who work at Pearson and the fact that he comes from Toronto. I assume he was going to suggest they had argued in the political process of getting elected that they were going to challenge the Pearson deal. They did not challenge the Pearson deal. They simply overturned it.

We are talking about contract cancellation. That is not what they are doing. They are trying to pretend the contract never took place. That is not what they said they would do during the campaign. They said they would have a public review. We are still waiting.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak again on Bill C–22 and the amendments proposed by the other place.

Everyone in Quebec and Canada knows what effect this shameless attempt at privatizing the airport could have had if it had gone through and who would have had their palms greased as we say in Quebec with such a patronage–prone, foul–smelling plan as that to privatize Pearson Airport.

All the potential transactions, all the provisions of the privatization contract per se and all the people involved in this privatization attempt have not been brought to light yet.

Again, not only did we not get right to the bottom of the matter, but Bill C–22 still contains provisions which could be conducive to patronage, that which the people and Quebec and Canada detest most about the politics of older parties.

When you read in this bill that we continue to leave it to the Minister of Transport's absolute discretion to compensate promoters if appropriate, I find that is absolutely absurd. My colleagues have been pointing this out over and over since this bill was introduced and will continue to do so at every stage, unless the government changes course along the way.

I must say that this government's attitude toward Bill C–22 and privatization is worse than anything we have seen under the Conservatives. The Conservatives at least were upfront. They were open about their patronage deeds and about the fact they greased the palms of their friends, while the Liberals have a more underhanded, almost wicked, way of doing things. But they continue to do it after having rent their clothes, in fact a closet–full of made–to–measure shirts, starting with the Minister of Transport.

On November 29, 1993, the Minister of Transport himself openly told the media that he was thinking about holding an inquiry, an exhaustive inquiry into the ins and outs of this attempt to privatize Pearson airport. It was after he realized that it was not just Conservatives involved in promoting this project or in the investments connected with the privatization of Pearson, but that there were also friends of the Liberals, who had made contributions to the Liberal Party of Canada, that the Minister of Transport, probably on the advice of his cabinet colleagues, backed down and offered us instead the report by Mr. Nixon, a very close advisor to, not to say a member of, the Liberal Party of Canada.

From the beginning of the debate on Bill C–22, we spent some time cross–checking contributors to the Liberal Party coffers, even Canadian companies who had made contributions, and the principal players involved in Pearson. And we found the connections very easy to establish. It was obvious that somewhere there were people who had such an amazingly underhanded, nebulous influence that it halted the process of inquiry into the privatization, the attempt at privatization of Pearson airport.

Yesterday, the attitude of the Liberal majority to the bill tabled by my colleague from Richelieu on public funding of parties was proof to me that members of the Liberal Party of Canada are just as steeped in patronage as the Conservatives.

• (1645)

They roundly defeated a bill that would have applied, at the federal level, the old dream that Mr. Lévesque made come true in Quebec, namely financing parties with contributions from individual citizens of Quebec and Canada who require defended after, who require that those they elect defend their interests and not the interests of the very rich friends of the regime, especially of the lobbyists who previously belonged to former Liberal or Conservative governments. Their attitude yesterday tells me a lot about the inflexibility they have shown every time we asked them to set up a real inquiry process that would fully elucidate the attempt to privatize Pearson.

Why do we need to get to the bottom of it? Because, if we were able, with the fragmentary information at our disposal, to perceive the possibility of ethical problems and patronage in this issue, it may mean that there were many more in the past under the Conservative government and under the Liberal government before that as well. But above all, it means that the incongruities and strange happenings involving very powerful lobbies connected to the main federal parties may occur again in the future.

The taxpayers of Quebec and Canada find that quite costly. They must find out what happened in the Pearson affair and especially they must be assured that such incidents will not recur in future, where friends of the party, former ministers, senators, people who worked very closely with the government as senior officials affiliated with the old parties got rich at taxpayers' expense. That is why it is important to clear this

matter up. To find out whether the lobbyists accused of having influence—and we are not the ones who say so; it is in the Nixon report, the Liberal Party's report—the lobbyists accused of having extraordinary influence in this contract, lobbyists like Pat MacAdam, a Conservative lobbyist and friend of Brian Mulroney; lobbyists like Bill Fox, a Conservative lobbyist and college friend of Brian Mulroney.

We have been naming names for a long time now, because they should be ashamed if they have done something wrong, they should be ashamed to continue pressuring the government not to order a public inquiry. As professional lobbyists, they are certainly still worrying about the possibility, perhaps only a slight one because, after all, these people are friends, that there will be a public inquiry that would reveal to Quebecers and Canadians the amazing extent of their influence.

So, I go on because I want to make sure that Harry Near, a Conservative lobbyist and long–time supporter, Don Matthews, a former president of Brian Mulroney's nomination campaign in 1983 and former president of the Conservative Party, Hugh Riopelle, a lobbyist and the strong man in Mulroney's office, and John Llegate, Michael Wilson's personal friend, exert no more untraceable influence. They can lobby in a normal and legitimate manner, but when a Liberal report, the Nixon report, says that they exerted an influence which went beyond the bounds of normal lobbying activities, I think that we should have greater doubts than those timidly expressed in the Nixon report.

This deal did not just involve Conservative lobbyists or people close to the Conservative government. That is probably why the Minister of Transport, who went loudly after the Bloc Quebecois members when they told him the truth, that is probably why the Minister of Transport backed down within the space of a few weeks saying: No, there will be no inquiry, just a short preliminary analysis about the possible financial consequences for the Canadian government if we had privatized Pearson. He realized that friends of the Liberal Party were also involved.

As my colleague, our critic for transport, said earlier, there was Senator Leo Kolber, well–known for his haute cuisine dinner at $1,000 a plate. During the election campaign, Mr. Kolber invited all those who could have, according to the Nixon Report, a somewhat obscure albeit overwhelming influence on the government to come and meet the next Prime Minister at a private dinner at $1,000 a plate.

• (1650)

Among his distinguished guests was Mr. Bronfman, who was directly involved in the privatization of the Pearson Airport. Also involved in this deal were Herb Metcalfe, a lobbyist for Capital Hill, a representative of Claridge Properties and former organizer for the current Prime Minister, as well as Ramsey Withers, a Liberal lobbyist with close ties to the Prime Minister.

I think only one or two of these worthy Liberal supporters would have been enough to persuade the Minister of Transport to have a change of heart, since the minister was already not quite convinced that he needed to go after not only the friends of the government, but also of Canada's financial establishment.

The inconsistencies identified by a review and an in–depth examination of the privatization contract should have drawn anyone's attention. I have seen a lot of sales contracts in my lifetime, but none like this one. I have never seen, for example, a central government agreeing, like the Canadian government did, to insert a clause in the privatisation deal in order to cut the duration of the contract in half so that the promoters could avoid paying the Ontario sales tax which would have come to about $10 million.

In complicity with the Canadian central government, which some people find so praiseworthy, the promoters were able to save $10 million in Ontario taxes. I think that is a first, that never before did a federal government deliberately cause prejudice to provincial finances as this privatization contract did.

We also saw other discrepancies in the calculation of the basic rent. The agreement said that Pearson Development Corporation would normally pay to the government 30.5 per cent of its gross revenue from the previous year, up to a maximum of 125 million dollars in gross revenue, and that it would pay a rent equal to 45.5 per cent of gross revenue in excess of this figure.

But according to the Nixon Report, and remember it was prepared by a friend of the Liberal Party, the gross revenue was deliberately reduced in the contract because unusual deductions were included which lowered the rent required from the developers in the future. Given those deductions and the omission of all extraordinary income received by Pearson Development Corporation, the rent for airport facilities was reduced considerably.

We also noticed a few things that made no sense, some very innovative clauses in the Pearson privatization contract; it said that even though the federal government would no longer be involved in airport activities after the privatization, it—that is the taxpayers from Quebec and Canada—would assume all of Pearson's debts. The government was no longer involved, but it would have to pay the debts; so I was paying, my colleague was paying, Quebecers and Canadians were paying for all the bad debts of the Pearson Airport. However, as taxpayers, we no longer had any say in the airport's activities.

I could mention other flaws; we did so at the second reading. There is, for example, the absence of any serious financial analysis. Why should we privatize just about the only profitable airport in Canada without requiring some serious financial analysis? In the case of simple one million dollar deals, for the purchase of companies for example, financial analyses and

spin–off analyses are conducted. The absence of any serious analysis in the case of a transaction of such a scope simply makes no sense.

• (1655)

We could also have talked about the lack of a serious and independent analysis on projected revenue. We could have talked about the lack of analysis of the investors' situation. Those investors' were not very solvent, but with the overall benefits that the federal government was giving them, they were sure to be able to spend the rest of their lives in lavishness.

This attempt to privatize the Pearson airport is highly outrageous. No wonder that Canadian government finances are in such a mess. Why is it that the federal accrued debt will be around $550 billion this year? Why is it that we have so much trouble reducing the deficit below $40 billion annually? Why is it that we cannot control our government finances any more and that we are expecting another warning from the International Monetary Fund in the near future?

If there have been other transactions as dubious, as obscure, as appalling as this one, because it serves the friends of the Liberal Party, of the Conservative Party, in fact, the old Canadian parties, I understand why things are going badly in Canada. I understand why government coffers are being drained at an alarming rate and why the Minister of Finance is forced to take unpopular actions that affect the most powerless among Quebecers and Canadians, in order to serve the friends of the party, in the light of the millions of dollars that were in there, that were concealed there. Since there is no political will to get right to the bottom of that deal in order to avoid others in the future, I understand why Liberals tend to be more drastic than Tories used to be.

Ever since the Minister of Transport introduced Bill C–22, the Bloc Quebecois has been criticizing the fact that no public inquiry, no serious analysis has been made by a royal commission of inquiry.

Every time I look at all the benefits that deal had to offer, I keep asking myself: "Will it be better with the bill?" I think perhaps it could not be better, from a certain standpoint, because the Minister of Transport will still be able to bribe some friends of the Liberal Party of Canada, he will still be able to use his discretion to give his friends tens of millions of dollars, if he so desires, to make up for a potential loss without an analysis being made or a royal commission being established to get right to the bottom of the deal.

I am looking at that in comparision with the decisions the Minister of Finance made when he tabled is last budget on February 22 and reduced the unemployment benefits and the credits for senior citizens. Over the last few days, the Minister of Finance seems to be suggesting that the registered retirement savings plans could also be taxed, but family trusts are still being maintained.

Officials were told not to give any information to members of Parliament about the hundreds of millions that could be concealed there. This is precisely serving the interests of those same friends of the Liberal Party of Canada, or maybe the very rich friends of the Conservatives. It is also serving the 2,000 Canadian millionaires who did not pay a dime in income tax last year.

When I compare that to other decisions of the government, such as the possibility that the Minister of Transport compensate once more friends of the ruling party, I say it is a disgrace. The Liberals should be ashamed of themselves, the Minister of Finance first of all, as well as the Minister of Transport, his accomplice.

As for the Senate amendment, like my friend said, in my view the Senate has no value. It is not a legitimate and democratic authority. Therefore we dismiss everything that comes out of the Senate, good or bad.

• (1700)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before moving on to the question and comment period that should follow the speech of the hon. member, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bourassa—Immigration; the hon. member for Mercier—Social program reform; the hon. member for Quebec—National Defence; the hon. member for Red Deer—Haiti.

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my colleague just spoke on Bill C–22, the bill to cancel the privatization project of Pearson airport. I would like him to tell us about the millions of dollars that are being spent. It was said earlier that perhaps the Liberal government should give these companies thirty million dollars in compensation rather than wait for court action where they might get more. Could the hon. member tell me whether or not such monies are actually available, that is, if Pearson Airport brings in that much money, how come we have so little money to keep regional airports open, why is it that the Minister of Transport wants to close our regional airports?

These airports mean a lot to us. In remote areas like northern Quebec, where air travel is the only means of transportation, what are people going to do when they want to travel south? How do we measure the cost? If the Val d'Or airport, for example, is to be closed on the medium term for lack of money, why not divert some of the money from profitable airports, like Pearson and maybe Montreal, to bring some equity nationally and thereby permit us to travel by air?

Maybe my colleague has an opinion on this and on the way to make the system equitable.

Mr. Loubier: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Abitibi for his excellent question. I believe there is only one possible answer to that question. For this government, like the previous one, it is not a priority to serve the population of Quebec and Canadians well. Its main interest is not there, as was revealed yesterday by the Liberals' position on public financing. The citizens of Quebec and those of Canada are not the ones who finance those two old political parties. It is rather the large companies, the very rich Canadian minority, and the ones who are served first when an old federalist party comes into office. That is crystal clear.

The logical result of public fund raising is that the first ones to be served when a member, a government comes into office are the citizens. Not friends who contribute several hundred thousand dollars to the party's campaign fund but real citizens with genuine needs. Members of parties who have adopted such a public fund raising serve first of all those electors.

If at the outset you have a predisposition to grease the palms of the very rich and mighty friends of the party, you are less disposed to think first in terms of equal services from coast to coast in Canada or, in the case of Quebec, in the regions as opposed to the big centres. You are also less disposed to think that way, you would rather choose to give $30 million to the party's friends who may have lost something. We do not know if they have lost or not because there was no inquiry. We are not saying that they are not entitled to compensation, but that we do not know what really happened, since there was no public inquiry into this matter.

Thus, you decide to compensate the Liberal hacks, to maintain the family trusts in which these same hacks invested and still invest year after year without paying a single cent in tax for up to 80 years. You also decide to maintain tax treaties with 16 tax havens around the world, again allowing the wealthiest, the very large and profitable Canadian corporations to file their profits overseas where these are free of tax and to report in Canada their losses made overseas, for example. These are the choices you make.

• (1705)

You also choose to cut billions from the unemployment insurance fund, simply because the unemployed are not those who contribute to the Liberal war chest. Grassroot financing is not enough. The Liberal Party turns to the large corporations, their great and rich friends, for financial support. Kolber, Bronfman and friends, these are the ones who hand out the money because they will be served later by the Liberal Party as well as by the Conservative Party. Thus, to me, Liberals and Conservatives are the same: old parties which are against democracy. They are old parties which are against grassroot financing as they obviously showed us yesterday.

Anyway, I am not surprised by the fact that such absurd decisions as the one to close regional airports which serve a specific population are being taken, while, in the case of Pearson Airport, they refuse any kind of inquiry or openness because they are afraid of the truth.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of Canadians and Quebecers who are listening to us, I will say that my question is unsolicited. In other words this is not, as we say back home, a planted question contrary to what Canadians are used to seeing during Question Period when a government member puts a question to a minister who in turn reads the answer. We see that regularly, but this is not the case.

I appreciated the speech by the member for Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot who, by the way, is a well–known economist in Quebec. I do not know if his fame has reached the riding of Stormont–Dundas which you represent so well, Mr. Speaker, but I want to say that in Quebec the member for Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot is renowned.

I ask him if it is true that companies who hired these lobbyists can deduct their fees from their income tax report. Therefore, if compensation is granted in the Pearson deal, and we do not know if it will be, or if it is justified, which we do not know, and if the minister deems that it is, the cost of this tax loss will have to be added to it. I am not sure what words to use as I do not have the same background as the member, but I would like to hear what he has to say about this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The member for Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot has two minutes to answer the question.

Mr. Loubier: Mr. Speaker, it is true that one was not planted. You may be sure of that.

To answer the hon. member's question: Yes, corporations can deduct lobbying expenses, and Jim will agree with me. Corporations can deduct lobbying expenses, just as they can deduct the taxes they have to pay every year. They can also deduct the cost of hiring experts to find loopholes in the Canadian tax system so that they can shelter hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars every year. We do not know the exact amount, because senior officials at the Department of Finance have been told not to comment.

Yes, I can assure the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans that corporations can deduct lobbying expenses, just as they can deduct fees for consultants and experts to help get them around the tax system and avoid during their corporate duty every year, which represents a loss of hundreds of millions, or even billions of dollars to the federal treasury.

We can afford it, with our cumulative debt of $150 billion and an annual deficit of $40 billion. Since we can afford it, that is what happens. Instead of closing these loopholes and tightening up the tax system, the Liberal government, and especially the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, prefer to keep them and make them even bigger—to let $30 million slip through, as we see in the case of Bill C–22—while hurting those who are

hurting enough as it is, and I am referring to the unemployed, to senior citizens who have worked hard all their lives. Above all, they can do without the very serious threat of attacks on RRSPs and pension plans.

This is unconscionable, immoral and obscene, and the Liberals should be ashamed of themselves.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the amendments to Bill C–22 sent to the House from the other place.

The motion before us today is quite simply a slap in the face to each and every taxpaying citizen who felt that the previous government had gone too far by attempting to sell terminals 1 and 2 at Pearson airport to a group of self–interested investors in the dying days of an endangered administration.

• (1710)

Contrary to the statements made by some of our friends in the other place, the proposed amendments to Bill C–22 have little or nothing to do with protecting the legitimate collective interests of taxpaying Canadians. No, the motion before us today is about protecting the private interests and profits of a handful of self–interested individuals over and above the collective interests of the unknown hard working taxpayers of the country.

As chairperson of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport I can report that due process was served when our committee conducted its thorough review of Bill C–22 last May. In addition to a clause by clause analysis of the bill, the Standing Committee on Transport conducted hearings in order to obtain input on the legislation from individuals directly involved in the Pearson deal.

We heard testimony from several witnesses including Transport Canada officials; Hession Neville and Associates, an organization that put an unsuccessful bid on a Pearson contract; Air Canada officials; and representatives of the Matthews Paxport Trust, Mr. Gordon Baker and Mr. Donald Matthews. Of course we will never forget the colourful and melodramatic testimony of the legal counsel representing the Pearson Development Corporation.

In addition to the hearings, the committee considered the findings of a report on the Pearson deal submitted by Mr. Robert Nixon to the right hon. Prime Minister. On this point it should be noted that Mr. Nixon's report contained the following conclusion. Maybe members of the Reform Party would be interested in what it concluded. It stated:

> To leave in place an inadequate contract, arrived at with such a flawed process and under the shadow of possible political manipulation, is unacceptable. I recommend to you that the contract be cancelled.

As stated in the report itself, Mr. Nixon's comments were based on what was considered to be in the best interest of taxpayers, the travelling public and general economic development of the area. That statement captures the very essence of my case against today's motion.

Some of our friends in the Tory dominated red chamber and their friends in the Tory dominated Pearson development deal would like us to believe that Bill C–22 is a Draconian piece of legislation that, among other things, breaches the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights by taking away the fundamental right of Canadians to legal recourse in the courts. Indeed the level of romanticized fiction in that argument is similar to that which might be found on any given day in a cheap supermarket tabloid.

With regard to the constitutional issues surrounding the legislation, it is worth while to examine an approach that has been used by the Supreme Court of Canada when interpreting the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in order to put things in their proper perspective. I am referring to the so–called purposive approach to interpreting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as stated by Canadian constitutional law expert, Peter H. Russell. He said:

> The main thrust of the purposive approach to charter interpretation, fashioned by Chief Justice Dickson in some early cases, is to inquire into the reasons a particular right or freedom came to be valued in the history of western civilization and thereby to identify the interests each right or freedom was meant to protect.

I would like to focus on the latter portion of that statement pertaining to identifying the interests each right or freedom was meant to protect.

In most democratic societies, including our own, it is a generally accepted principle of democracy that with some exceptions the legitimate interests of the collective are held in higher regard than that of individual private interests.

As I stated, however, there are exceptions to the rule: for example, a situation of some sort of social or economic injustice or inequity brought on by such social phenomena as racism, sexism, poverty or any number of things that might characterize a historical disadvantaged or disempowered minority group or individual in our society. Under such circumstances it is incumbent on us to ensure that the interests of the disadvantaged or disempowered minority are not overpowered by that of the majority. If we apply this approach to the current Bill C–22 and its proposed amendment we can see that in fact the government is attempting to act in a forthright manner.

• (1715)

In this particular instance, by cancelling the Pearson deal through Bill C–22, the government has clearly chosen to protect the legitimate interests of the collective taxpaying populace as opposed to protecting the individual private interests and profits sought by a handful of lobbyists and contractors.

I do not have any sympathy whatsoever for those lobbyists and contractors because the deal they signed in the dying days of the previous administration was simply not in the best interests of the taxpaying Canadian public as a collective.

In short, I challenge any hon. member in the House to prove that the organization this motion is designed to protect, namely the Pearson Development Corporation, represents the interests of a historically disadvantaged or disempowered group. Prove it.

Are these lobbyists and contractors in a situation of significant disadvantage such that the interests of the majority should be over–ruled in this case? No. All members of the House know full well that the motion before us today was created in the interests of protecting the so–called foregone profits of a very small but extremely privileged minority in our society. It is simply a shameful attempt to impede the legitimate purpose of Bill C–22 which is to cancel a dubious contract made under dubious circumstances by a dubious administration that was not acting in the public interest.

Let us not be fooled by the people in the other place who claim to be fighting for the rights of Canadians. Make no mistake. They are fighting purely for the profits of their corporate colleagues.

In closing, I implore the members of the House to take a purposive approach to the legislation in question in order to properly identify which interests are most appropriate to protect in this case. Should we be looking out for the majority of taxpaying Canadians who stand to gain only what they deserve if the motion before us fails, namely justice? Or should we join our friends in the Tory dominated red chamber by giving their colleagues in the Pearson Development Corporation a chance to take the citizens of Canada to the cleaners on a deal Canadians never wanted the previous government to make in the first place.

The choice is clear. This motion has no merit. Let us dispense with it and get on with serving the legitimate interests of our fellow Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hamilton West, as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport, of which I am vice–chairman, has used his privilege as a member to speak in the House. I made a number of allegations in what I said earlier, and I would appreciate his thoughts on the following: When he told me in committee that subpoenas had not be used to summon witnesses to appear before a committee since 1917, did he give me the wrong answer? Was he aware of the situation when I showed him proof that this had been done in 1989, 1990 and 1992, for instance, by the hon. member for Windsor, the present government House leader?

Did he purposely answer that this procedure had not been used since 1917 or was he trying to evade the question? Because he knew perfectly well that if we had subpoenaed these people, we would have had genuine answers to our questions.

I have an additional question for the hon. member. If Senator Leo Kolber had been a Conservative, not a Liberal, would he have agreed to be summoned to testify before the Standing Committee on Transport?

[*English*]

Mr. Keyes: Mr. Speaker, I would only answer my hon. friend in an honest and straightforward fashion. Beyond that he asked me to bring forward a process which we discussed thoroughly at committee that he knows full well would have extended the debate on Pearson airport for a minimum of months, maybe years, a process that would have Canadian taxpayers watching, being frustrated with it. It would hold back any development, process and progress at Pearson airport.

• (1720)

Canadian taxpayers want to see Pearson airport succeed. They want it to become viable. They need that airport for economic reasons, to sustain what we see as an important, viable piece of infrastructure for travel across this country, to connect this country and the world.

I would only answer my friend in the most honest, straightforward manner.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Hamilton West. I am glad to see someone from the government side speak that is subject to questioning.

The analogy that the hon. member brings up is very interesting. He said that there were some allegations or possibility of impropriety, so it is in the best interests of Canadians to cancel the deal and not compensate these people. He did not say that it has been properly investigated or if anybody really even created an improper procedure in this whole thing.

It is like being a person associated with somebody who drops dead. We do not know what killed the person, but we charge him with murder because after all he was around somebody that died. We do not even know if a murder happened, never mind whether this person contributed to it. Yet we want to find him guilty. That is what the government is saying in this bill: "We think there are some improper things and if we think there is something improper, then by God there must be something improper, because we know it all". I challenge that.

I would ask the hon. member if they are so anxious to cancel this bill because it is such a bad bill, they must obviously have something better in mind. I asked the Minister of Transport today what he had in mind, what he was going to replace this contract with, what he was going to do about the problems at Pearson airport terminals 1 and 2.

The government must have something better in mind. I would like to hear from the hon. member what will replace this bad deal that is better?

Mr. Keyes: Mr. Speaker, maybe the hon. member's staff has not kept him abreast with what has been going on in government but the Minister of Transport has a national airports policy which has been released that should be of profound interest to this member and the Reform Party.

It takes away from the particular group that I spoke of, a very eclectic group of lobbyists and contractors and the profitability they might make, into a so–called Canadian airport authority, which has representation not just from government but from the community that it serves. It will give that opportunity to all the citizenry, not just around that airport but around that entire region, to have input into the process of decision making for the airport.

Guess what? It is not a revelation. It is quite simply input by the community. What do they need done at this airport? This is what they need done. Who is going to pay for it? They are going to pay for it with good old fashioned, common sense business practices. That is something else the government stands for and which I hear being touted by that party opposite.

On top of that I find it passing strange that we have a Reform Party, a third party in the House who stand opposed to—or in favour possibly of—this motion, when the motion says that we are looking at ensuring there is an opportunity for that eclectic group of contractors and lobbyists to strip away from the Canadian taxpayers a potential of over $400 million. This comes from a Reform Party, a third party that is concerned with cutting taxes, with ensuring that the debt comes down, with ensuring that the deficit is worked at. They stand and want to support this motion to possibly open the door to give $400 million to these contractors. It is incredible.

• (1725)

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise again to speak on Bill C–22.

Before I begin my main remarks I would like to correct a statement made earlier in the House today by the minister. I think the words the minister used were that the Liberals were elected to cancel this deal. I do not think that is quite accurate. I think they were elected to review the deal. That is what they were saying during the campaign, not to cancel the deal but to review it.

An hon. member: I heard the Prime Minister say that. Review the deal and act accordingly.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Not to cancel the deal with no regard for potential costs or the delay at Pearson airport, or due process. Let the record be straight, that was not what the Liberals were elected to office to do.

The decision was made to cancel a project of this magnitude on the basis of a hurried 30–day investigation. The decision was made to cancel a project of this magnitude, in 30 days, without any input from the people involved.

It smacks of a knee–jerk reaction to try to show a government in action, without due regard for the taxpayers of this country. They are the ones who are going to end up paying the bill that we are looking at here.

Unfortunately the solution to this problem has the potential to cost the taxpayers some hard–earned tax dollars that will further increase our deficit. And they are mostly wasted tax dollars because it will do nothing to improve Pearson.

I say mostly because I believe that by going through the courts and opening up this whole mess to the public, we will be doing something to restore some of the trust that has been lost between voters and all politicians. To me anything we can do to remove the cynicism that has developed between the voter and the politician is something at which we should seriously look. That is what we are talking about here.

A major part of the dilemma the government is facing in the debate is the "trust us" to do what is fair and reasonable behind closed doors. The message during the campaign, the message I was getting and I am sure many members were getting was that the trust that had once there had been lost and needed to be regained. We have to re–establish that trust. This bill does not do that.

Members may or may not agree with that, but the fact there were 205 new members elected to the House of Commons says to me very clearly that the voters were not happy with the old politics and wanted some changes in this place. There is no better way to achieve that goal than to open up this process to full disclosure. Let us review the facts that brought us to this point.

First of all, we have a deal that was negotiated by the previous Conservative government behind closed doors. It was signed during the election campaign in the full knowledge that it was going to be reviewed. It was not just a Conservative deal, it is a deal that involved friends on both sides, Liberals and Conservatives.

Second, we had a shady deal and now we have a shady review. Without questioning the abilities of Mr. Nixon who was asked to do the review, if we really believed in restoring the voters' trust and confidence in politicians, whoever was going to do this

review absolutely had to be non–partisan. It had to be done by somebody who was completely removed from involvement in the political arena. That was not the case here and that flawed review did nothing to restore the trust and confidence I am talking about.

Third, the review raises many questions about the process and puts into question the names and reputations of many people and firms. An implication is that perhaps the law has been broken.

In spite of this damning report this bill does nothing about giving those involved whose names and reputations have been put into question the opportunity to remove that cloud. Yet it does say that in spite of this secret and perhaps unlawful deal they will pay some compensation to these people. They are going to give them some money, but they are going to do it behind closed doors.

If this deal is only half as bad as the Nixon report suggested, not one penny of taxpayers' money should be approved for payout.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The member will certainly have the option of continuing his remarks to the maximum of 20 minutes when this piece of business returns to the House.

It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should ascertain whether current levels of immigration are sustainable in periods of high unemployment and slow economic growth or recession, and if it finds these levels to be unsustainable under such circumstances the government should develop a means of expeditiously adjusting immigration levels in response to economic conditions.

He said: Mr. Speaker, since you have just read the motion I will not read it again. I happen to care very much about the precise wording of the motion. It was worded as carefully as one could in an attempt to hit the target. I would like to explain to the House where the genesis of this motion came from.

Once every four or five years members of this House go back to the people to seek re–election and others to seek election. During that process we have a very healthy experience of meeting the electors and hearing their concerns, not just by telephone or letters but right at their front doors. That is where they tell those seeking re–election and those seeking to be elected for the first time exactly what the score is from the perspective of the voter.

During the 1993 election I was dutifully electioneering in my riding with several other candidates from other parties. At that time we believed we were in the tail end of the recession. Statistically it is fair to say that we were and at least in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River we were waiting for the economy to spin up again.

Many of my constituents asked me about the levels of immigration. They said if the unemployment rate is 11 per cent now it surprises them that we are taking in more immigrants this year than we did the year before and that the immigration levels are increasing.

My riding is 55 per cent immigrants. It is actually an immigrant receiving community and we are very proud of that. It is a very healthy, vibrant community and that augments our lives there considerably. There was a high level of intake of new Canadians.

• (1735)

A constituent said to me that she sponsored her sister as an immigrant last year. She was accepted recently and she is going to come but this is a terrible time for her to come because she is not going to find a job.

The economy is in such miserable shape around here. The metropolitan Toronto area was hit very hard by the recession and I do not think we have recovered the jobs that we lost four years ago. We are down considerably by 100,000 or 200,000 jobs.

She was expressing concern about the ability of her sister to find a job when she arrived in Scarborough and was suggesting to me, even though she and her sisters were current clients of the immigrant process, that maybe we did not have the timing quite right.

That combined with many other questions put to me at the door caused me to undertake to my constituents that I would raise in the House the question of immigration levels when the economy is not growing, when we have a weak economy. That is why the issue is here. Although the economy has improved somewhat since last year the issue is still a legitimate one.

A year later some events have overtaken the currency of that issue. It is worth pointing out that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has undertaken a very comprehensive and broad ranging consultation process with a view to establishing a long run, a 10–year plus immigration plan for Canada that will take us into the next millennium. That process has begun and it is continuing. It is comprehensive. Canadians will play a definite part in that and I am looking forward to that process continuing.

There are a number of questions raised in the consultation but I want to note two because they bear relevance to the subject of debate at the moment. Page 10 of the first consultation docu-

ment it states while there may be increasing concerns about the number of immigrants coming to Canada there is evidence to suggest that these concerns are linked as much to issues of unemployment and the economy as they are to issues of diversity. That is in the government's own discussion paper.

Another question asked on page 13 is a question not unrelated to the one we are debating here today: should immigration be managed in response to the business cycle or only on the basis of long term social goals?

Right there the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and those who work with him have asked the types of questions that are related to the motion we discuss here today.

Keep in mind that the motion addresses immigration levels in a weak economy; high unemployment and all of the other manifestations of a weak economy. It is clear that the issue has been addressed. At least if it has been addressed, it may not have been answered, but an answer is being sought from Canadians.

Let us use this debate to focus on that particular issue, the issue of immigrations levels in a weak economy, and hopefully make a contribution to the broader consultation now under way.

What are the issues related to this? In a weak economy some Canadians ask, at least the ones I spoke to at the doors did, if we are able to receive as many immigrants in a weak economy as we are in a strong economy. Looking back over the last few years: immigration levels in 1991, 206,000; 1992, 220,000; 1993, 245,000; and the plan for 1994 would have us receive 250,000. There has been an increase and that increase took place at about the same time as the recession sucked the growth out of our economy.

If one was unemployed in Toronto or Scarborough in 1993 during the election campaign and simply took note of an increase of 30,000 or 40,000 people in metropolitan Toronto as immigrants, one might legitimately ask whether their arrival will decrease one's ability to find a job. It is a legitimate question and it is one that I do not think the government has definitively answered. It is a question we ask here today.

• (1740)

There is something else going on here while the question is being asked and if we had 30,000 or 40,000 new Canadians in metro Toronto and they all started looking for jobs I think the unemployment rate would shoot through the roof, but it did not through that period. It went up in the recession but it never did shoot through the roof.

It is clear that the arrival of new Canadians does not per se on a person per person basis directly cause unemployment. Nevertheless, the question I have already acknowledged is a legitimate one.

We can look for the answer perhaps in some economic studies that have been done. There are some related economic studies which show that immigrants can create just about as many jobs as they would take as workers. The suggestion in some of these economic studies is that there is a balance.

When immigration increases, when the people come here to Canada to start new lives, they immediately increase the demand for goods and services. They in effect become a part of the marketplace that generates jobs. I suppose that particular piece of economic news is a good one.

There was a 1991 study by the Economic Council of Canada called Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration which states at page 62 that immigration may influence the incomes and job opportunities of existing residents. It also says the impact of immigration on unemployment is almost certainly negligible, at least over the long term. Even temporary effects seem quite unlikely unless immigration increases very rapidly.

Immigration appeared to be increasing relatively rapidly between 1991, 1992, 1993, but in any event it has at least addressed the issue.

There is another statement in that same study by the Economic Council of Canada which gives its recommendations as an economic advisory body. It recommends that the level of immigration be gradually increased above the average levels of the last 25 years to reach 1 per cent of the population, that is a 1 per cent increase on a gross basis by the year 2015. These levels would be reviewed every five years to verify that the integration of immigrants is being successfully managed.

While Canadians gain economically in terms of per capita income from more immigration, the gain is so small that it did not weigh heavily in our recommendation. Nevertheless, nearly every immigrant more than pays for himself or herself in scale economies and in lighter future tax burdens. These are positive things for our economy.

We note that there is hardly ever an effect on unemployment rates. Nevertheless, at the doors in my constituency the fear was there. It may not be a justifiable fear but Canadians are telling me they are worried about it.

I want to assume that in the discussion here the motion I have placed here is dealing with a period of high unemployment, weak or no economic growth, and a level of high immigration receipt. If you are from a community in Canada that did not have a lot of immigrants coming to it you would not care too much about the motion. You would not care too much about the issue perhaps. However, this is the way my constituents have put this to me.

Research on this subject also shows two earlier studies, 1977, 1982, which tended to suggest that there were materially recognizable costs with immigration.

• (1745)

However, those studies second guessed the methodology and the computer models which were then called TRACE, CANDIDE and RDX2. These are 20–year old economic models which I understand are not used any more. Therefore the results of those studies are certainly in question.

We leave the ascertaining of the economic impacts to the economists. I have referred the House to Economic Council of Canada study in 1991. There was another study done one or two years ago by the Mackenzie Institute. I take note of it because that particular body contributes quite a bit to public policy development in the country. Its conclusions are not always the conclusions that I would come to but they are a contributor.

On page 124 of the Mackenzie Institute study is a quote I want to mention because it was written by a current member of the House, the hon. member for Capilano—Howe Sound. The assessment in that document was that the economic effects of immigration on the welfare of resident Canadians tend to be positive. I wanted to note as clearly as I could that overall the immigration impacts are very positive for Canadians.

I would like to get back to what I think the focus of the House disposition should be. I and my constituents would like the government to ascertain whether high levels of immigration, when the economy is weak, impact negatively on Canadians especially in high immigrant receiving communities. I realize that an answer might not be forthcoming quickly and definitively but that is the issue we seek to have resolved.

If the government finds that it does have a negative impact then it should take steps to alter the immigration levels in a way that would nullify those impacts.

Last, I again want to recognize that the question will be addressed in the current consultation process. I hope that it will be done by the government, by officials in employment and immigration and with the assistance and in consultation with Canadians in a way which will recognize the concern that has been expressed by my constituents and in a way which will permit our immigration act and policies to serve Canadians in the best possible way for the decades to come.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against motion M–157 tabled by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

[*English*]

When I read the motion for the first time I thought it came from a Reform Party MP. However, I was wrong. It comes from a Liberal MP and I am very surprised.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member wants to know whether current levels of immigration are sustainable in difficult economic times. This motion rests on the premise that immigration interferes with economic prosperity or undermines efforts toward economic recovery.

It seems to me that what the hon. member from the Liberal Party is suggesting is right along the lines of the longstanding Reform Party immigration policy to drastically reduce the number of immigrants admitted to Canada. The unemployment rate is not tied to the number of immigrants Canada welcomes. The economic crisis and resulting unemployment have much deeper causes. Let me quote figures for a few years. In 1991, while the unemployment rate in Canada was 10.3 per cent, having soared a full two points in one year, immigration levels were decreased by 7,813. On the other hand, from 1992 to 1993, while the average rate of unemployment remained more or less the same and extremely high in Canada, immigration levels were increased by 25,023.

• (1750)

As the hon. member indicated, the unemployment rate is dropping slightly these days. There certainly does not seems to have been any correlation between the levels of unemployment and immigration for a very long time. As a matter of fact, it should be pointed out that British Columbia is currently the province with the highest growth rate in Canada. British Columbia welcomes the highest number of immigrants to Canada in proportion to its population.

Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver last July, I saw the vitality and dynamism injected by ethnic communities and new arrivals in that province's economy. I noted in particular the dynamism and contribution of the Asian community. I want to pay tribute to this very dynamic and lively community that has settled in Canada, particularly in Vancouver and British Columbia.

The hon. member quotes figures from studies by the Economic Council of Canada which, in fact, contradict what he is trying to prove today in this House. Many Canadians fear that too many refugees and immigrants are dependent on social assistance. But, according to the statistics, the truth is that immigrants, including refugees, rely less on social assistance and unemployment insurance than native–born Canadians.

So far, immigrants have brought more to Canada than they received by creating jobs, increasing the demand for consumer goods and housing and paying taxes.drastically

These facts have been confirmed in a recent study by Dr. Morton Beiser, a professor at the University of Toronto. He showed that only 8 per cent of the 1,300 refugees from Southeast Asia who were interviewed did not work in 1991, when Canada's unemployment rate rose to 10.3 per cent. One out of five had set up their own business. The study also found that 4.5 per cent of refugees collected welfare benefits compared with 7 per cent of all Canadians. My colleagues from the Reform Party should keep this in mind.

In any case, the member for Scarborough—Rouge River should not be too concerned, because Canada will not take in the 250,000 immigrants planned for 1994. Indeed, in the first half of this year, far fewer immigrants have come to this country than in the same period in 1993. Probably the total figure will not exceed 200,000 for 1994. The Liberal Party's program would increase immigration by 1 per cent a year, but the 250,000 immigrants that Canada should receive in 1994 are only 0.86 per cent of Canada's population.

We look forward to the document on immigration levels for the coming years which the minister is to table before November 1. At that time, the minister should provide us with all the studies and results of the consultations carried on in recent months.

I think that the Standing Committee on Immigration and Citizenship could then conduct a thorough study of this issue.

• (1755)

[*English*]

Any immigration policy must in the first place consider demographic factors. Currently most considerations are based on economics. One of the factors that has this last year justified higher immigration levels is the increasing preoccupation of many Canadians regarding the demographic decline in Canada for the coming years.

The projections indicate that if immigration numbers and birth rates do not increase then Canadians will be faced with a reduction in their numbers. Studies show that post–industrial nations will have a birth rate between 1.4 and 1.7 per cent. However, a rate of 2.1 per cent is necessary only to maintain the current population numbers. This difference must consequently be adjusted by the immigration policy.

In addition we must take into consideration the ages of the Canadian population. Young immigrants are needed to work and finance our social security system.

Finally, there is an increasing number of countries that find themselves in conflict situations. There are more than 100 million refugees in the world. Canada has a moral duty to do its share in solving this problem by welcoming refugees into our country.

[*Translation*]

The motion tabled by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River is totally opposed to his own party's policies, the Liberal Party of Canada, as they are worded in that red book which the Prime Minister and the members opposite often quote as though it was the Bible. As I said, increasing immigration levels so as to reach one per cent of the Canadian population is a promise made in that red book.

The hon. member's motion is a barely veiled and disguised criticism of his party's policy. He told us that immigrants account for 55 per cent of the population in his riding of Scarborough—Rouge River. I think those people will not be very proud of their member of Parliament today, since he is squarely in favour of lowering immigration levels. In any case, let me tell you that, as a member of Parliament who came here as an immigrant, I am not proud of the member's motion. For all these reasons, the Bloc Quebecois opposes the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address this reasonable motion. It is only a shame that this motion did not originate with the government. It seems that the government has a great deal to learn, at least as far as immigration policy is concerned, from its own backbenchers and especially from my hon. colleague, the author of this motion.

The fact that a motion like this even requires debate and is not already government policy is a reflection of the power that special interests have exercised and continue to exercise on government policy.

We currently have an immigration policy as outlined in the Liberal red book that is literally based on nothing. This government is allowing nearly 1 per cent of the population to come into the country this year as immigrants; 250,000 immigrants. At the same time Canada is experiencing a level of unemployment that is denying jobs to 1.5 million people.

The government can offer no rationale for this level of immigration. It is not derived from economic research, since the experts are agreed that immigration does not add to the wealth of Canada. Over the long term economic forecasts suggest that our current levels will actually lower the average income of all Canadians. There is no evidence that immigrants create more jobs than they take. At best the job and wealth creating effects of immigration are neutral.

There are data to back up arguments for restricting immigration during times of recession. There are data that clearly suggest that immigration should be tied to the economy. Moreover, it is only common sense that immigration should serve one primary role, to supplement our labour force to strengthen the economy and contribute to Canada's economic growth. That is not the agenda of this government at present and that is not the agenda of the immigration industry.

• (1800)

There is no question that immigration could be made to work in the interests of the economy and the interests of Canadians. There is a simple recipe for success. That recipe is to cut the numbers of immigrants, especially during hard times such as the one that we are currently facing and ensure that immigrants who come into Canada are chosen for their ability to quickly and successfully integrate into the economy and to make an immediate contribution.

The way that we can do that is to ensure that the bulk of immigrants come in under the point system. Currently however only 15 per cent of immigrants come in this way. The rest are family class and refugees.

Over the summer a poll was conducted by the immigration association. One of the questions that was put to over 1,000 people across the country is the following: "Would you approve or disapprove of a proposal to place restrictions on the entry of immigrants who may compete with unemployed Canadians during times of high unemployment in the country?" The answer to that question was an overwhelming yes. Canadians would approve of restricting immigration levels if it was determined that the job market could not accommodate newcomers. Sixty–seven per cent of Canadians approved. In political terms that is an overwhelming majority.

That is not the only poll around. Earlier in the year the department of immigration commissioned the EKOS polling firm to survey Canadians on their feelings toward immigration policy. In this poll a majority of Canadians surveyed said that there were too many immigrants coming into Canada, period. That is very revealing.

Canadians have always been among the most accepting people on earth. We have welcomed newcomers and believed that there was a place in Canada for them where they could contribute, where they could stake out a place and become productive members of society.

Now the majority are saying: "Let's tighten up. Let's shut the doors", and many of them are immigrants themselves. Frankly there is little wonder that this sort of reaction is occurring. Officials from EKOS have told me that there is a direct correlation between the state of the economy and the desire of Canadians to limit immigration.

They also inform me that this level of discontent with immigration levels was unprecedented. Some spin doctors call the results of the EKOS poll intolerance. It is nothing of the sort. It is a logical reaction to a strain on Canada's economy and that strain while apparently unnoticed by officials in the department of immigration and by the minister himself is being felt by Canadians who are on the streets competing for jobs.

Canadians it seems have again demonstrated that they know more about the consequences of policy than do the policymakers. What Canadians want is an immigration policy that works for them. Canadians are not intolerant.

This government and those in the immigration industry should bear in mind that when they call those who are opposed to current levels of immigration intolerant that they are indicating a sizeable majority of the population. Are we to believe that the majority of Canadians are intolerant? Absolutely not. They simply want change. They simply want an immigration policy that makes sense. They want an immigration policy that first and foremost ties immigration levels to the state of the economy in a real way, in a substantial way. Immigration can work in the interest of the economy.

Tying immigration to the state of the economy would be so simple and the benefits would be immediate and would be profound.

This minister and this government refuse to consider it. This minister and this government are at the beck and call of a small group of immigration lawyers, immigration and refugee advocates and government funded ethnic leaders who have a monetary stake in ensuring that immigration levels are maintained at the current level or even raised. If anyone doubts that the immigration industry has the ear of the current minister, they need only look at this minister's appointment to the Immigration and Refugee Board. That will give a clear picture of who is calling the shots.

• (1805)

It is time to take immigration back from special interests. It is time to put the direction of immigration policy into the hands of Canadians. They should be consulted. It is time to do precisely what this motion demands. It is unfortunate that it is not a votable motion. It only makes sense. I surely hope that this minister listens to what the Reform Party along with the majority of Canadians have been calling for for some time.

I hope the minister will look at the intent of the motion and recognize that it reflects Reform Party policy and the will of the majority of Canadians. I hope this minister does what is right and reduces immigration levels until Canada pulls itself out of this recession. I hope this minister does what is good for Canada. I am afraid he has not done this so far.

I applaud my hon. colleague for his common sense and for the courage to table a motion that flies in the face of policies that his own party has generated up until now.

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us today gives me an opportunity to outline for the hon. member some of the many initiatives this government is involved in to help newcomers to Canada settle in this country and quickly become effective, contributing Canadians and not a drain on our economy.

I wish to emphasize the importance of our settlement programs within this equation which assist immigrants integrating into Canadian society quickly.

People who come to this country are not set adrift once they arrive. They do not have to fend for themselves in a strange country. Immigrants long ago had few resources available to them but today we realize that providing initial assistance can quickly translate into independence for the newcomer to this country.

[*Translation*]

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration is involved in a series of joint projects with non–governmental organizations, centres for social services and other levels of government. For instance, we are involved in co–operative enterprises through our Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program and our Settlement Language Training Program.

In 1992, for instance, the federal government provided a total of $277,000 in funding for projects to promote immigrant settlement, and we know that is money well spent.

[*English*]

The reception services point the newcomers to other settlement and integration programs we have in place and by promoting the many settlement services offered by governments and community organizations we acquaint newcomers with the programs they can tap into as they integrate into Canada.

According to our reports this has eased the anxieties of many newcomers about the problems of successfully settling here.

[*Translation*]

These programs are not frills but an investment that is vital to the well–being of new immigrants. We see them as more than just projects. These programs are a way to work together with people who are deeply committed to the integration of immigrants in our society.

I repeat, these projects are an investment that is vital to the well–being of new immigrants in this country. By working with community organizations across the country, we manage to involve all immigrants in every aspect of Canadian life.

This kind of work is essential to help people who are often very vulnerable. It is money well spent, because this is a hands–on way to give people support and help them become independent. We have been very successful with these programs in Quebec, where I know the situation very well, and across Canada. Most refugees who participated in our settlement programs have managed to integrate remarkably well into their new communities in Quebec and across Canada.

[*English*]

It is the programs that help us build a multicultural society.

The motion before us implies that immigrants have a difficult time adapting to Canada and hence they are a drag on our society. I would suggest otherwise. I would suggest that our settlement programs are doing their job. They are helping new people adapt and integrate into a complex and dynamic country. In so doing they are helping to build and maintain a vibrant society that the United Nations told us not once but twice was the envy of the world.

Throughout our history immigration and nation building have gone hand in hand. Immigration has helped us to define a vision of a tolerant, caring and generous society. Today our immigration policy reflects these very ideals. To adopt the motion before us would diminish our success in immigration and refugee matters.

Canada is also a respected world leader because we offer new life for refugees. In fact international agencies rank Canada's refugee program among the most generous in the world. Our per capita acceptance of refugees places us at the top of the list.

My riding of Saint–Denis is made up of refugees and immigrants. Most are hard working and most contribute socially, economically and culturally to my riding and to the country. We have talked a lot about studies in the Chamber. A study was done by the Council for Cultural Communities and Immigration of Quebec, of which I had the honour to be vice–president. It was proven that in a very short period, in fact 20 weeks, most refugees or immigrants had found one job and sometimes had found two. They are working and contributing economically to the betterment of our society, to the betterment of our economy.

They do not, as some say, steal our jobs. They create jobs. They employ people. The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River cited certain studies that said immigration impacts were very positive.

We have examples in the Chamber. We have examples of Canadians or children of immigrants who have contributed economically, socially, culturally and even politically to Canada. I would like the hon. member and the Chamber to take those facts into consideration.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I was struck by the initial part of the intervention of the hon. member for Saint–Denis.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. Through this period of business there are no questions or comments. Unless I am mistaken, I would like to remind members they must be in their seats to be recognized by the Chair.

There being no further members rising for debate and the motion not being designated as a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped from the Order Paper pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

Adjournment Debate

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall I suspend the sitting of the House to either 6.30 or until the members who are to take part in the adjournment debate are present?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 6.13 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 6.27 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, on June 16, I asked the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration a question regarding the fact that immigration officers were requiring from refugees whose status has been recognized by the Immigration and Refugee Board a passport from their country of origin. If these refugees could not produce a passport, they were asked to contact their embassy or consulate to apply for one in order for the authorities to review their application for permanent resident status. This practice varies depending on the immigration office and the rules are applied in a totally arbitrary fashion.

This requirement can jeopardize the safety of those people and that of their families in their country of origin. It is sometimes very difficult if not impossible for a refugee to obtain such documents. I hope to get a complete and adequate answer regarding that issue today.

I also take this opportunity to denounce the setting up of the claims processing centre in Vegreville, Alberta, which is a total flop. The decision made by the Conservatives and confirmed by the Liberals to centralize the processing of claims far from the users and the immigrants was irrational. Things started off on the wrong foot and the centre was immediately overwhelmed by the massive number of claims to process. Delays are very long. People cannot get information on their files when they phone the information centres set up for that purpose. Since May, the Vegreville centre has literally never had control of the situation. Files keep accumulating and the delays due to the insufficient number of employees processing those claims is unjustified.

I learned that thousands of files which cannot be processed in Vegreville will be returned to local centres. These files are returned precisely in those centres where staff cutbacks were made, since it was believed that it would be more efficient to centralize the whole process in Vegreville. Now it is the local centres which will not be able to keep up with the demand. I denounce the unjustified staff reductions at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

In this regard, I must mention the intolerable situation of thousands of people in the Montreal area who try to contact their immigration department by dialing 496–1010. This number is the only one for answering all immigration questions, and it is always busy. In July alone, there were 126,000 calls to 496–1010. There were exactly six officials there to answer the phone. Officially, there should be 15, but in fact, there are never more than nine employees. Service to the public is woefully inadequate.

I also want to denounce another situation which clearly shows that the minister has lost control of the immigration centres. During the first week in September, Montreal had a list with the names of over 2,000 people who were waiting to receive kits by mail.

I hope that the minister will take concrete action soon to improve this terrible situation.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, in order to become a permanent resident of Canada, refugees must be able to prove their identity. This is necessary to protect Canada from persons who may have committed criminal acts or human rights violations in their own country and who should not be given permanent residence and eventually Canadian citizenship.

It is also necessary to establish a refugee's identity in order to clarify a refugee's relationship with family members. In order to prove their identity, refugees are asked to present a passport, even an expired one, a valid travel document or a satisfactory identity document.

Refugees who are unwilling or unable to apply for a passport from their country may therefore obtain permanent residence by presenting a travel document other than a passport or an identity document.

In some cases where none of these documents are available permanent residency may be granted on humanitarian grounds if it is unlikely that the person presents a criminal or security concern.

In all cases, however, every effort is made with the individual concerned, through community and support groups, to help them produce acceptable evidence of identity for the purpose of applying for permanent residence.

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, in a question I asked in this House on May 25, I mentioned a warning given to the minister in a communications strategy paper whose contents were leaked—there have been other leaks since. This paper referred to "UI cuts seen by the population as evidence that the government wants to fight the deficit on the backs of the poor".

My question was this: "Under the circumstances, will the minister tell us if the delay in tabling his action plan is the result of a split among cabinet ministers regarding what is at stake?" That was on May 25. This question is still relevant today because, since May 25, we have learned that the minister's action plan, following which a bill will be drafted and action will be taken, has been postponed until the spring and perhaps until the fall. It will be a discussion paper on which Canadians and Quebecers will be consulted.

The question I asked pointed out that the delay in tabling the action plan was no doubt the result of a split among cabinet ministers. This question is still relevant and I would say that it is even more relevant today. We must keep in mind that the only thing the government has done since the election to help the needy is to cut access and UI benefits except for a small number of cases which, as the minister reminded us today, had positive results.

• (1835)

But for one thousand or so recipients to get enhanced protection at 60 per cent, all other claimants will see their UI benefit rate reduced to 55 per cent. More importantly, there is all those who will no longer qualify for UI, those who will be entitled to fewer weeks of benefits, which means more families and single parents ending up on welfare and increased poverty for children.

We could read in the papers this morning that in Canada, one child out of five is poor and their numbers have increased dramatically since 1989.

I repeat forcefully and will continue to repeat it as long as it takes: apart from talking —it bursts with generous, compassionate words— all the government actually did was to make matters worse on the whole for families and individuals in need.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I have paid attention to the hon. member's comments and I can assure her that the expenditures that will take place to engage Canadians in consultations will be expenditures that are necessary to engage them in what we as a government feel is an important dialogue.

There is great support throughout the land for the social security review. People understand that the present programs, although they have served us well in the past and have given us the security we need, are no longer valid for the contemporary reality.

We are going to use this review to engage Canadians. It is not just here in Parliament but it will be in town hall meetings throughout the country. It will be with the parliamentary standing committee. It will be the type of consultation that this country really has not seen to date.

The review is necessary. Canadians need change. We need to give our young people the tools required to compete in a very globally competitive society. We need to adjust our programs to take into consideration the changing configurations of the Canadian economy, the change in our families, the change in our incomes. All the changes that have occurred need to be addressed in a very serious manner.

It is for this reason that the government had the courage to engage in a dialogue with Canadians. We are sure that Canadians, like the hon. member, will be a very effective partner in bringing about positive change to the lives of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec): Mr. Speaker, following the release of the report of the Department of Defence Advisory Council on Women in the Canadian Armed Forces, the media reported that the department had taken specific measures to combat sexual harassment. On May 30, I rose in the House to ask the minister what these measures were and whether there had been an evaluation of the new complaint process.

I have yet to receive a clear and substantial reply from the minister, who had promised something to that effect. Harassment is a problem that affects women throughout the workplace, especially in cases where women constitute a very small minority. I think everyone will agree that the Department of National Defence still fits that category.

All studies have shown that the effects of sexual harassment are many and varied. They may lead to physical discomfort (headaches, fatigue), personal and family problems or problems directly related to the job (unfair evaluation, poor references and, in extreme cases, resignation or release from employment). Linda Geller–Schwarz, who compiled information on sexual harassment in the workplace for the Women's Bureau, Human Resources Development Canada, wrote:

> Harassment is no joke. It upsets the life of the victim, threatens her livelihood, is detrimental to the career of the harasser and poisons the atmosphere at work.

In other words, in the workplace, the emotional and financial cost is often huge for all concerned.

• (1840)

I realize the Minister of National Defence intends to take action, and I commend him for it. However, I would appreciate it if he would tell the House how he intends to rid his organization of the social poison of sexual harassment in the workplace. I would also ask the minister whether the main victims of harassment, his female employees, have been or will be asked to participate in the evaluation of measures taken to deal with a problem that concerns them directly.

[*English*]

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to address this important issue and to respond to her question once again.

On June 20, I tabled in this House on behalf of the Minister of National Defence a series of documents describing the measures taken by the Department of National Defence to address the issue of harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Changes have been made to ensure that DND's commitment to eliminating harassment is reflected in our programs and policy. Minor changes to the Canadian forces administrative orders that include the concept of zero tolerance are embedded in this policy.

The goal of the policy is simply the elimination and prevention of harassment. Every member has the right to work in an environment that is harassment free and to have any complaint of harassment dealt with in an expeditious, impartial and sensitive manner without fear of retaliation, and that is very important to add.

Our goal is to prevent and eliminate harassment in the workplace and this will be achieved by this policy and by educating and training members on harassment issues, policies and procedures.

Specifically, the new policies include revised complaint reporting procedures, the designation of harassment advisers, a DND harassment co–ordination office, a monitoring system to track the incidence of harassment and a comprehensive education and training program.

Harassment education and training for all members at the unit and base level is mandatory. The new policy is in the process of being printed and will be published in the upcoming months.

Once again I thank the member for allowing me the opportunity to stress the fact that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces remain committed to the implementation of a zero tolerance policy on harassment.

HAITI

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I am here today simply because so many Canadians are asking the same question and are demanding an answer, not an answer that we can come up with in the months to come, but an answer that we need right now because the decisions are being made right now.

For Canada to think that we have the resources or the ability to be the 911 emergency for the world, we are far beyond that.

The minister would agree that there are many hot spots in this world, that there are many that can explode tonight, tomorrow, next week, next month, and we have to establish some criteria that we are going to follow when we make foreign affairs decisions, particularly in the area of peacekeeping.

We need to look at things like the economic implications, the humanitarian reasons. They are good reasons but then every single place would have these same reasons. We have to come up with a set of fixed criteria. We have to look at the geographical relationship. The people who are closest should be the ones who can help the best.

We have the OAS which should definitely have been more involved in the Haiti situation. The African states should have been more involved in Rwanda. We have to look at the effect on international stability. We have to look at the media relationships—should we always be driven by CNN and Newsworld? We have to ask those questions.

Canadian people want to know what it is going to cost. How much is this going to cost? How much money are we going to budget to handle all of these emergencies? Again, that all comes into criteria.

We have to look at the resources that we have and of course we have to ask ourselves what our commitments are. We look at the whole military situation and see an awful lot of generals but we are certainly running out of front line troops. We are expecting our men and women in the forces to do so many things and they are not able to be stretched any further.

We hear talk about the equipment not being adequate. We get letters from parents who have lost a loved one because they felt our ability to deliver was inadequate.

We have to ask, what are these resources? How far will they go? We have to have a plan. We cannot just trust politicians that say: "We will send them and we will let you know what we hope to accomplish after". We must know, we must ask questions. If my son or daughter was going I would want to know why they were going, what they are going to accomplish and how it is going to help Canada. For how long are they going?

The closest thing I have seen on how long we are going to be Haiti was when RCMP Chief Superintendent Pouliot said yesterday on "Canada AM" that we are going to be there for seven to ten years to train the police forces.

We need to know the criteria, the costs, the resources that will be expended and of course the plan and how long we are going to be there.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's question and intervention, I have taken the liberty to note the first interview given by Chief Superintendent Neil Pouliot in his capacity as commissioner of the United Nations civilian police contingency in Haiti.

Commissioner Pouliot has clearly indicated that Canada's commitment in Haiti has been set for approximately 18 months, that is until the inauguration of Haiti's next president which is slated for February 1986.

He has also said, and this became the basis for the member's question in the House today and his intervention now, is that he thought Haiti might need eight to ten years before its police force reforms were fully implemented. This comment made in his capacity as UN commissioner referred to the need for a complete change of attitudes and the time needed for all ranks of the future 5,000 strong force to assimilate the concepts of a modern police force.

He certainly did not imply that Canada has committed itself for that length of time. That is certainly not our intention. Canada has pledged to assist Haiti in the area of police reform through our participation in the United Nations Mission in Haiti. For this purpose we have sought 100 volunteers who will be deployed in the weeks or months ahead once the Security Council has authorized the United Nations Mission in Haiti.

The cost of this participation has been estimated at $12.8 million for the 18–month period I have just mentioned. This is what the member was asking. CIDA will cover those costs.

The task of the RCMP officers will be to monitor the behaviour of the new Haitian police, accompany them on their daily rounds and give them on–the–street training. The RCMP will not take official duty. They are there to train, not to do the policing themselves.

We do not know yet how long such monitoring will be required and if, after a certain lapse of time, all of the 100 Mounties will be needed. Once a formal training program has begun it is quite possible that smaller numbers will be required.

I thank the hon. member for raising this. He has made excellent interventions in the standing committee on foreign affairs and in the joint committee reviewing foreign policy. I know he views this issue with great interest and importance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.48 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 29, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I welcome this morning the opportunity to report to my federal colleagues of this House on the international conference on population and development held in Cairo earlier this month, at which I had the privilege of being the leader of the Canadian delegation.

As head of that delegation I would like to express the government's sincere thanks to the very able Canadian negotiators who piloted through the program of action on Canada's behalf, a group of dedicated public servants who served our country with distinction.

I should also mention the work done by a multiplicity of support staff that worked long and hard from morning to evening in those discussions. Many times we forget that those are the officials who worked for several years leading up to this conference and sometimes at the conference it is the heads of the states or the leaders of the delegations who get the limelight or the credit as well as the blame when perhaps things do not go per course. I think it is important for all of us to signal to them our appreciation for the kind of public service they have rendered on our behalf.

Canada not only played a useful role as one of the many countries assembled in Cairo, but I would suggest Canada played a tremendous facilitating role. Canada was very much a builder of bridges among different countries that perhaps had different views and yes, some very hard concerns about certain aspects of the draft action plan.

• (1005)

Canada did not try to seek the limelight and speak in the public arena every day but there was a lot of behind the scenes work in trying to foster those rapports, in trying to keep channels open and also being respectful of the different opinions, whether they be political, whether they be cultural or whether they be religious. In terms of the Holy See, I think Canada among the western countries had probably one of the better pipelines that remained open with the Holy See and others. That is the kind of internationalism that Canada has made a very proud tradition for herself.

It was a truly rewarding experience as a participant to see such a remarkable degree of consensus on sensitive and controversial issues that strike at the very heart of the human condition.

[*Translation*]

There were over 180 delegations from far and wide representing various political systems, cultures and religions. They agreed on a comprehensive program of action.

[*English*]

As an international blueprint for change the program of action represents a springboard for advancement on both population and development. It brings together the approaches of the past which focused on demographics and development. In the seventies in Bucharest the answer was development. It was seen as the panacea in terms of trying to deal with both population on the one hand and between the nations that do the consumption. Yet that did not work.

In the eighties the whole question was the demographics, somehow arbitrary numbers brought down from thin air and probably forced upon people and nations the globe over. That did not work either.

In the 1990s as a result of Cairo we have seen the convergence of both family planning and development, both for the individual as well as for that country. It think it is through the convergence of those two forces that hopefully we will be able to unlock a number of problematic doors that have faced the international community.

Cairo also recognized the vital role of women in achieving social and economic goals. We mentioned in our speech from the platform, as Mahatma Gandhi once said, when you educate a man you educate an individual; when you educate a woman you educate an entire community and family. I think there is something to that. Some people get worried when we say empowerment of women.

If we look at what that means the empowerment of women is also the empowerment of family. It is the woman in many families who is the centrepiece and the anchor. Therefore if we accentuate her role, her opportunities, her rights we clearly buoy up the entire family which many times she is responsible for.

Governments agreed not only to talk but to act, to take action on reducing mortality rates of mothers and infants, on ensuring equal education opportunities for girls, access to employment opportunities for women, and pay more attention to the reproductive health needs of adolescence and improving access and availability of basic health care.

At the end of the day when it came time to commit our fellow world citizens came to a degree of consensus which was unprecedented at similar population conferences in the past. I know that before going to Cairo there was controversy on various elements of the draft action plan. Yet that seemed to dominate the discussion, certainly the media attention and we forgot that as a complicated, complex diverse world this document enjoyed before the first gavel ever hit the desk 90 per cent agreement.

Why is 90 per cent agreement on a document such a bad thing? If I got 90 per cent at high school or university I would have been a rocket scientist. If one of our parties would have attained 90 per cent of the seats across the country we would have been superstars in terms of our political organization.

• (1010)

Why is it that when a diverse world comes together and agrees on 90 per cent of the document somehow it has to be seen as a negative or a failure because we have the last ten yards to go and those are the toughest?

There was more that united this world in its action plan than divided it. One of the most important things to come out of that conference was that delegates took a new approach to population issues. Instead of looking strictly at demographic targets, just the numbers, they widened their focus in an important way. They recognize that social and economic development is central to achieving a balance between the number of people on earth and their demands in terms of food, shelter and other basic necessities of life.

It was a real coming together of north and south, east and west, rich and poor. No one was dictating to anyone. Those days are clearly over. There was very much a question of consensus rather than suggesting by force or implications.

It was also heartening that the international migration issue was treated in a truly comprehensive and balanced way for the first time in a forum of this kind. Governments recognized not only the negatives in terms of the mass of humanity that is on the move, some 150 million people strong, but also the positive benefits of migration. We were also able to bring one of those positive messages.

Despite the challenges and difficulties that still confront us, we were also prepared to admit that the force of migration helped to build a country called Canada. That was something the international representatives, both NGOs and governments, had not heard enough of in terms of simply talking about the problems rather than also about the advantages.

Delegates also stressed the need for increased international co–operation to deal with the challenges that current migration trends present to all of us. We talked about prevention, protection and then integration of those migrants.

[*Translation*]

The Cairo program of action in international migration is the first to have been approved by this many nations.

[*English*]

It now provides a springboard for further progress on the international political level and on the daily operational level. Cairo has given Canada a relevant and practical tool for advancing its international migration agenda.

We need more bilaterals, more of a regime between and among countries if we are to deal competently with that movement of humanity. One country cannot do it alone. Canada should not be expected to do it alone. No country has the answers to that kind of dilemma.

If we put regimes together, if more countries keep their front doors open a little, it will make life not only easier and more bearable for those individuals seeking a home, it will also make life easier and more bearable for those countries that have done their share.

No one is responsible for the entire problem. Rather, we are each responsible for our share of that situation. We as members of the global community met in Cairo with a daunting task before us. There were many who predicted we would dissolve into disagreement, discord and disarray. We proved them wrong and we proved there is consensus and commitment in the world community to tackle global problems not only effectively but together.

The last message Canada brought on the closing days was that while the agreement provides us with that road map and that consensus, the agreement is only as good as its implementation. That too is a uniquely practical Canadian application of not simply being happy about an agreement but really rolling up our shirt sleeves making sure that individual member states follow up on the commitments we tied together in Cairo. Only then can we say that truly Cairo was a success. It clearly started as that and we in this country in co–operation with the United Nations will ensure that the individuals for whom this plan is intended will certainly see the fruits of our labour.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Madam Speaker, the impressions we have brought back from the International Conference on Population in Cairo are too many to sum up in just a few minutes. But I would say that the two words that describe them the best are openness and progress.

I am glad that the minister shared with us this morning his thoughts about this international conference. It makes us realize the importance of such gatherings because when cultures and deep differences that shape nations come in contact, we can subscribe to the idea that discussion promotes openness, and openness promotes progress and the furtherance of ideas.

For us, Cairo was above all an occasion to voice major concerns that much not only be discussed in international fora but also in our target communities as well as in our parliamentary institutions.

I would like to emphasize an aspect of the conference that distressed me deeply as a parliamentarian and a woman, and that is the status of women. It remains a stumbling block, the central area in which progress needs to be made if our civilization is to embark upon the quest for the well–being of our people.

Suffering can affect both body and soul. Just think of the plight of millions of young women around the world who are subjected to what we call excision or infibulation.

In a world in which technology and science keep turning everything upside down on a daily basis in the way we live and think, two thirds of the 960 million illiterate persons on this planet are women.

Considering that life expectancy in Zimbabwe is 44 years for women and 40 for men, the tragic reality behind these figures shows strikingly the major imbalance between developing countries and industrialized countries. This geopolitical reality was palpable during discussions at the conference. The international community is faced with this implacable reality that concerns us all.

The attitude change in people world–wide on issues such as family planning, health and education, is a sign of modest progress in the status of women, although much remains to be done. I noticed how widespread were the concerns expressed by women about abortion legislation. I also noticed how government leaders can make overcautious statements on this issue, statements that do nothing to help women in their everyday lives. To avert a potential disaster for mankind, it is imperative that every woman in the world be given equal opportunity and the chance to achieve her potential. That is the message from Cairo, the message that must be sent out.

It must also be heard in this House. We must look at what has been accomplished in Canada in concrete term and how much progress remains to be done. I suggest to you that, while being ahead of many other countries on the issue of women status, Canada still has quite a long way to go.

Economic equality for women is still far from a sure thing. Women working for the federal government continue to be paid less than their male counterparts. Yet, we know that to further the cause of women and the state of the children requires that women and men be treated as equals.

It is also imperative that our government provide protection to women from foreign cultures by making illegal practices that adversely affect their basic rights. In fact, I would suggest that the government support the bill on the mutilation of feminine genitalia that I will be introducing today in this House, the purpose of which is precisely to protect a fair number of our Canadian women.

I would also ask the government to take all necessary steps to fight child poverty and to take action immediately.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I also want to commend the public servants who worked on this program. I know a number of people in foreign affairs put in a lot of time on this.

Without really reviewing the conference and what happened, I would like to highlight a few facts where I think there would be agreement among all of us. Certainly over population is a threat and the world's sustainability is certainly dependent on us bringing this problem under control.

However, demographers and researchers have done an awful lot of work on this. It is a topic for study in universities. I am not sure that a conference of this magnitude would be necessary to discuss the fact that there is a problem.

• (1020)

Second, the empowerment of women, giving them greater control over their lives through increased access to education, health care, and increasing their economic contribution in developing countries should be strongly supported and would have our utmost support.

Uncontrolled migration is another major problem. We have seen what has happened in Rwanda and it is something that we must deal with. Making things better at home is one way to help uncontrolled migration.

It is rather a motherhood issue to say we would support the essentials of life, such as water, food and shelter. Certainly the preservation of basic human needs is vital and we are all concerned about that.

The spread of disease is another major issue that we must look at when we talk about populations. We have seen the spread of AIDS, how it started in Africa and what has happened since. We now have the plague in India and we see how quickly it has become a global problem.

We would like to emphasize the importance of the NGOs. They are on the spot, and in many cases understand the issues much better than governments do. Therefore, the promotion of the NGO community, helping with their funding as opposed to government to government grants is certainly commendable.

If we agree on all of these things then what do we find is the problem with the Cairo conference? What kinds of questions do we have to ask? Most obviously Canadians want to know if this was the best way to achieve the goals desirable in this world. One has to wonder just how much further we have come as a result of this conference and what will come out of it. What new and innovative matters were learned at this conference that we did not know before? Was a timetable established? Will that timetable be kept? Will there be action instead of just words?

Reference was made to the fact that a large part of the conference was the discussion of abortion. Both sides struggled to try to gain control of the conference. From a Reform Party standpoint we believe that abortion is up to the individual and not up to international bureaucrats.

Everyone agrees that increased wealth in countries leads to smaller families. Talks aimed at promoting open markets and economic diversification were really not discussed at this conference. While certain aspects of the economy were mentioned that did not seem to be leading to any concrete action.

We have to ask, was this a good expenditure of our funds? Canada sent a huge 28 person delegation to Cairo, including nine MPs. I was in Cairo last June. The tourism was great but we have to ask, did those 28 people have to go and what did they accomplish?

The estimated cost that we could find at this point was approximately $235,000 paid for by foreign affairs. In addition in preparatory arrangements about $2 million was spent on this conference. Canadians are asking questions about the cost. Why did we send that many people? Could this money have been spent more wisely in other ways? Was this conference simply a recipe for big government? The suggestion that more agencies should tell people what to do is the traditional western approach to global problems.

The Government of Canada should not be exporting politically correct agendas. The best way to help developing countries would be to promote open markets, economic diversification and development, and even more important, help improve educational opportunities for everyone around the world.

• (1025)

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–277, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (circumcision of female persons).

She said: Madam Speaker, this morning I am tabling my bill on the circumcision of female persons.

It is very important that the government give its support to this bill. We are all well aware that there is a movement in the world concerned with the issue of genital mutilation of females. That is why I encourage the government to support my bill.

We are well aware that this practice is carried on in Canada by immigrants to this country. The Cairo conference raised this important problem, one that is recognized by Egypt's population minister, who would like to see such a bill studied in the people's assembly of Egypt. I therefore hope that here in Canada, where we pride ourselves on our progressive stance in the area of legislation, we will move ahead, and that my bill will be debated and passed in this House.

(The motions are deemed adopted, the bill is read the first time and ordered to be printed.)

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present some petitions this morning on behalf of several people who live in and around the Edmonton area.

The petitioners state that a majority of Canadians believe that the privileges which society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships.

They pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships and also not include the term, which is as yet undefined, sexual orientation in the human rights code.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, I am presenting two more petitions today bringing the total to six petitions that I have presented this week on the subject of gun control.

An increasing number of Canadians are concerned the government has not recognized that we have a crime problem in this country and not a gun problem.

The petitions are coming into my office on a daily basis and the petitioners ask for strict enforcement of existing statutes governing the use of firearms in the commission of an offence, with particular emphasis on the rigorous use of section 85 of the Criminal Code.

The petitioners oppose further legislation on firearms acquisition and possession, and I agree with my petitioners.

[*Translation*]

RAILWAY TRANSPORT

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Madam Speaker, I am tabling a petition containing the signatures of 1,500 Quebecers opposed to the closing of the VIA rail line between Montreal and Jonquière.

The petitioners are asking Parliament for a one–year moratorium on the anticipated reductions in service. They are also asking the Canadian government to hold public hearings so that those affected by losses of service can make known their disagreement with this decision.

As a representatvie of a remote area in Quebec experiencing serious economic problems, I support the action undertaken by the coalition to save the Montreal–Jonquière passenger train. I am opposed to the systematic dismantling of our rail infrastructures under the pretext that rail travel is an outmoded, antiquated form of transportation too expensive to maintain.

• (1030)

Without the railway, Quebec is deprived of an infrastructure that could be important to its economic development in the years to come.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present a petition from Canadian citizens, most of whom are from my constituency.

These petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the human rights act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or homosexuality, including amendment to the human rights code to include prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I have six petitions to present this morning, two of which are petitions where the petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way that would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase of sexual orientation.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, in two petitions the petitioners are praying that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

EUTHANASIA

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Finally, Madam Speaker, I have two petitions in which the petitioners do not want Parliament to rescind an act of Parliament or the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on the right to die, on euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to rise to present seven petitions on behalf of my constituents from Yellowhead. Three of these petitions come from the communities of Neerlandia and Barrhead, two from the town of Hinton and one petition each from Onoway and Drayton Valley.

These petitioners ask that Parliament do the following: that Parliament not indicate societal approval of same sex relationships; that Parliament amend the Criminal Code to extend protection to unborn human beings; and that Parliament not sanction the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b), because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 20 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse) moved:

That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

He said: Madam Speaker, one word was omitted from the text of the motion. I would ask for my colleagues' consent for this word to be deemed included in the motion. The word "alleged" should appear before "illegal activities" so that the motion would read as follows:

That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the alleged illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to amend his motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Langlois: Madam Speaker, today the Official Opposition moves the following motion:

That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the alleged illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

• (1035)

This motion has become necessary following the allegations made about the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in recent months and the events revealed and corroborated during the same period.

In addition, the many obstacles encountered by the Parliamentary Sub–Committee on National Security chaired by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River make it even more imperative to set up a royal commission of inquiry responsible for investigating the alleged actions of CSIS.

CSIS has become a state within a state as it is answerable only to the Security Intelligence Review Committee, commonly known as SIRC, which reports to the Solicitor General himself who, in turn, discloses to the House only some of the few elements he deems relevant.

Although the enabling legal provisions give SIRC very wide powers of investigation, the fact remains that it controls only the elements voluntarily submitted by CSIS.

The very composition of the SIRC greatly undermines our trust in this institution. In fact, of its five members, three were appointed on the recommendation of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and one on the recommendation of the New Democratic Party of Canada. These two parties no longer enjoy official status in the current Parliament.

Without enforcement legislation, a simple sense of ethics would dictate that the people appointed on the recommendation of political parties no longer recognized in this House should resign so that the Review Committee can reflect the current membership of this House as elected by the people last October 25.

The Official Opposition, the Bloc Quebecois, and the second opposition party, the Reform Party, could then be represented on the review committee. However, this would only be a provisional measure until the act is amended to abolish the Review Committee and restrict to parliamentarians the power to control and monitor CSIS.

What could be more normal and healthy in a democracy than putting this function under the exclusive jurisdiction of elected officials? Our American neighbours have shown us the way by demonstrating for many decades that such a system of parliamentary control is the only one acceptable in a free and democratic society.

The royal commission whose creation we are calling for today is in no way intended to compete with the Sub–Committee on National Security. All the Official Opposition is asking for is to obtain the most results in the least amount of time.

We fully recognize the legitimacy and authority of the Sub–Committee on National Security and we also acknowledge that Parliament never abdicated its powers to CSIS or its Review Committee. Nevertheless, given the present situation and the composition of the review committee, we must expect parliamentary guerrilla war with the members of SIRC instead of full and total co–operation from them.

Creating a royal commission would keep members of the review committee from using delaying tactics to avoid being accountable.

Last week, the Solicitor General, in answer to a question from the Official Opposition, refused to set up a royal commission, on the pretext that SIRC's internal verification was sufficient.

• (1040)

You need only see how the meeting of the Sub–Committee on National Security went on September 13 to realize that SIRC members are past masters in the art of subterfuge, rather than in investigation. The minister should definitely review what happened at that meeting. He would see that clearly the Sub–Committee on National Security will not obtain from the members of SIRC the full and entire co–operation which it is entitled to expect.

He should find grounds for reviewing his position and establishing a royal commission of inquiry without delay. We cannot remain in the dark where SIRC is keeping us, when serious charges have been leveled against CSIS. Let us see what these charges are. First, CSIS is accused of having used people like a certain Grant Bristow to set up or infiltrate the Heritage Front, a Canadian neo–Nazi organization based in Toronto which advocates white supremacy. The purpose of this organization is directly contrary to the values of Quebec and Canada, as proclaimed many times in our most important laws.

Grant Bristow reportedly continued his work or was recycled as a bodyguard of the leader of the Reform Party of Canada in the last election campaign. This Reform "volunteer" was allegedly well paid by CSIS for doing this infiltration work. We are entitled to know whether the Reform Party of Canada, which has no other ambition than to take power through the normal democratic channels, was infiltrated on CSIS's orders or with its knowledge or if some ill–intentioned individual, following written or verbal instructions, or with CSIS's guilty silence, penetrated the inner circle of the Reform Party leader.

Was the Reform Party of Canada at any time considered a threat to Canada by CSIS or by the Conservative government? We have eloquent proof in this House that the Reform Party was a real threat to the Progressive Conservative Party, but surely not to Canadian democratic institutions.

It is possible that CSIS, either at the request of the Conservative government or on its own initiative, decided to infiltrate the Reform Party, knowing that it was acting with complete impunity, since its review committee was controlled by a majority of people appointed by the Conservatives who, by virtue of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, were directly accountable to the Solicitor General of that same Conservative government.

If the Reform Party of Canada was indeed infiltrated and considered, at one time or another, to be a threat to Canada, what was the attitude of these people towards other opposition parties, including the Bloc Quebecois, whose ultimate political raison d'être is to help Quebec become a sovereign state?

We want to know how CSIS was able to resist the temptation of finding out a little more about the Quebec sovereignist movement. Let us not forget that, in the seventies, the RCMP stole the list of Parti Quebecois members, burned barns and also stole dynamite.

• (1045)

Is it possible that CSIS may have decided to pursue similar activities? A royal commission of inquiry would, in all likelihood, provide the answer.

The Official Opposition is not the only one requesting that all the facts be known. The chairman of the Sub–committee on National Security, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, also asked for some explanations, as reported by the media on September 13.

Another allegation was made against CSIS. Indeed, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation may have come under surveillance by CSIS after reporting that it was conducting an investigation into possible links between Heritage Front and some Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia. Given the behaviour of some soldiers in Somalia, the existence of such links is plausible.

Are Grant Bristow and other agents part of a plot by CSIS to spy on the CBC?

Another allegation made is to the effect that CSIS, Grant Bristow or other individuals who may or may not be related to the neo–nazi group Heritage Front have targetted the Canadian Jewish Congress, by leaking information on Canadian Jewish organizations to violent American racists, by promoting the use of violence by members of Heritage Front and by organizing a campaign to harass anti–racist leaders by telephone.

According to another allegation made, CSIS apparently followed every step of French secret service agents interested in the Quebec sovereignist movement. Consequently, even if CSIS did not directly investigate Quebec sovereignist forces, which have been called "the enemy within" in this House by the member for Beaver River, it may have indirectly obtained privileged information through its contacts with the French foreign security services, the DGSE.

According to a Canadian Press dispatch published in *Le Journal de Québec* on Friday, September 9, 1994, CSIS is said to have infiltrated the Canadian Union of Postal Workers during a labour conflict to provide useful information to Canada Post management. The same newspaper also reported that other documents confirmed the existence of a link between CSIS and some foreign secret service organizations, including Mossad in Israel and the secret services in Italy and Jamaica.

Finally, some light should be shed regarding claims made by Brian McInnis, an advisor to former Solicitor General Doug Lewis, who admitted violating the law by giving a confidential note to the *Toronto Star*. Mr. McInnis added that CSIS also violated the law by infiltrating the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, because that network was inquiring into possible links between the racist organization Heritage Front and Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia. Following these allegations, the RCMP arrested Mr. McInnis and thoroughly searched his home.

As you can see, some serious accusations have been made and too many questions remain unanswered. Even though the Sub–Committee on National Security will look into this issue, the Official Opposition remains convinced that only a royal commission of inquiry with a very wide mandate can inform Quebecers and Canadians on CSIS activities.

• (1050)

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this issue. I am a bit surprised by the fascination of members of the Bloc with this case. They appear to be very disappointed that they were not the organization or the political party with which CSIS was involved. It seems to be a clear case of CSIS envy.

The attitude of the Bloc must be questioned. The original motion shows an inclination to condemn the government for the refusal to initiate a royal commission on the illegal activities of CSIS rather than the allegation. I think the Bloc gets ahead of itself in this particular matter.

I have often listened to the Bloc accuse the Reform Party of using wild west justice and of being awfully tough on crime, but at least we believe people are innocent until they are proven guilty. The Bloc seems already to be assuming the guilt of CSIS before in fact it has been proven as such.

There are a number of allegations out there and I have made more than a few of them myself, but I am not aware at this time of any evidence that CSIS was involved in illegal activities.

There is a significant amount of evidence however that someone was involved in wrongdoing. But was it CSIS that was responsible for this wrongdoing, or was it Grant Bristow who was responsible, or was it the previous government?

How can the Bloc accuse CSIS of committing illegal activities when the investigations are presently being conducted? I am not the biggest fan of the Security Intelligence Review Committee and that is quite obvious. I am prepared to give them the benefit of the doubt until the report is tabled.

SIRC is actively investigating the role of CSIS in this issue. I know because I sat in on a SIRC interview. I know it is looking into it. I know it has spoken to a number of officials within the Reform Party. I know it has spoken to a number of people who have pertinent information about this case.

There is no reason to doubt the efficiency of the SIRC investigation. However, once the investigation is over we will get the report. At that time the pressure will be on committee members as to whether or not their report is accurate and whether their report is enough. Their integrity will be at stake at that time.

If there is evidence of wrongdoing by the previous government, will the Conservative members of SIRC enthusiastically pursue this information in their report? As the saying goes, only time will tell. I am encourage, however, that SIRC members have said they want the report to be as public as possible.

I am still concerned about what definition SIRC uses for national security and the reasons for national security. I will explain why I am concerned. On May 10, SIRC appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. When discussing the role of CSIS in technology transfer it mentioned it was limited to eight key sectors. When asked to identify those eight key sectors, the response was: "We are not at liberty to identify those eight key sectors".

Exactly one week earlier the director of CSIS, Mr. Ray Protti, had appeared before the same justice committee. He too chose to talk about technology transfer. He stated that the investigation was: "in those high technology areas like aerospace, nuclear, biochemical and telecommunications".

Here is an example of where the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was being more open than its review body. This certainly does not bode well for a truly open and public report. However we must give SIRC the opportunity to come up with the report. Its report will then go to the Solicitor General who I understand will determine what will be released.

• (1055)

The Solicitor General has assured the House that it is his objective: "to make as much as possible the report public". He went on to state that he would seek legal advice to help him make up his mind on how much he could make public.

I would like to give him a little advice now. Everything should be released except the information about CSIS sources other than Grant Bristow. There is no reason why the entire issue cannot be discussed openly.

While no one has ever accused members of the Heritage Front of being Rhodes Scholars, it is safe to assume even they have figured out that CSIS was investigating them. Likewise I think it is a safe bet to assume they now think Grant Bristow was a source. There really is nothing left to hid. Why would we even try?

If the SIRC report that the Solicitor General releases to the public is not complete then the credibility of CSIS, of SIRC, of the minister and of the government will all suffer. Yes, CSIS needs a certain amount of secrecy to operate efficiently, but it cannot operate without the confidence of the Canadian people.

The release of the report is all about confidence. If it is thorough and completely public, confidence in CSIS will be there even if CSIS is guilty of some minor indiscretions. However, if the report is heavily censored in the interest of national security there will be little public confidence even if CSIS is vindicated. Any evidence of any significant censoring of SIRC's report will automatically be viewed as a cover–up. If this is the case, not only will the Reform Party be joining the Bloc in a call for a royal commission; we will be leading the demand.

The accusations that have been made are extremely serious, striking at the very heart of the democratic process. To us in Reform the most important question that must be answered is: Did the previous government use CSIS for partisan political purposes? At the very least we have a Conservative Solicitor General who was aware of the efforts of the Heritage Front to infiltrate the Reform Party and he chose not to advise the Reform Party of such.

Some may ask if he should have. I asked somebody who should know. I asked Jean–Jacques Blais, a former Liberal Solicitor General and one of the first members of SIRC. Mr. Blais replied that if he had the information when he was Solicitor General he would have notified someone in the Reform Party. When asked why Mr. Lewis did not, Mr. Blais said he could not answer for the previous government.

It will be interesting when the former Solicitor General appears before the subcommittee on national security in October to answer this question himself. However there are questions that CSIS must answer itself.

Who made the final decision permitting Bristow to attend the Reform Party meetings? I cannot imagine the source handler himself making this type of decision. Just the mere fact that Bristow, publicly known to be a member of a white supremacist neo–Nazi organization, showed up at a Reform Party rally had a detrimental effect on the party. CSIS officials must have known that his mere presence could have a negative effect on the party.

Since he would not have been sent there without high level approval, we need to know who approved his attendance and why. We need to know why Grant Bristow urged Heritage Front members to take out Reform Party memberships. We need to know why Grant Bristow even paid the $10 membership fee for some of these Heritage Front members. We need to know why Grant Bristow was so intent on getting Heritage Front members into the Reform Party when he refused to take out a membership himself.

• (1100)

We also need to know if any of this had to do with Bristow's allegiance to the Progressive Conservative Party as indicated by his work on the Hon. Otto Jelinek's 1988 campaign.

These are the types of answers that we are expecting in the SIRC report and we will not be satisfied unless these questions are definitively answered. We will also want the answers to some questions like why did Wolfgang Droege frequently show up at Reform Party meetings after he had been expelled from the party? Why did he just come and sit at these meetings without trying to say anything, without trying to distribute any of his literature and without trying to make any contacts with people in the crowd? Why did he usually have a local Toronto television crew there to film him sitting in the audience at these Reform Party meetings? Most important, why did Wolfgang Droege appear to have some money on him when he was attending all of these meetings?

Let us not stop with Bristow or Droege. Less than two weeks ago another Heritage Front member, Max French, announced that he was running for mayor of Scarborough. At his press conference he proudly announced he was a member of both the Heritage Front and the Reform Party; a proud member of the Heritage Front, yes, but he certainly was not a proud member of the Reform Party.

After the expulsion of other Heritage Front members from the Reform Party, Max French stated that Reformers were race traitors and would be lined up against the wall with the rest of them when the revolution came. He does not sound like an enthusiastic member of any party when those kinds of statements are made. Why did he keep his Reform membership?

It is answers to these questions that SIRC must provide. The Solicitor General must release these answers if it is to maintain any credibility.

I mentioned earlier that what is at stake here is the entire democratic system. Let me explain to the House why I say that. I have talked to a number of Reform candidates from southern Ontario. They advised that they had great difficulty overcoming the smear campaign that Reformers were racist. This campaign was led by the Conservative Party. In four ridings, none of which had a sitting Liberal MP, the Reform Party finished second by less than 5,000 votes. If just 10 voters per poll in those ridings had voted Reform instead of Liberal but did not because they were worried about the racist smears we would be sitting in a very different House today.

The consequences of the racist smear campaign on Reformers are enormous and questions must be answered. With regard to the investigation into CSIS, we are prepared to wait for SIRC to complete its investigations and to make its report. We are prepared to wait for this report to be filed with the minister. We are also prepared to wait until the minister makes his report public. However, what we are not prepared to do is to wait for a cover–up.

If the SIRC report that is made public does not answer our questions we will then be more than happy to join with the member from Bellechasse in calling for a royal commission.

There are a number of other issues that do not fall under SIRC's responsibilities. There are a number of other issues in this controversy that have to be brought to light. Those issues are the handling of documents by ministers' aides within the former Solicitor General's office, an antiquated Official Secrets Act and the way it is enforced. The way that government information is classified leaves a lot of room for discussion.

These issues can and will be examined by the subcommittee on national security. While we have similar concerns as the Bloc about the political make–up of SIRC, the make–up of the subcommittee does reflect the current Parliament. It is the subcommittee on national security that should first deal with these issues of classifying information, of handling high security documents and of reviewing the Official Secrets Act.

• (1105)

If the subcommittee cannot resolve these issues in this House then another royal commission into Canada's security intelligence service would be warranted.

First this House must make every effort to get to the bottom of this to avert the additional cost to the Canadian taxpayers of a royal commission. We have the vehicles in place. We have CSIS doing an internal investigation. We have SIRC doing a watchdog report and we have the national security subcommittee to investigate it.

What we do need is to have the will to be fully accountable to the Canadian people, for only in being fully accountable will we maintain the support and the confidence of the Canadian people in the job that we are trying to do.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, there are problems, to say the least, with the Bloc's motion.

One of these problems has been identified by the Bloc itself when the proposer of the motion conceded there was the unfortunate absence in it of a key word, allegation. The motion originally spoke about illegal activities of CSIS as if it had been proven that such activities had in fact occurred.

As I have said in this House and outside the House the many allegations made recently about CSIS activities are so far just that, allegations. By the way, it is important to stress that these allegations relate to a period well before this government took office and before I assumed the responsibilities of Solicitor General.

To conclude that CSIS acted illegally requires analysis and conclusions based on solid evidence, that is based on definite facts, related to the legal framework created by this Parliament for the operations of CSIS and other relevant laws as well.

That is why I believe that Canadians should await the conclusion of the work, the investigation of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, into what I repeat are so far only allegations.

The requirement for the creation of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC, when Parliament passed the legislation creating the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in 1984 was designed to provide Parliament, Canadians generally and the Solicitor General with an independent review of CSIS activities.

This body has over the years provided important insight and analysis for ministers, Parliament and the public regarding the operations of CSIS and has made recommendations to ensure that CSIS continues to operate as Parliament intended when it adopted the CSIS act.

A reading of successive SIRC reports over the years, and I am talking about reports available to the public, shows that the SIRC as a permanent body at arm's length both from CSIS and the government has found areas for improvement since CSIS was created over 10 years ago. It has also found reason to confirm the value of the work of CSIS in the interests of all Canadians.

• (1110)

The point is that the SIRC was created exactly for the task that the Official Opposition in its motion says we need a royal commission to perform.

The SIRC exists to provide the review of all CSIS duties and functions. More specifically, under section 54 of the act the SIRC can investigate any matter that relates to the performance by CSIS of its duties and functions, and then provide the Solicitor General with a special report of this investigation.

A review of any such matter and the production of a special report is precisely what the SIRC has undertaken to do in response to the recent allegations. It has also stated that it intends to have a report as soon as possible. It has said that it intends to have a report available, in other words in the coming month of October.

SIRC has built up a body of expertise and experience that I think will prove extremely valuable to this present investigation.

The Official Opposition in its motion calls for the creation of a royal commission. What is a royal commission? It is an individual or a group of individuals independent of government, appointed by order in council, that is by the cabinet, with wide powers to look into a matter or matters of public concern.

The Security Intelligence Review Committee is a body of individuals appointed by order in council, by the cabinet, under the CSIS legislation to look into and report on an important matter or matters involving the activities of CSIS.

Like an ordinary royal commission it is independent of government. It is independent and at arm's length from CSIS and the minister. It has wide powers to carry out its mandate. That is why I say that in my view it is in effect like a permanent royal commission with the mandate of keeping under review the activities of CSIS and carrying out special inquiries into these activities, either of its own accord or at the request of the minister.

We have in effect already in place what the Bloc is calling for in its motion. The spokesperson for the Reform Party made the important point that since CSIS is already carrying out this work, there is no need for the creation of another body that, looking at what the history of royal commissions indicates, would involve considerable additional expense for the taxpayer.

[*Translation*]

Parliament created SIRC precisely to ensure that so–called wrongdoings such as the ones which are being raised in this House today undergo objective investigation.

Moreover, SIRC was given important statutory powers to carry out its mandate. SIRC is authorized to obtain from CSIS all necessary information to fulfil its responsibilities, including documents, reports and explanations. Obviously, SIRC has the abilities and the powers required to investigate the allegations being made.

The Official Opposition was unable to prove that we should set up another review agency to do exactly what SIRC is authorized and able to do.

[*English*]

As I have said, it is my intention, my objective, to make as much of the CSIS report into the recent allegations as public as possible, subject of course to the requirements of any relevant legislation. In fact if the legislation permits me to do so I certainly would like to make the entire report public. Mind you the spokesperson for the Official Opposition herself has pointed out there may be some justifiable reasons for some of a report of this nature not to be made public and her views should be taken into account.

• (1115)

I believe the SIRC investigation and the preparation of its report should continue. While it should take the time it needs to do the job properly, as I have said SIRC has already indicated it wants to complete that work as soon as possible. It expects to have a report available in October.

I should also mention that the CSIS act provides for an Inspector General to report to the minister about CSIS. The Inspector General has been quoted publicly as saying that he himself is undertaking reviews with regard to policies and procedures governing the use of human sources by CSIS and the handling of CSIS documents. These reports will be another valuable source of information and analysis for me to use as a basis for seeing if action should be taken with regard to what has been alleged over the past weeks and months.

I want to stress as I have done before that I will not hesitate to have corrective action taken where such action is in fact necessary on the basis of real proof that there are definite problems to be corrected with regard to the work of CSIS. However, I do not think it is fair or reasonable to make judgments in advance, as the Bloc has done in its motion, as to the value or the quality of the work of SIRC in this matter before that work is even completed.

To conclude, I submit that what the Bloc's motion calls for is not in fact necessary since Parliament in passing the law creating a framework for the operation of CSIS created an oversight mechanism for it. This involved the creation of SIRC, which I have said I look on as being very much like a permanent royal commission with a specific mandate for the ongoing review of the work of CSIS.

I believe we should allow this body to complete its work on the recent allegations. Then we should make use of the report which as I have said I intend to make public as much as is possible in the light of the requirements of the relevant legislation. Then decisions can be made on what action may be necessary to take in the light of definite proof, if there is any, with respect to problems regarding the work of CSIS.

However I submit that at this time the motion presented by the Bloc calls for action that is not necessary. It duplicates the work of a body created by Parliament which is like a royal commission. We should allow SIRC to complete its work so that its report can be completed and we can have access to it and take any action necessitated by that report.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I was pleased to hear the hon. Solicitor General acknowledge that he will take into consideration my comments about how much of the report should be made public. I hope he notes that the only exclusions I made were the names of additional sources other than Grant Bristow. I feel all else should be made public.

My concern is that some of the legislation he may be looking at to see how much flexibility he has is outdated. I would like some assurance from the hon. minister that he will use some flexibility in the interpretation of these outdated pieces of legislation so that he is not restricted and bound by classifications of material that do not apply in this case.

I would like some assurance from the hon. minister that he will be open minded in the interpretation of this legislation to allow a more open process.

• (1120)

While I have the opportunity I would also like to ask for the minister's assurance that he will support the efforts of the subcommittee on national security to further investigate this issue beyond that which SIRC can do. I hope the minister will give full co–operation to and persuade government members of this House to support the subcommittee in its efforts to get to the bottom of this.

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's comments. I want to make clear that the legal advice I will seek cannot be limited to those comments, no matter how useful or well–intended.

The hon. member says that certain legislation is outdated. I suppose she is talking about the Official Secrets Act. That may be the case but since that legislation is passed by Parliament I cannot ignore it, whatever my personal views about the relevance of the legislation today.

That is why I have to seek appropriate legal advice from law officers of the crown with respect to how far I can go in releasing the SIRC report and with respect to responding to any relevant legislation. I want to be very open minded and forthcoming, but as I said I am not in a position to ignore the relevant laws on this matter as adopted by Parliament.

Certainly the work of the subcommittee can be very useful. I cannot say what the committee should be doing but perhaps at some point it may want to carry out a review of the relevance of the current provisions of the Official Secrets Act.

However, all of us in this House are still bound by the relevant legislation on this matter which has been passed by this House and Parliament as a whole. All of us have to take that into account in our activities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Madam Speaker, I think the Solicitor General does not understand the object of the request made by the Official Opposition. The request for a royal commission of inquiry in this case is not just a whim.

If you look back over past events, you see that so far we have had the McDonald Commission and the MacKenzie Commission, which were both Royal Commissions of Inquiry. Meanwhile, some joint committees have examined the issue of national security. But the only reports Parliament has followed up on are those of the McDonald and the MacKenzie Royal Commissions. Parliament has always ignored the reports tabled by the joint committees, except to implement two or three minor and watered–down recommendations to amend the legislation.

A royal commission of inquiry would help us to clarify the whole situation and might even prove to be in the interest of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, which is increasingly losing its credibility in the mind of the Canadian taxpayers.

As Solicitor General, you seem to trust SIRC completely. Then, tell me why SIRC is not aware of the allegations recently published in the newspapers, as you put it? Because these allegations relate to events which happened during 1990 and 1991. We are now in 1994—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but he undoubtedly knows that questions must be put to the Chair. Members cannot directly ask questions to the minister concerned. The minister may answer the question.

[*English*]

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, the McDonald royal commission was created to do its work at a time when there was no equivalent of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The security service of the RCMP did not operate within a specific legal framework as does the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and there was no mechanism for oversight or review. At that time something had to be set up to carry out the kind of work that SIRC is now mandated to do under the relevant legislation. It was a very different situation.

Now we have a civilian security service that was created specifically by Parliament and which has a specific mandate and authority. It has limitations. For example it cannot look into matters involving lawful dissent; it cannot look into lawful advocacy, protest or dissent. This is clearly set out in the law.

• (1125)

We are dealing with a very different situation today. The experience of the McDonald commission is not relevant. As I said, it related to a time when there was no civilian security service operating in a specific legal framework with an oversight system as we have now.

Finally, the hon. member asked me whether SIRC was seized with certain allegations. Since SIRC is a body independent from me, I am not in a position to comment.

I conclude by saying I am continuously amazed by the interest of Bloc members in anything with the word royal connected to it and in having a royal body set up. Perhaps they should check with Mr. Parizeau who could possibly be very upset to see the interest of the Bloc in this House in relying on and calling for a royal commission.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on the motion put forward by the Bloc Quebecois today because I think that it is imperative that we have such a debate. The question we must ask ourselves is why we are now requesting a royal commission of inquiry on the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I use the term royal commission of inquiry not because I am a royalist, but because I have to use the tools made available to us by this Parliament. Moreover, I would like you, Madam Speaker, to assure the Solicitor General that in an independent Quebec, we will not call such a body a royal commission of inquiry, but rather a state commission, a commission of inquiry of the sovereign state of Quebec.

Some hon. members: Right on!

Mr. Bellehumeur: That being said, it may be necessary to look at the origin of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act to be able to understand the whole problem. You will see that it goes back to the commission of inquiry concerning certain activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, better known as the McDonald Commission, which published its report in 1981. The commission had been established in 1977 in the wake of a series of illegal acts and practices by the former security service of the RCMP.

The McDonald Commission had the mandate to look into illegal activities on the part of a supposedly reputable institution respected by the majority of English Canadians, and I am talking about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, better known under the acronym RCMP. It is important to go back to the 70s to really understand the history of the secret service in Canada, but first, let us look at the act by which the Canadian secret service was created.

In 1966, the RCMP became the responsibility of the Solicitor General when it was given the status of a government department. Before that, the police force was under the authority of the Minister of Justice. The reorganization that took place in 1970 was the result of another royal commission of inquiry, the MacKenzie Commission, which published its report in 1969. The commission's main recommendation was to create a civilian security service. The commission considered it inappropriate to leave security functions to the ordinary police services, and the special operations branch did not have the complexity or the analysis expertise deemed necessary to play its role in security matters.

It also recommended that a bill be passed to authorize investigation methods like undercover operations, and to improve the security screening process, including the addition of an appeal procedure. Accordingly, a security intelligence service was established under a civilian director. Until then, you could tell RCMP agents by their red uniform, but security agents became less easily identifiable and then, I am sure you agree, unrecognizable.

Let us go back to the 1970s period when things went awry. Uniformed officers, unlike civilians, all had positions of power. At the end of the 1970s, for example, not a single civilian had a position above that of an officer in a planning or operations sub–branch. RCMP employees, therefore, wielded absolute power. Not only did they have police powers, but they were also had considerable leeway with the structure. Civilians knew almost nothing of what was going on in that section of the RCMP.

• (1130)

Ironically, the same thing is happening in 1994 with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, but this time, Parliament itself and the general public in Canada and Quebec are kept in the dark concerning our intelligence service. Questions are asked, but there are no real answers. The fact that elected representatives could not get near or watch the RCMP in those days led to wrongdoings. And believe me, there were a lot of wrongdoings.

The October crisis stunned everybody, both the Quebec population and the government. The then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, did not know, when he invoked the War Measures Act, that he was unleashing a mad dog. I hope, and I would like to believe, that he was not aware of that.

The government realized that it knew very little about the sovereignty philosophy in Quebec. Therefore, it asked the RCMP to adopt an active strategy on that issue and to get all the information it could on the bad separatists.

In several cases and in various contexts, members of the security service committed extremely illegal acts and I think it is worth mentioning again some of the actions taken by the RCMP during those days. They set fire to a barn in order to prevent the so–called separatists or sovereignists from holding a meeting. They broke into the offices of a leftist news agency in Montreal, stole and destroyed files, broke into the offices of the Parti Quebecois, a legitimate political party, and even stole lists of members of that democratically recognized party.

When I think about those days, I still shiver with rage. It is a pitiful page in the history of Canada, especially when you see that one of the people involved, Mr. Normand Chamberland, who was accused of stealing dynamite at the time, has been promoted within the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and is now the Deputy Commissioner for Quebec, no less.

It seems that those responsible for enforcing the law can break it once in a while and even get rewarded for it. It is also important to note that the RCMP did not commit that kind of abuse only in the 1970s and only against separatists. The McDonald Commission indicated that other illegal activities had occurred, such as opening of mail, illegal access to supposedly confidential government information, planned prostitution, blackmail and other actions of that type which had been taking place for a long time with regard to various aspects of national security, from spying and counter–intelligence to subversion.

The main recommendation of the McDonald Report advocated the creation of a totally independent intelligence service of a civil nature and it did so for the same reasons as the MacKenzie Commission did, that is the need to restructure the agency with a view to collecting and analyzing data instead of using mainly deterrence and repression. Therefore, the mandate of the proposed new agency would be defined by legislation and the law would state clearly which threats to Canada's security the agency would be authorized to investigate. The definition would cover four areas: first, espionage and sabotage; second, foreign interference; third, political violence and terrorism; and

finally, subversive activities aimed at destroying the democratic system.

The report also recommended that the new agency be prohibited from investigating legitimate advocacy, protest or dissent, and that it not have the power to implement security measures.

All this led to the McDonald report published in 1981. The government indicated that it would accept the principal recommendation to create a civilian security intelligence service. Subsequently, a special transition group was set up at the Department of the Solicitor General to prepare legislation to that end.

In 1983, Bill C–157 was tabled in the House of Commons to create the Canadian Security Intelligence Service or CSIS, along the lines recommended by the McDonald Commission but with some major changes and additions.

As a result of severe criticism from the public that the service's mandate was too broad, the bill died on the Order Paper. During the second session of the 32nd Parliament, a new bill was tabled in the House. This was Bill C–9 which, for all intents and purposes, incorporated all the recommendations of the commission. Parliament adopted the bill, with very few changes, in 1984.

• (1135)

The legislation was intended to restrict the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and create monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service did not exceed its mandate.

Central to the bill is the definition of the expression "threats to the security of Canada," which determines the general parameters of CSIS. The definition also specifies that lawful advocacy, protest or dissent are not included. If we consider this definition and the allegations published in the media, especially about spying on a democratically recognized party—we have seen that happen before—and investigating the CBC and certain leaders of the Canadian Jewish Congress, there are some very real problems.

CSIS members seem to have trouble with the definition of lawful advocacy. In any case, if the past is any indication of what the future holds, we can assume that members of CSIS have the same attitude as the former RCMP intelligence section, which does not augur well for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We have the right to know, and we have the right to call for a royal commission of inquiry.

As far as the basic duties of the service are concerned, these are set forth in section 12: to collect by investigation, and analyse and retain, information and intelligence respecting threats to security. According to section 13 of the Act, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service may provide security assessments on future government employees. Finally, under section 16, CSIS may assist in the collection of information relating to defence and national affairs, by investigating and conducting surveillance of any persons, other than Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

As we consider the history of intelligence services in Canada and their questionable activities, which always raise a number of questions in my mind and in the minds of many taxpayers in Canada and Quebec, there is one question we have every right to ask: "Who watches the intelligence agency that is watching us?"

One would expect that in 1994, our institutions would be monitored by people elected through the democratic process as the legitimate representatives of the present Parliament of Canada. Not at all, that is not the way it works in Canada, in 1994. Legislation was enacted to establish the office of the Inspector General and the Security Intelligence Review Committee, better known by its acronym, SIRC, as we said earlier.

The Inspector General is appointed by the Governor in Council and his duties are to review the operational activities of CSIS and to report to the Solicitor General and SIRC, as well as to monitor the legality and relevance of these activities.

SIRC is made up of five members maximum, chosen from Privy Council members, appointed by the Governor in Council after consultation between the Prime Minister and the leaders of recognized opposition parties in the House of commons. We will see that it is not always the case. Its role is to review CSIS operations and to report to the minister and Parliament.

When it comes to reporting to Parliament, MPs are certainly not overwhelmed with information. As parliamentarians we know virtually nothing of what goes on within the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. This department spends millions of dollars, but Parliament, the supreme authority, knows almost nothing.

Those who watch over CSIS were never elected to the job. They are political appointees, and MPs are deliberately excluded.

Do you think I am reassured by the fact that the deeds, or alleged acts, committed under the Conservative government are being investigated by a group with a Conservative majority? Certainly not, it rather worries me. Who are these valiant watchdogs, that some journalists humorously call lapdogs? Three of them are personal friends of the former Prime Minister of Canada, and very, very close to the Conservative Party. Another comes from the ranks of the Liberal Party of Canada; he is a former president of the party. You know him, he is the lawyer who is getting $250,000 to do some kind of inquiry with some native representatives. As a hobby, he sits on the review committee. Quite a review he must do.

• (1140)

The last member was appointed from among the ranks of the NDP. Ever since I have been sitting on the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs and on the Sub–Committee on National Security—I have not seen the latter yet and I wonder whether it is really interested in meeting with us or even in doing its job—I have doubts about the kind of report all of them will be able to produce.

Where are the members representing the current Official Opposition? Where is the member supposed to represent the other opposition party in this House? They are nowhere to be found. We are asked to trust five individuals, appointed by our predecessors, who are looking into extremely important activities which have an impact on their own political party.

The main objective in creating CSIS was probably to have some control or to check into allegations but in reality this has not happened.

As crazy as it may seem, when the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was in the planning stages, some members and certain opposition parties said that there was no need to create a civilian body and that all that was needed was a piece of legislation clearly setting out the RCMP's frame of reference so that it would not go overboard.

For someone from Quebec who has lived through the 1970s, which were a turning point in the history of the province, this seems rather strange. I am not referring to myself as I was still quite young in those days. It is somewhat ridiculous to trust this agency once more, but again some people thought that the RCMP could still do the job.

The only thing I find reassuring is that when the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was created, there were those who thought that its mandate was too broad. I could not agree more with them and history has proven them right.

Similarly, the definition of the word "threat" is very controversial. And again I agree with those who thought at the time that it was so vague that it could encompass a variety of activities not even closely related to real security. Current events have borne this out.

The government is of the opinion that the definition should be interpreted in the context of, on one hand, the provisions protecting legitimate dissidence and limiting the agency's authority to what is strictly necessary and, on the other, the new monitoring and surveillance system. According to the government, within such a context, the definition is a reasonable one.

When I look more closely at the investigative power of SIRC and its access to information, I get scared. I get very, very scared.

Another concern of mine is the range of the SIRC mandate that allows it to use any investigation technique. The two most serious issues have to do with how this organization is being monitored: first, the office of the Inspector General must have access to information, and second, so must SIRC.

We must acknowledge that, before the Sub–Committee on National Security, I was told that SIRC has access to every document possible. Indeed, it has access to all this documentation, but only if the Canadian Security Intelligence Service agrees to hand it out. And that is not how things work out in reality.

SIRC does not have access to Cabinet documents, either. Yet, as we have learned recently, an assistant of a former Solicitor General of Canada can walk out with two cases of documents, with no questions asked, while SIRC is not even aware of the existence of such documentation. This really belongs in the realm of fiction.

Why can we not grant this investigative power to people who have a vested interest in the truth and are able to reassure the public? In fact, this issue was raised when Bill C–157 was debated. We examined the possibility of implementing some kind of parliamentary review, as recommended by the McDonald Commission. At the time, both Opposition parties and some government members supported the creation of a special Parliamentary committee which would have had access to information regarding CSIS to ensure that it does not overstep its mandate.

Madam Speaker, you are indicating that my time is almost up, yet I could go on and on.

I want the government to know that there is no way we can get definite answers to our questions if we leave it to SIRC. I have sat and I still sit on the Sub–Committee on National Security. When an elected member of Parliament, a legitimate representative of the people is told by witnesses that they do not have to answer either yes or no, we have a problem. A very serious problem indeed. The system is sick. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service has become a monster that no one can control, not even Parliamentarians, and this is totally unacceptable in 1994.

• (1145)

That is why only a royal commission of inquiry can get to the bottom of this issue. Taxpayers would then get satisfactory answers to questions they have been asking ever since the creation of CSIS in 1984.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I did indeed listen carefully to the comments made by my hon. colleague from the Opposition. First, the hon. member referred to events that occurred in 1970, which I think is a rather sensitive period, but we are not here to go through that again, since this was already covered by the McDonald Commission, which led to the creation of SIRC and CSIS.

Moreover, I find rather strange that when abuses are discussed, those which happened in the 1950s are never mentioned. The hon. member did not mention the Padlock Act passed by the Union Nationale. They went after the Asbestos workers in 1949. They went after my constituents in Murdochville. I find it passing strange that nothing is said about abuses done either at the federal level or especially at the provincial level.

I am not here to criticize the province or the country, but I would like nevertheless to indicate to the hon. member that SIRC was created to ensure the presence of a civilian body operating at arms length both from CSIS and the government itself. We are looking forward to the report SIRC should present in the next few weeks, and I am sure it will be to everyone's satisfaction, or at least I hope so. We will see what we will be able to discuss here with the Opposition members.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I think that the hon. member did not ask a direct question but made some questionable allegations, which is even worse.

He said that I referred to the events of 1970. Yes, I did. I do not think that we have to go back to 1950 to dig up provincial problems, when the RCMP is exclusively under federal jurisdiction. We are here to prevent more overlapping, to see that the present Constitution and set–up are respected. Later on, when Quebec has decided on its future, it will be different story.

I must say to the hon. member that if we consider what happened in the 1970s and the information released by the CBC on CSIS's investigation of some members of the Jewish Congress in Toronto, the possibility that CSIS financed or helped found the Heritage Front, the employment of Bristow, a member of Heritage Front, as a bodyguard of the leader of a recognized party, I think that we can make comparisons between 1970 and 1994. There are still reasons today to demand a royal commission of inquiry, just as there were when the McDonald Commission started its hearings in 1977. All we want is to get answers to the questions we have been asking since that time. We never got any answers.

Just by looking at the Harlequin reports published once a year by the SIRC for the past two or three years, it is obvious that we will not be able to get answers even though we, as parliamentarians, were democratically elected by the people of Canada to oversee and monitor public expenditures. These little documents published by the SIRC from time to time will not shed much light on these activities. We need a royal commission of inquiry and I think we have enough allegations to warrant the setting up of such a commission. If there is nothing serious in these allegations, why is the Inspector General of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service looking into the matter? Why is the SIRC looking into the matter and why were its people so nervous when they approved before the Sub–Committee on National Security of which I am a member?

• (1150)

Why is it that parliamentarians felt the need to create this Sub–Committee on National Security to study these allegations? Because they had good grounds for doing so. But, despite all that, we will not get any answers unless we set up a royal commission of inquiry to look into the matter. Then our questions would be answered.

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague from the Bloc why he is not prepared to give SIRC an opportunity to prove it is incompetent of coming up with a report that is satisfactory to us.

The hon. member and probably most other members in the House know how I feel about the make–up of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. It is not a make–up of which I approve. It is not a process of which I approve. However I feel we should allow it to do its job and then judge whether or not the report is adequate and fulfils the needs of the Canadian public to know the facts.

Why is the hon. member unprepared and unwilling to let SIRC complete the report, then sit in judgment and ask for a further commission to be established because the committee has not done its job rather than accusing it of not doing its job when it is not given the chance to do it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to answer that question from my hon. colleague whom I admire and for whom I have a liking since we once worked together. There is something else I admire about her, her naivety.

When the SIRC came before the Sub–Committee on National Security, we could see that we would not get answers to our questions. To questions as simple as: "On what date did Mr. So–and–So contact Mr. Such–and–Such?" the Service member's answer was: "I cannot answer you, Mr. Bellehumeur".

When I asked other questions on facts not related to national security, I was told: "We cannot answer you, Mr. Bellehumeur. We will take note of that question and we will get an answer for you, but it will come from the Solicitor General of Canada, not from us".

What will we get from the SIRC? What answers will we get to our questions? Answers censored by the Solicitor General of Canada? That does not satisfy me. Nor does it satisfy the taxpayers I represent. We really need a royal commission of inquiry, where the principals will come face to face with us and will be compelled to give the commissioners answers to the questions we asked and to which we did not get answers from the SIRC.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, does the hon. member realize that the review committee can enter any office or public institution and visit all the premises, examine every document, voucher, or file in that office or institution? I get the impression the hon. member did not quite understand when the Solicitor General said the review committee has the same powers as a royal commission of inquiry.

I do not see any purpose in having a royal commission. Since members opposite always complain about duplication, why should we have a royal commission? We already have a review committee, the SIRC. We all know that SIRC was created precisely to investigate allegations such as those made recently.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I thought that, after one year in Parliament, the hon. member would have lost some of the illusions he still seems to harbour.

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I object to that personal remark. I asked a question and I want to get an answer. Let us leave character out of this.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. The hon. member knows that no reference to another member's character should be made in this House.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I apologize if I insulted the hon. member, but nevertheless, that is what I think.

• (1155)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I believe that the hon. member knows what he is saying, since his words are very well chosen. I ask him to withdraw them.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Which ones? He made two objections. Does he want me to withdraw the expression "I think" or the comments that I made on him?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I consider that the member has withdrawn his words.

Mr. Gagnon: You know, Madam Speaker, the Opposition member is still a good devil. I rise today to speak on this motion.

Mr. Bellehumeur: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I believe that the member just attacked me by saying that I am a devil, whether a good or a bad one, but still a devil. I would ask the member to withdraw his words.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the parliamentary secretary withdraw his words?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, I did not use them pejoratively.

Mr. Bellehumeur: I accept the hon. member's apologies.

Mr. Gagnon: As I was saying, I rise today to speak on this motion which, as the solicitor general mentioned, involves a certain number of problems and misunderstandings. It seems essential to me that the members of this House understand and fully appreciate the complex and sensitively ordered system of checks and balances that is part of our national system of security intelligence.

Also, that system is designed to ensure a balance between the protection of individual freedoms and the need to protect the Canadian public against threats to the security of their country. Most people will agree that we must protect Canada against threats to its security and that this protection requires a security intelligence agency.

There is no doubt in my mind that Canada needs a security intelligence service, as all other industrialized countries do. Let us take for example the threat that terrorism involves. Canadian democracy is based on a climate of freedom and political objectives are met through open discussions, debates or other legitimate activities toward lawful advocacy.

However, that climate, as well as public safety, is jeopardized when an individual or a group is trying to meet those political goals through violence or threat of violence.

In the 1980s, terrorism became a major concern for safety and the government gave CSIS the mandate to gather, on a priority basis, security information on terrorism. Our first line of defence must be information.

The other thing which is threatening us is espionage. Since the emergence of nation–states, espionage has become part of everyday life. Every nation is striving to improve its position within the international community. However, we have to admit that even if the political scene is better world–wide, some nations still resort to deceptive or clandestine activities for the purpose of enhancing their international position.

Canada must protect itself against such threats, whether they take the form of traditional espionage or of any other means of illegally obtaining the technological know–how of this country.

• (1200)

Canada must also be able to identify and to thwart steps taken by foreign countries or agents seeking to secretly influence or harass our ethnic communities. Again, we must protect those who have elected to settle in Canada and make it their new homeland.

Here also, the gathering of good intelligence is at the very heart of our first line of defence. I am convinced that the CSIS Act is an efficient piece of legislation, enforced according to the wishes of Parliament set forth ten years ago. The CSIS Act provides a legislative framework likely to ensure the delicate balance between efficient national security and the respect of

individual rights and freedoms. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act defines the mandate of CSIS and gives it the necessary powers to fulfill it.

It provides a unique operational framework for CSIS. It defines the powers of the service and specifies its limits. These take the form of various control mechanisms: political controls, subject to ministerial accountability and responsibility; judicial controls and external controls by the Security Intelligence Review Committee, or SIRC.

The act also provides a mechanism allowing any person or group of persons to complain about any aspect of CSIS activities. Furthermore, the Security Offences Act, which was passed at the same time as the CSIS Act, confirms the RCMP's responsibility concerning security offences, as well as its responsibility in preventing such offences.

These two acts provide a legislative framework flexible enough to adapt efficiently to the circumstances of each case. Furthermore it should be emphasized that the political and judicial structure of these two acts is unique in the world. The government used policy directives to guide their interpretation and implementation.

The main stakeholders in the Canadian security intelligence system made sure that the legislation was practical and efficient. The service has developed and follows a strict and satisfactory investigation procedure. Since 1984, the Inspector General and the Security Intelligence Review Committee have played their role in an orderly and strict manner.

The Solicitor General relies a great deal on their work, especially on the reports of the Inspector General that enable him to make sure that the service is conforming to legislation and following departmental directives on orientations. The review committee's annual report that the Solicitor General tables in Parliament completes the annual cycle of public accountability.

Finally, the RCMP and CSIS have established measures and developed mechanisms for co–operation. This is how the legislation works today. Solid legislation, detailed government instructions and an efficient internal administration are the elements which allow the service to fulfil the mandate it received from Parliament ten years ago.

The government does not stop there. I wish to remind everyone that this government is constantly trying to find means to improve the quality of the service. As the minister responsible for CSIS the Solicitor General must make sure that in its daily operations the service maintains a fair balance between national security requirements and the rights and freedoms of Canadians. The minister does that by using his authority to approve and to give directions and also by relying on the reports of the Inspector General and the review committee.

Therefore, his task is to exercise a ministerial control. He answers for the CSIS to cabinet and to Parliament. Two main processes allow the minister to fulfil that responsibility. The first one is his approval or concurring authority.

• (1205)

In keeping with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, the Solicitor General must personally approve all investigation warrant requests, all agreements concluded between CSIS and other organizations, departments, provinces and foreign countries, and all requests for data collection in Canada by CSIS on behalf of foreign countries.

Now, let us examine the other act, passed in 1994, the Security Offences Act. This act confirms the RCMP's overriding responsibility in investigating certain security offences. Intelligence gathering, protection and enforcement are the three pillars of our security system.

The RCMP and CSIS have complementary functions. Each service assumes a distinct role within the wider framework of our national security system. CSIS is responsible for gathering intelligence concerning threats to security and giving warning about such threats. The RCMP is responsible for investigating into offences, either planned or committed and, above all, for crime prevention.

In order to facilitate CSIS's task, the CSIS Act contains detailed definitions of possible threats to the security of Canada.

This enables CSIS to rapidly adapt to circumstances in our constantly evolving world and to ensuing threats, as was Parliament's wish ten years ago. For example, the CSIS Act has allowed this organization to adapt to political and economic upheavals in the world during the last ten years.

Although areas of concern are not the same, we can still feel very strongly that hostile intelligence services threaten our national security. In matters of terrorism, new threats to the security of Canada have evolved as a consequence of foreign conflicts being unfortunately introduced into Canada. Terrorism is a scourge that spares no nation on Earth. Unfortunately it does not seem to be receding, quite the contrary.

Ever since its creation in 1984, CSIS has been able to evolve considerably thanks to the flexibility provided by the act and to ministerial directives. The act continues to give us the necessary means to face any subversive action. Naturally, because of its very nature, a security intelligence service must remain secret. This is particularly necessary in some cases, when the right of someone to privacy is to be protected.

Secrecy is also required to protect certain operational activities like staff distribution, modes of operation and sources of information. Everybody recognizes that secrecy as an end in itself does not serve anyone.

I have touched on the kind of security intelligence system that Parliament wanted to meet the needs of democracy, and I have touched on some of the real threats that make such a system a necessity in a democracy.

I am only echoing the words of the Solicitor General when I say that we do not need to set up a royal commission of inquiry, because we already have in place systems like the SIRC, that have the wide powers necessary to conduct an in–depth inquiry.

Therefore, before deciding on anything, let us wait until the Security Intelligence Review Committee has completed its job and submitted its report to the Solicitor General. This should be done shortly. Once the report has been submitted, as parliamentarians we will be able to take the necessary steps.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for his very enlightening speech. I also want to congratulate him on making his remarks entirely in French, from beginning to end, which is a first in this House for him.

If I understood the member correctly, the Solicitor General rubber–stamps special mandates, and one must trust that everything is in order since the agency publishes a new annual report every year.

• (1210)

I read the report made public in 1993. It is a ten–page document, with each page only half full to make room for some very interesting graphics. It is not with such a report, that would hardly meet grade 12 standards, that we are going to reassure the population regarding certain allegations.

The Bloc Quebecois has never questioned the need for such an agency. I believe that any self–respecting nation ought to have this kind of agency; there is no doubt about that. The point we raised is that allegations were made and if the Solicitor General approves everything, this means that he knew that someone was spying on the Reform Party from within. This is intolerable.

That is why, in case of allegations, one must go beyond the annual report. Do you know how difficult it is to get into CSIS? It takes about one hour to get all the doors unlocked. If they see you coming, they obviously have the time to put any file they do not want you to see in false–bottom drawers. There is no guarantee that an investigation can get all the facts. If something is secret, top secret, or top, top, top secret, obviously you will not find it lying on a table. It will be securely locked up in a file drawer nobody has access to.

How can we guarantee that an investigation will get to the bottom of things? That is what we are wondering. This is the reason why we say that it is all nice and dandy to wait for the report, but the allegations are too serious. We are just about to enter very difficult times in Canada. We are no fools, but we want to make sure that what happened in 1970 will not happen again. We do not want to see history repeat itself. We want to go through this difficult transition as adults and in accordance with democratic principles, not with a top secret service which is going to plant bombs whenever it pleases.

So I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General how can he guarantee that we are protected from such an occurrence?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, first of all, the allegations made before CIRC about CSIS will be examined. This is not an annual report, but rather a report that will examine the issues and the allegations that have been made against the intelligence service by the opposition. I must conclude, however, that there are members on this side of the House who are on the sub–committee looking at allegations about our security intelligence service.

I can also tell you that, in answer to the member for Rimouski—Témiscouata, one of the things we have recognized, particularly with respect to the CIRC and CSIS, is that it is unacceptable that such a group be asked to spy on a legitimate political party. I think that everyone in this House recognizes that this is not the goal of this government and that if it has already been done—I was not there then—but I can tell you this: I know these are difficult times, but I am nevertheless happy to hear that the hon. member recognizes the importance of having an intelligence service with a mandate to ensure Canada's integrity, particularly in light of the industrial and technological espionage that we see nowadays.

I can assure the member that it is not the goal of the service to spy on political groups.

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I would like to react to comments made by the hon. member from the Bloc who said that she is afraid these secrets are in hidden boxes, locked in drawers and cabinets. I think the reality is that these secret documents are passed around by staffers. They are taken home. They are left in open boxes in basements. We should be concerned about the lack of security of classified documents.

My question for the Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada is this. Is the hon. member aware of how these documents are classified?

• (1215)

The hon. member made a comment that he does not want secrets for secret's sake. How are highly classified documents labelled as such? Does the hon. member know?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, actually I do not know and that is the idea of the inquest being held by SIRC. It is to look into these various allegations. The hon. member also brought forward before the committee a number of questions. I am told there are more than 130.

I am sure that we will have to answer many of those questions and surely others put forward by the Bloc members as well as members on this side. I can assure the hon. member that I hope we will be able to answer a lot of them.

Again, it will be up to the Solicitor General to make sure that the information made public will not undermine the national security interests of Canada. I am convinced that a lot of these questions will be answered to the satisfaction of the opposition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Madam Speaker, I would have a question for the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General. I listened carefully to his speech and I must tell you that it sounded to me like he had a lot of good to say about the previous administration. To listen to him, I wonder why he did not run for the Conservative Party in the last elections if everything was going so well.

Considering that we have a democratic system and that nothing is more sacred than democracy in this country, in Canada and Quebec, does he not agree that it would be interesting from time to time to have a commission, whether royal or not—I say royal commission because that is how they are called in Canada—*to have a high-level commission investigate, especially when officials of the SIRC appearing before a sub-committee refuse to answer certain questions?*

They did not answer all the questions. Would it not be time to have a commission investigate and shed light on this so that the people of Canada know exactly what is happening?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, unlike the hon. member's leader and Leader of the Opposition, I never ran for the Conservative Party. But I can you tell you this: for one thing, let us allow let the process to run its course.

First of all, the SIRC was established specifically to answer questions raised by the member opposite as well as by interest groups. So, based on the facts or evidence submitted to us concerning the allegations made against CSIS, I trust we will be able to make an informed decision regarding this service. I think we should let the organization do its job. I am convinced that the hon. member opposite and our colleague from the Reform Party will have ample opportunity to scrutinize the report in October.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Before resuming debate, I would like to read a quote from Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 478. This morning a couple of times I hesitated to interrupt speakers but citation 478 states:

> The proceedings of a committee may not be referred to in debate before they have been laid upon the Table.

I would just ask hon. members to be aware of this rule.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan): Madam Speaker, I want to begin my speech with a brief historical overview. In 1946, with the RCMP's increased responsibilities for security, the personnel assigned to security tasks as, for the first time, separated organizationally from the Investigations Directorate and grouped in the Special "I" Branch.

In 1956, the Special "I" Branch was made a directorate within the RCMP, under the command of a deputy commissioner.

• (1220)

In 1969, the Royal Commission on Security recommended the establishment of a civilian security agency. The government rejected this recommendation but announced its intention to give the Special "I" Branch a separate status and to increase its civilian personnel.

Between 1971 and 1974, especially but not exclusively in Quebec, the security service mounted a series of operations, many of which were apparently illegal, in order to neutralize radical and separatist groups.

On March 27, 1975, the federal Cabinet produced a directive governing the security service's activites; this directive remained secret until 1978.

In 1976, a year later, Corporal Samson was tried following an incident unrelated to this affair, but revealed his participation in Operation Bricole in 1972. This operation involved breaking and entering and stealing files, especially on politics in Quebec.

Various events occurred over the years, but let us go to November 29, 1984. The members of SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, were appointed. The chairman was Ronald Atkey, a former Conservative Cabinet minister, as if by chance.

In February 1985, the federal government's budget estimates showed that CSIS, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, had a meagre budget of about $115 million; I say meagre because today its budget exceeds $200 million. This still represents, in the midst of an economic crisis, a considerable amount.

Despite this huge amount coming from the pockets of Canadian and Quebec taxpayers, Parliament only plays a minor role in monitoring the review of CSIS activities. Even reviewing the budget only skims the surface as the CSIS budget amounts, in fact, to a single line in the 1994–95 Estimates. I know from experience that when Mr. Elcock, a senior director of CSIS, appeared before the justice committee I was on, we asked him, to no avail, how these millions of dollars spent on national security were used. We never at any time—the evidence is all around us—received anything even remotely resembling an answer. That is not really surprising since Mr. Elcock has a reputation that probably always precede him.

In this regard, Richard Cléroux, a writer and former reporter with the Toronto–based daily newspaper the *Globe and Mail*, thinks that Mr. Elcock is very intelligent and plays political hardball. He sees him more as a Jesuit than an Oblate and thinks that he would make a formidable opponent of the independency movement.

What is most important is not that he refuses to answer our questions despite being accountable to taxpayers but that he leads an organization that seems to be above government control, that costs over $200 million a year and whose activities we cannot find out anything about, let alone check. That an organization with millions of dollars at its disposal is beyond our control is rather disquieting. It is troubling for taxpayers and from a national security standpoint. How far can we go in letting people put our money to work and for what reasons?

Talking about CSIS, opinions vary, according to experts. One of the questions we must ask ourselves is this: Could the organizations responsible for our national security with so little monitoring engage in illegal activities? It happened in the past. Let us just say that by asking the question, we are begging the answer to it.

• (1225)

Money can do anything, really. But considering the economic situation, our present state of affairs, and the demographics and the geography of our vast country, could this really happen? Well, yes, it could, but is it likely? Personally, I would say that not only is it likely, it is very likely.

Mr. Jean–Paul Brodeur, a criminology professor at the Université de Montréal, who specializes in intelligence services, among other things, even mentions that the Americans are sometimes taken for a ride, even though they have a much tighter control system than we do, in the form of committees with wide–ranging powers in both houses of Congress.

Who has forgotten the famous Oliver North, who was taking orders from above and literally thumbed his nose at everything else?

Mrs. Lorraine Lagacé, the former Quebec delegate in Ottawa, under Mr. René Lévesque, has some thoughts on this matter. She says that most English Canadians are not interested in looking at legal mechanisms, that what really counts for them is democracy, but that if they must choose between democratic rules and a united Canada, they will always opt for a united Canada.

That is precisely how they see this issue, so, no matter what the RCMP or CSIS says, the mandate of secret services will always be to save Canada before anything else.

CSIS employees, whom we pay more than $200 million per year, are not accountable. These people only have to table some kind of report before a pseudo–monitoring committee made up of political appointees. In fact, that review committee must phone CSIS before going to its offices to look into files, and they do not have access to all files. This is what you call transparency!

The public does have the right to know and we, elected representatives, have the basic duty of providing the information. What is happening with the more than $200 million paid in taxes? CSIS is a monster that nobody can control, not even the government. Consequently, you can imagine what is happening! This is why the Bloc Quebecois is asking for a royal commission of inquiry.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I realize that the hon. member stopped after ten minutes. Am I to understand that you are sharing your allotted time with a colleague?

Mr. St–Laurent: Indeed, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Fine. Questions and comments. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned again that we have no way of monitoring CSIS activities and referred to events dating back to 1970. We have been through this before. Today, all we want to do is ensure that SIRC can report on the allegations made either by the opposition or people whose rights have supposedly been, shall we say, impinged upon by CSIS.

I wonder if the hon. member would acknowledge that we now have in 1994 a service and a control committee which did not exist earlier on. I understand that this monitoring committee is made up of people tied to the previous government, but the hon. member should recognize that, if a seat at SIRC becomes vacant, we have the obligation to consult the opposition leaders.

• (1230)

So, I would like to know if the hon. member recognizes the existence of provisions in the act setting up SIRC which stipulate that we need to consult the opposition before appointing anyone to this committee?

Mr. St–Laurent: Madam Speaker, of course, we must take certain guidelines into account, and this is provided for in this context.

However, the question raised here today is that we believe it is particularly absurd to see the lack of control by the House of Commons over an institution to which it pays so many millions dollars every year and from which it really cannot get answers. On the contrary, people are asked to answer questions simply.

They do not have to give exact details on individuals in particular with specific dates and amounts; these things are not asked, especially when we are in committee. We ask people to tell us how it works and what happens internally. We talk about different aspects which have something to do with the way our tax dollars are spent.

We give $200 million dollars a year to CSIS, Madam Speaker, but I cannot explain to my constituents how the money is spent. I can only say to them that I do not have the slightest idea of how CSIS spends this money. I know that it hires people, of course. But what do they do exactly?

The people from across the way do not seem to be interested in speaking about what happened before, but we must not forget that it did happen. It is part of our history, and it must not be forgotten. We must not be afraid of repeating that the taxpayers' money was used for terrorist acts specially directed at some Quebecers accused of separatist activities.

With this in mind, we are justified in asking this question: will the taxpayers' money be used again for terrorist activities? This is the question we are asking today. It is a monster gone out of control.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, it is false to claim that activities of this kind take place in Canada. I believe that the hon. member has the privilege of sitting here in the House of Commons, the right to express his opinions and the privilege of sitting on the Sub–Committee on National Security. He has the privilege of asking questions about the performance of SIRC and the estimates tabled in the House every year.

I think it is not a matter of money but of realizing that we have the mechanisms to ensure our security. In fact, according to a number of international experts, this mechanism does not exist in any other country. You know, in France when you get off the subway, you often see French policemen doing ID checks. That is not the kind of society we have here in Canada. We have a free, liberal and generous society with great respect for the freedom of the individual.

It is not my purpose to defend our past performances, because I was not there. I have to admit I was not around at the beginning and the end of the sixties. But today, we have the mechanisms we need to ensure there is no abuse of power with respect to legitimate organizations, including political parties.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Before we continue this debate, I wish to inform the hon. member that he may use the 30 seconds he has left.

Mr. St–Laurent: Madam Speaker, I will do that, but instead of a lengthy reply, I just want to make a brief comment.

The hon. member opposite said that I had the privilege to do this and the privilege to do that. I also have the right.

Mr. Gagnon: Of course.

Mr. St–Laurent: I have that right, because I was duly elected by people who pay their taxes, whom I represent here in the House. I am now exercising the right I was given by the electorate.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Manicouagan for sharing ten minutes of his speaking time with me. Allow me to add my voice to that of my Bloc Quebecois colleagues and ask this House to blame the government for refusing to set up a royal commission of inquiry on illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

• (1235)

Let me remind you that CSIS was allotted a budget of about $205 million for fiscal year 1994–95. From a strictly accounting point of view, it is obvious that this House has not only the right but indeed the duty to look into the activities of this agency.

But we are not here to talk about accounting today. This debate is about the very activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, nothing less.

I should point out that this agency was established out of concern for transparency, to follow up on the recommendations of the McDonald Commission, which had uncovered a disgraceful set of unacceptable, if not downright illegal, practices and actions by the RCMP's very own security service.

Although the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was established with transparency in mind, there are nonetheless two major problems with CSIS. First, it does not have to account to Parliament for its budget, which it receives from Parliament. What this means is that we, who represent the people we were elected by, have no way of knowing how our tax money is spent. That is absurd!

The second problem with the accountability of CSIS to this Parliament relates to its intelligence gathering activities. Some may quickly answer back that the annual report CSIS tables every year is public and that a monitoring committee, commonly know as SIRC, reviews all its activities. Unfortunately, the reports tabled in this House in that respect are rather laconic, they do not say much. They are the epitome of the lack of transparency.

That is why the Bloc Quebecois considers that a royal commission of inquiry would give the people of Canada and Quebec a chance to determine whether their tax money is used properly and, more importantly, to check if CSIS has infiltrated and is trying to destabilize one or several political parties or other legitimate organizations. This is a serious matter. After all, an agency above suspicion, namely the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, did engage in such activities in the past.

We are justified in fearing that history will repeat itself. The *Toronto Star* recently uncovered a confidential note from an assistant to former Conservative Solicitor General Doug Lewis. According to this note, CSIS used an informant to obtain information on a report on the CBC television program "The Fifth Estate".

CSIS used and paid an informant by the name of Grant Bristow, who is one of the founders of Heritage Front, an extreme right–wing group dedicated to the unacceptable promotion of white supremacy. It has even been maintained that this individual tried to spy on the Canadian Jewish Congress. Worse yet, it was revealed that this mole, namely Mr. Bristow, found himself in the entourage of the Reform Party leader at least twice as a security guard.

Mr. Parrot, the president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, believes that CSIS also spied on his union.

Tell me, is CSIS under control or has it lost its marbles? Is this a simple mishap or, on the contrary, just the tip of the iceberg?

• (1240)

There is no way to know. In parliamentary committee, officials clearly avoided and even refused to answer the legitimate questions asked by members of this House. The Liberal government tells us that the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC for short, is checking out these allegations and will report to the Solicitor General within a month.

That is not good enough. The people must know that on September 13, when the Review Committee itself appeared before the House Standing Sub–Committee on National Security, committee members were bold enough to tell members that they could not reveal their findings and that only the Solicitor General could decide what should be made public. We are not naive.

The report or rather what will be left of it will obviously not tell us the whole truth. What about transparency, Madam Speaker? The Bloc Quebecois is not alone in demanding a public inquiry. Several very respectable organizations have called for a royal commission of inquiry. If I may, I would like to quote from an article published on September 10 in the Quebec City newspaper *Le Soleil*: "More and more groups are calling for an independent investigation into the allegations against CSIS. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Simon Wisenthal Centre all argue that the government should set up a mini–commission based on the McDonald Commission which investigated the former RCMP security service in the 1970s. To ensure public confidence, someone should take a fresh look at this whole affair, said Mr. Borovoy, head of the Civil Liberties Association".

The Government of Canada also finances other intelligence agencies. In addition to CSIS, with its $205–million budget, there is the RCMP's Criminal Intelligence Directorate, with a budget of around $5 million, the Security and Intelligence Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs, with a budget of around $10 million, and finally the top secret Communications Security Establishment of National Defence.

This famous establishment, the CSE, is governed by no law specifying its mandate or its powers, nor is it subject to any control mechanism. It is not even required to answer to Parliament. In spite of that, the CSE spends between $200 and $300 million in the greatest secrecy, without having to account for it, because it is so secret that it does not even exist in legislation. According to our information, this establishment has two mandates: the first is called INFOSEC, whereby the CSE gives the government technical advice, reports and assistance on the security of the telecommunications of federal departments. The second is code–named SIGINT; under this heading, information is collected on the activities, intentions and capabilities of foreign governments and on individuals and companies in various fields.

We are not being paranoid, but when we see an organization like CSIS, which is covered by legislation and faces serious charges of infiltrating a political party and spying on other legitimate organizations, I am very inclined to suspect that other secret services which are not governed by legislation can do even more and much worse.

As we just saw, these intelligence agencies have a combined budget of half a billion dollars and members of this House are unable to tell taxpayers if this money is spent in the best interest of the public and, most important, in accordance with the laws of the land.

Given this flagrant lack of openness, this flagrant lack of accountability to parliamentarians and citizens, this flagrant lack of control over the activities of Canadian intelligence agencies, especially CSIS, it is imperative to review the process by which these agencies report to Parliament, to review the CSIS Act, to review the process of appointing members to the Review Committee, and in so doing, members of this Parliament can ensure that the interests and rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Canada and of Quebec are respected.

• (1245)

It would have been very simple to let members be informed openly, but since they are denied access to the truth, only one solution remains: the people must now be informed through a royal commission of inquiry on CSIS.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, the Security Intelligence Review Committee was set up ten years ago precisely to ensure greater transparency regarding the activities of CSIS. Let us not forget, and I hope the hon. member will agree, that we have a duty to protect industrial interests in Canada.

All kinds of rumours are circulating in the Greater Montreal to the effect that some Quebec industries are the target of foreign interests or industrial espionage. I think the media reported several cases of Canadian companies losing contracts or being robbed of some technology by a foreign government. In my opinion, the primary objective is to protect the technological advances of our industries, including the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries, which are very important in Quebec and also elsewhere in Canada.

Does the hon. member recognize that we must protect our interests against increasing and disturbing competition from certain countries?

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is full of good intentions. I notice that he is the only one on the Liberal side to defend that cause. In fact, some other Liberal members were making very different statements not that long ago.

On March 19, 1992, when he was in opposition, the Liberal member for Scarborough West, said this regarding this issue: "We call upon CSIS and the minister to ensure, now that they can crawl, that future annual statements and reports contain more information, as promised by the minister himself, so that Canadians can have an informed public debate, be aware of the national security issues which face our nation, consider the major national security issues which face our country from year to year and how we are to handle them". The hon. member for Scarborough West was right on then, but the fact is that two years later Canadians, and even MPs in this House, still do not have the information requested.

Where are the Liberal members who were then asking for what we are asking for today? They keep silent. There is only one spokesperson for the Liberals and he has not been here long enough to realize that the problem has already persisted for too long and should have been resolved by now.

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that, as the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, I will always be first in line to protect individual freedoms. I will never accept the fact that legitimate organizations and political parties are being spied upon. I think that my party, and the government I have the privilege to be part of, have always sought first and foremost to protect individual liberties.

The hon. member referred to our committee. There is a sub-committee, made up of Liberals, Reform members and representatives of the Bloc Quebecois, which has been set up to undertake a review parallel to that of SIRC on allegations made against our security intelligence services. I believe we have shown some openness. I am very proud to see that even members on this side of the House are asking relevant questions that need to be answered. SIRC was created precisely to investigate allegations that can, at times, be legitimately made by the opposition or members on this side of the House.

• (1250)

Let me reassure the hon. member by saying that we follow our proud tradition and always try to protect the underprivileged in Canada, who are unfortunately going through some tough times. I am proud to be part of this government and of a party which is concerned about the less-privileged in Canada.

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear my colleague opposite say that they want to shed some light on actions by CSIS.

Let me remind the House that, on April 1, 1993, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River pointed out that Parliament's five-year review involved 117 recommendations and said: "While it certainly was not our belief that the government would immediately adopt all 117 recommendations, all of us who participated in the committee were disappointed that at the end of the day only one or two recommendations were actually formally adopted".

Mr. Asselin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine referred to this side of the House when speaking about the government, I noticed that only a few members were interested. I call for a quorum count.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I will ask the Clerk to count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I see a quorum. Resuming debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Duncan: Madam Speaker, is not a Reform member the next speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Barnes): My list shows the member for Durham. We have just heard from one side and we are alternating government and opposition and we now have the government speaker.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Madam Speaker, a clever motion has been put to the House that evokes a memory of transgressions from a bygone day. If approved, it would not serve the interest of Canadians or the lawful process that legislators designed to ensure their national security.

There are a large number of Canadians who are unclear about the role of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. These are serious people. If they are confused it is because they have been brought up on the myths about what an intelligence organization does.

I want to dispel some of these myths. Today I want to talk about what CSIS does and what it does not do.

• (1255)

There is the issue of law, of accountability and of democracy. The point I want to make is that CSIS exists because of those things, not despite them.

Nearly 50 years ago Canadians discovered, courtesy of Igor Gouzenko, that the Soviet Union was operating an espionage network here. The RCMP was asked to counter it and for decades it did. It became clear over time that police work and intelligence work were different. Police work involved enforcing the law, catching criminals and prosecuting them. Intelligence work involved warning governments and protecting people from acts by foreigners or by Canadians who threaten the security of our country.

The role of warner is very different from the role of enforcer. By its nature good warning requires good information. There are many ways to get information and some of them can conflict with civil liberties and the law. For that reason, among others, the Mackenzie commission of the late 1960s followed by the McDonald commission in the late 1970s both recommended that Canada's intelligence service be civilian in nature and that it be governed by a strict regime of law and accountability of review.

Simply put, CSIS exists because the government found that the rights of Canadians had not been adequately protected. In other words, the purpose of CSIS is to protect rights, to work within the law to be accountable to the elected Government of Canada.

There is probably no intelligence organization in the world that functions with a law that is so strict and comprehensive and as clear. The legislation governing some intelligence organizations elsewhere is often a few general paragraphs in length. Sometimes legislation does not even exist. The CSIS act is 29 pages long. Nine of those pages are devoted to outlining how what CSIS does is to be monitored, reviewed and approved by others outside. No other part of the federal bureaucracy is subject to such strict rules.

CSIS is under direct ministerial control and direction responsible to cabinet and responsible to Parliament. When CSIS engages in surveillance activities that are intrusive, such as electronic techniques, the director has to be personally satisfied in each case that the use of such techniques is necessary, that all other avenues have been exhausted and that the use of that technology is both lawful and within the mandate of the service. If it is not it does not happen. Even if the director thinks an action is justified, that is not good enough. The CSIS act requires him to secure the approval of the minister, the Solicitor General. If he does not approve, it does not happen. If he does, it does not end there. The case must be put to a judge on the Federal Court of Canada. There are no exceptions.

In addition, the law establishes two review agencies. One agency is internal with an independent auditor called the inspector general, with his own staff to report to the minister directly. He has complete access to literally everything that the service does.

The second review agency is external. We know it as the Security Intelligence Review Committee or, as some have mentioned, SIRC. It is independent both of CSIS and of government. SIRC also has its own staff. It has access to absolutely everything. It reports to Parliament annually. Its role, as it has described it, is to ensure that CSIS does things right and does the right things.

When CSIS was first created, SIRC found fault with some of what was done. It still does, but it stated in its 1991–92 report much has changed: "In the early years of this committee's mandate CSIS acted to a great extent as if it were simply a continuation of the RCMP security service. Despite public assertions to the contrary, SIRC felt that most CSIS targets, policies and procedures were virtually unchanged from those of a security service and that the CSIS preferred source of recruits was still the RCMP. It took over three years for this state of affairs to change significantly. CSIS is now virtually a new organization, hardly recognizable any more as the direct descendant of the security service of the RCMP. The number and type of CSIS targets, the rigorous justification required before anyone or any group is designated as a target, the lucidity, logic and balance of warrant affidavits submitted to the Federal Court, and the tone and content of reports by intelligence officers on target files have all changed significantly for the better. We still have criticisms to make, but our criticisms are no longer based upon strong and fundamental disagreement with the CSIS view of the world".

• (1300)

CSIS is a better organization because of that review process, but the mechanism of review and reporting have extended well beyond the work of that committee.

In 1987 Gordon Osbaldeston who had been clerk of the Privy Council was asked to look at CSIS. He recommended changes to the services top level organization, a new approach to training, development, and an improved infrastructure for CSIS. Those changes were made.

In 1989 Parliament reviewed the CSIS act, five years after it was created, and found that an organization to counter terrorism and espionage and to provide intelligence to the government was still needed in Canada.

In 1991 the then government responded to that parliamentary review. The best summary of its conclusions in terms of the service and the act of Parliament that governs it is provided by the title of the report, "On Course".

The third review since 1984 was done in the winter of 1992–93. The Solicitor General asked the director at that time to conduct a full review of the service and how it should change to take account of the end of the cold war and present and future threats to Canadian security. Today's service reflects the changed reality.

CSIS was created to enhance accountability, not evade it. CSIS was created to observe the rights and liberties of all Canadians. The law that governs CSIS is clear. The review that governs CSIS is comprehensive. The accountability of CSIS to the government is complete and the process of change and reform has been constant.

CSIS reflects our cultural diversity and many more women are part of the operation. Two out of three employees have been hired since 1984. The service has expanded dramatically its capacity for research and analysis including in depth long term studies of global security problems of relevance to Canada.

Hundreds of graduates in business administration, in history, in economics and in social sciences have been brought in. These people are not spies as some would prefer to believe. Many of them are analysts. Most are not sitting in some attic with a wire in their ear; they are at a desk reading. Much of what they analyse is open source material or information received from friends and allies.

The CIA estimates that 55 per cent of its finished intelligence product comes from open sources, in some areas 80 per cent. That makes two points. First, the other 20 per cent is also crucial. It is the stuff the guys they are trying to understand do not want them to know. It is what makes intelligence work differently and hopefully sometimes better than work produced internally from open sources. Second, the value added more often than not comes from brains, not bugging.

CSIS is not in the business of collecting information for collection sake. It is in the business of taking information, analysing it, integrating it, understanding it and then passing it on to the government. What CSIS does would be of no use if it kept the information for itself. It does not. Its role is to pass it on, to inform the government, to warn it and to reassure it. So the people are different and the focus is changing partly because old threats have disappeared and partly because new threats have emerged.

• (1305)

Security and intelligence was not the invention of the cold war. In Canada that function has been performed since the mid–nineteenth century when Sir John A. Macdonald asked the western frontier constabulary to patrol the borders of Upper Canada and to report on American Civil War activities that might affect Canada's security. The intelligence function was performed and continued until the cold war commenced. The beginning of the cold war was not the beginning of the need for intelligence, and the end of the cold war does not mean the end of that is near. Indeed some challenges have been made worse by the collapse of the Berlin wall.

There are two types of threats that CSIS is responsible for meeting. The first is public safety. The second is national security. I will deal with public safety first. Simply put, public safety involves protecting Canadians against violence. Violence can come from abroad through terrorism. Violence can be fostered here through extremism or the support of terrorism elsewhere. Warning of that potential violence and its prevention is called counterterrorism. That was not a worry for Canada for most of the forties, fifties and sixties, but with the explosion of terrorist groups and the incidents of the seventies it became a serious concern.

It became clear that Canada was not immune with the 1982 assassination of a Turkish diplomat in Ottawa. So too the takeover of the Turkish embassy in 1985 and the shocking tragedy that same year with Air India in which 329 Canadians died. CSIS shifted its responses and its resources to match the new threat.

In 1984 when CSIS was created only 20 per cent of its resources were devoted to counterterrorism and 80 per cent was devoted to counterintelligence. By 1992 the picture was dramatically different: a full 56 per cent of the operational resources were devoted by then to counterterrorism.

Public safety or the protection of Canadian lives is the number one priority. It is also the number one difficulty. The sources of terrorism geographically are diverse. Groups come and groups go. The inventions, activities, movements and targets of individuals and governments are almost impossible to predict. Their methods are by definition extreme. Their reach is global and the consequences of failure are severe.

The challenge of Canada's security service is to ensure this country is not the place where people are killed. That is not the only challenge. There are four others. We do not want to be the country where terrorism is planned. We do not want to be the country in which money for terrorism is raised. We do not want to be the country where the material to commit the act is bought.

We do not want to be the place where the terrorists hide after the deed is done.

In a sense dealing with the cold war was much easier. It was fairly obvious what countries the spies came from. Opposing intelligence specialists were extremely familiar with each other's habits. There was almost a code of conduct. It was all somewhat predictable, almost choreographed. That predictability, that order, is not there with terrorism.

The terrorist threat is not diminishing. The technology of terrorism is becoming more accessible, more convenient. The sources of terrorism remain strong: nationalism, religious and political extremism and state sponsored terrorism. There is a correlation between the proliferation of terrorism and the proliferation of regional conflict. Regional conflict continues. There is also a correlation between ethnic unrest and hatred and the proliferation of terrorism.

Looking at Asia, the former Soviet Union, eastern Europe, Africa and even Northern Ireland, it is clear that unrest will continue. Unfortunately Canadians will always be vulnerable. Our borders are open and long. We are a wealthy industrial society, a good target for extremists, a good place to secure equipment, technology and funds. Links of family, emotion, ideology and culture exist among millions of Canadians and societies abroad. When conflicts grip those countries the echoes can be felt here.

• (1310)

The concerns of Canada's security intelligence service are several: first, to prevent the spread of homeland conflicts to Canada; second, to prevent the exploitation of immigrant countries for fund raising to support those conflicts; and, third, to prevent terrorism or support for terrorism that originates here in relation to conflicts abroad.

The job of CSIS is early warning. It passes that information on to the government. Each year hundreds of threat assessments are prepared for the government by CSIS. The vast majority of them dealt with terrorism. Much of what it does involves dampening concerns rather than increasing them.

Let me now turn to the second major priority of CSIS, national security. Simply put, this is about spying. Its job is to counter that. That is why it is called counterintelligence. The focus is on the activities of the organization that are the creatures of foreign governments.

CSIS is concerned about countries that are one or more of the following: potential enemies equipped with weapons of mass destruction capable of striking Canada; countries that seek to develop such weapons through threat and theft of technology; countries that violate our sovereignty by meddling in our ethnic communities; countries that try to exercise repressive control over their citizens in Canada who are here on visitor exchanges; and countries that seek to prejudice our economic security by covertly gaining access to our leading edge technologies.

Throughout the cold war much of CSIS activity was devoted to countering those activities, but that was before the Berlin wall fell. What about the new world order? Unfortunately some of the new world order is not new. Arms control agreements have been negotiated and are substantially reducing the nuclear threat that is still there.

Other countries continue to conduct espionage operations here because the reasons for spying remain strong. Communists did not invent spying; the desire for national advantage did. Spying is a cheap way to acquire weapons technology whether conventional or weapons of mass destruction.

The proliferation problem is getting worse, not better. We have much of that technology here. It is at our nuclear, chemical and pharmaceutical industries; in our electronic sector; and in our machine tool capacities. As long as we are an open and wealthy country with a leading economy, countries will come here to spy and not simply for weapons. Developing countries eager to catch up with the rest of world find espionage a highly efficient way to modernize their economies. Former communist countries may begin to resort to intelligence gathering for the same reason. Everyone is after the competitive edge.

In conclusion, the motion admonishes the government for not having set up a royal commission. I have already mentioned the Security Intelligence Review Committee. In addition we have established a parliamentary committee to further examine specific aspects of CSIS.

This is not to detract from what may well have been useful exercises, but I have here summaries of various costs of royal commissions: aboriginal peoples, $13 million over nine months; national passenger transportation, $23 million over three months; Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, $23 million over eight months; and reproductive technologies, $25 million over three years. The list goes on.

Members of the Bloc have accused the government of creating deficits on the backs of Quebecers. Here is a clear case of the Bloc proposing the wasting of taxpayers' money on more studies that benefit no one. More interesting is the fact that the Bloc members, through their own representation on parliamentary committees, are saying they are so inept to carry out investigative powers the electorate has bestowed on them that we have to pay outside experts to do their jobs.

• (1315)

I do not think the taxpayers of Canada and especially those in Quebec will be pleased to learn of that. This motion is an insult to all people of Canada who are so concerned about controlling government spending and getting our economic house in order.

[*Translation*]

M. André Caron (Jonquière): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the excellent speech on CSIS made by my hon. colleague from Durham. It is no doubt necessary, in a modern state, to take special measures in order to ascertain that activities related to espionage, foreign interference and revolutionary subversion are not carried out within a state's territory. I think the member has explained very clearly why there is a need for an organization to monitor these kinds of activities. However, the opposition motion before us today deals with a somewhat different subject.

I am a little sensitive to these questions because my name was on the list of members of the Parti Quebecois that was stolen by members of the RCMP's security service in the 1970s. When I had the honour of being elected by the people of Jonquière to represent them in the House of Commons, some of my friends warned me, because I am a known sovereignist, a separatist as many of our colleagues opposite like to say. I was a separatist in the 1960s, and it looks like I am still a separatist in the 1990s.

Mr. Milliken: Yes, and next week you will be a federalist.

Mr. Caron: You may rest assured, my dear colleague from Kingston and the Islands, that I will be a sovereignist for the referendum.

When my friends saw that I was going to Ottawa as a member of Parliament, they told me that I would be under surveillance by the RCMP. I told them that I was not particularly worried because we are in a state governed by the rule of law and I did not think such a threat was real.

When I look at the issue before us today, I realize that CSIS seems to have taken questionable measures. But I am not supposed to worry because we have a review committee. I do not want to know what is going on in CSIS, but I want to rest assured that it is well supervised and monitored. However, present members of the review committee have been appointed by the previous government, and parties then represented in this House had their say in those appointments. There are three Conservatives, on Liberal and one New Democrat sitting on this committee. I imagine they are all good federalists, and people with a certain vision of Canada.

I do not trust those members. Sad to say, I do not trust them to see to it that my rights as a Canadian and a Quebecer are respected by CSIS. I am not sure they will do it. The Reform Party was infiltrated by CSIS, and I am not sure the same thing did not happen with the Bloc Quebecois.

Those issues are important. People are sceptical and the present review committee cannot set their minds at peace. Does my hon. colleague think it would be important, for the sake of democracy, to have a royal commission of inquiry even if there are costs involved? I think that in view of the present membership of the review committee, we should spend whatever money is needed. Would the hon. member for Durham agree that a royal commission should go to the bottom of those allegations made in the media about the Canadian Security Intelligence Service?

• (1320)

[*English*]

Mr. Shepherd: Madam Speaker, the essence of the hon. member's question is whether CSIS is accountable. I went through the process and CSIS seems to be just as accountable as every other government department through Parliament. That is a fundamental of our democratic system.

It is a ludicrous assumption to me if we are saying that a royal commission is needed every time something has to be investigated, whether it has to do with CSIS, the Department of Industry or anything else. What would be the purpose of Parliament if we resorted to a royal commission every time a problem arose? We have made too much use of royal commissions and studies. The Library of Parliament is full of them, many of which are just collecting dust. What we are saying is that to move away from that process is a total disregard of our parliamentary traditions.

More important is the cost. Clearly, the cost would be justifiable if there was an invasion of civil liberties, but the reality is that we have the functions here. There are all kinds of systems which scrutinize CSIS. Why spend the extra money? With the deficit running at billions of dollars it seems totally ludicrous that we would even think about a royal commission on something that already has tremendous investigative advantages.

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. member to clarify a couple of points in relation to the actual function of CSIS. I thank him for the overview.

It is my understanding from his presentation that CSIS was actually born from the RCMP out of a need to counteract Russian spying at that time. Since the cold war has ended and the Berlin wall has dropped the need which originally called for the start up of CSIS is gone.

When the cold war existed 80 per cent of CSIS activity was in counterintelligence which falls under the national security point of the two points outlined. Considering there is now no cold war tends to imply that the public safety component of CSIS should probably go back to the RCMP. It seems to be an early warning system and once it is identified is referred to the appropriate

sources to carry out in any event. Under national security I believe the counterintelligence involvement is now 56 per cent. I am wondering if the role of CSIS is becoming unnecessary. Maybe we should be looking at some other component.

Mr. Shepherd: Madam Speaker, the essence of the hon. member's question is whether it go back to the RCMP. The hon. member wonders why the RCMP cannot carry out those functions.

My dissertation tried to point out the significant difference between law enforcement and intelligence gathering. It appears the birth of CSIS and indeed other intelligence gathering organizations like the CIA were predicated on the assumption that they had a unique role.

The second part of the hon. member's question was whether there is a need for that today. It does not take much reading of our local newspapers to see that terrorism still exists around the world. We have been treated to the terrors of Northern Ireland, Bosnia–Hercegovina and other areas. These do have attachments to Canada; people who live here have relatives in those countries and so forth.

The answer is yes, it appears there is a need. In fact due to the globalization and technology there may well be a greater need today than there ever was before.

• (1325)

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Crowfoot.

It is a pleasure to rise today to contribute to the debate on the security of our country. I am aware that by its very nature and its inception in 1984, CSIS and much of its work must be kept secret. The lives of individuals involved in CSIS work, contacts and ultimately all Canadians would be at risk if the wrong information got into the wrong hands. However this does not and should not preclude parliamentarians on behalf of all Canadians from discussing this secret agency, its work, mandate, activities, and the manner in which we review the scope of activity, namely through the Security Intelligence Review Committee otherwise known as SIRC.

The work of CSIS in protecting the interests and security of Canadians is not in question. Canada being such an open society must be as vigilant as ever to the threat of subversive action. We must be conscious and sensitive to Canada becoming a proxy battlefield between immigrant groups who want to continue their hostilities on our soil. Remembering that Canada has the highest rate of immigration in the western world and therefore has extra exposure in that regard, we must be vigilant.

While it is important to acknowledge these potential threats and reaffirm our support for CSIS, it does not mean that CSIS is ultra vires or some untouchable CIA type derivative. Accountability still remains the hallmark of the nature of this country, its public servants, politicians and those on the public payroll.

Canada is one of the few western democracies to give its security service an explicit statutory charter. It provides a defined mandate for the operations of the agency. It interposes a system of judicially defined authorized warrants in the agency's use of intrusive investigation techniques. It establishes monitoring and review bodies. These purport to ensure that the agency does not indeed act outside the limits of its mandate.

Therefore the question is: Is it doing so? It became obvious during the four years of existence of the McDonald commission in the late 1970s that illegalities and improprieties were rampant in the security service branch of the RCMP. The principal recommendations of that report called for an entirely civilian security agency. This agency was to be politically accountable and subject to strict review. The report concluded that law enforcement and security work are incompatible.

Accordingly, Bill C–157 which was introduced in May 1983 was put into effect in order to form this new security agency. However, it died on the order paper after much debate, committee review and public criticism. During the next session of the 32nd Parliament Bill C–9 was introduced and incorporated virtually all of the proposed changes and amendments as prescribed during the Bill C–157 debate. This was proclaimed in August 1984.

The act assigns the management and control of CSIS to the director, a cabinet appointee. The Solicitor General is given an active supervisory role. Originally the bill had adopted a model similar to Australian legislation which would not have given the minister any operational role whatsoever. This was ostensibly to ensure that CSIS could not be used for partisan purposes. The act now provides that the minister has an override and must approve all warrant applications. The act also establishes the office of Inspector General and the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The Inspector General is to monitor CSIS operations and to report to the deputy Solicitor General and to SIRC on the legality and propriety of these operations.

• (1330)

SIRC is a committee composed of five Privy Councillors appointed after consultation by the Prime Minister with opposition leaders in the House of Commons. It is to conduct a review of CSIS operations and to report to the minister and Parliament on them. It also has a variety of investigative duties; deals with complaints and acts as an appeal board with respect to security assessments and security influenced decisions under the Citizenship and Immigration Act.

During its 10 years CSIS has had growing pains. The House of Commons set up a special committee in 1989 to review the CSIS act and the Security Offences Act. The committee had 117 recommendations. Its report called "In Flux but not in Crisis" generally concluded that the system was sound and any reform should be based on the continuance and extension of already established institutions.

The government's response set out its belief that legislative changes in the CSIS act and the Security Offences Act were not needed. Further it was unwilling to contemplate structural changes.

In February 1991 a debate was held on an opposition motion that the House of Commons concur in the committee's report which recommended a parliamentary subcommittee on national security. The subcommittee held its first meeting in June 1991.

On May 3, 1994 this same standing committee on justice and legal affairs re–established the subcommittee on national security which is the committee currently looking into the Bristow affair. The motion was a close vote and almost did not happen.

Let me now turn to the formation of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, euphemistically known as SIRC. In 1984 the then newly installed Tory government announced the initial membership of SIRC. In order to meet the requirements as prescribed in the act as a condition to sit on SIRC, two individuals had to be sworn in as Privy Councillors on the day of their appointments. The politics had begun, the die was cast and suspicions were raised. Naturally, due to the Privy Council appointment requirements, four of the first five appointees were ex–cabinet ministers and the fifth a well placed Quebec City lawyer.

Today we have five politically appointed partisan individuals on the review committee; three from the Tories, one from the Liberals and one from the NDP. This was a Mulroneyism.

What is its function? The security committee is to act as the eyes and ears of the public and Parliament on CSIS. The committee is intended to be independent of the government and its operations but responsible to the Parliament of Canada. The CSIS act provides that its members are appointed by the Governor General in Council after consultation with the leaders of all parties having more than 12 members in the House of Commons.

Is it independent? Is it another politically charged patronage agency made up primarily of Tory cronies? Is it conducting constructive and an apolitical review of CSIS and its activities? We need to know and perhaps the only way is to investigate the investigators.

We do not want to emulate the travesties perpetrated by our neighbours who have created monsters in the form of the CIA. If we are not vigilant and take the time to review agencies like CSIS after 10 years of work, it is easy to lose control of their function and scope of activity.

• (1335)

Under the legislation SIRC does not have access to cabinet documents. For this reason I suggest that the requirement that members of SIRC have Privy Council designation or past cabinet experience is unnecessary and should be abolished. Instead have individuals cleared by the RCMP and if they meet the top security clearance available they fit.

Why would one require a PC designation when one does not have access to cabinet documents? This change would lend itself to appointing independent members and not has been cabinet members.

I would also like to recommend changes to the length of appointments to SIRC. Currently the five–year appointment allows a former administration to protect itself from a new administration. At the present time we have the first of the Tory appointments to SIRC expiring in December 1996 and the latest one in 1998. All may survive this administration, assuming the next election is held before December 1996. Four or five will survive if the election is held before November 1997.

At the same time the Liberal committee appointee, Michel Robert, the same individual who worked Saturdays and has a non–tendered $249,000 contract from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, ensures that the current administration has one of its cronies who can keep track of things. It is a joke and nothing more than political patronage that surely does not lend itself to independent review of CSIS operations.

What we need is legislative permanence being granted the parliamentary subcommittee on security and legislative authority as well. This will at least meet the original recommendation of the 1991 review of national security and give us a body whose investigative powers include the ability to investigate cabinet, which SIRC cannot.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the very thorough job my colleague opposite has done in preparing and delivering this speech. It was refreshing to hear recalled some items of recent history.

I appreciated the relatively thorough research that he obviously did in relation to the mechanism for appointing members to the Security Intelligence Review Committee. He has articulated a concern in relation to those appointments, i.e., the method by which consultation is or is not done with leaders of the parties in the House of Commons before such appointments are made. This is a point that I raised in the House in the last Parliament.

At that time, as an individual member, I appeared not to have been heard by the then Prime Minister, who is solely responsible for those appointments, so the hon. member's remarks are refreshing.

I would like to ask him if he could elaborate on what process would be used in relation to a possible parliamentary subcommittee that would be different from what exists now in Parliament, where there is a subcommittee whose mandate includes the general area of oversight of the security intelligence envelope.

Could he elaborate or provide more particulars as to how he would change what is there now in relation to parliamentary committee operations?

Mr. Duncan: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the very important role that the member opposite has played in establishing that subcommittee. He has been the driving force. I must say I have had a crash course in CSIS since notification that this motion was coming forward.

• (1340)

I would like to see permanence of that standing subcommittee through legislative authority. I would also like to see the standing subcommittee have a very real role in the appointments to SIRC. In other words they should have a vetting role as opposed to just an interview role.

I would certainly be open to any other constructive suggestions the member might have.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, the overriding question that must be answered regarding the Brian McInnis–Grant Bristow affair is whether CSIS and other institutions of government were politicized by the Brian Mulroney government and whether the McInnis–Bristow incident was the premeditated extension of that politicization.

Rod Stamler, a former assistant commissioner of the RCMP has indicated clearly, not only in Paul Palango's book *Above the Law*, but in open line radio programs across the country that the RCMP was politicized by the Mulroney government and that it was denied a free hand in the investigation of political and other corruption in Canada.

When we look for evidence of this very serious allegation we see several disturbing incidents. We see the accusation of Shelly Ann Clark about deception and deceit in the Canada–U.S. free trade deal and her continuous complaint that her concerns were never fully investigated by the RCMP.

We see the accusation of Glen Kealy of kickback schemes run by members of the Mulroney government and in particular the case of Roch LaSalle which has never been finalized in court. We also see the case of Alan Eagleson, a close friend of the former Prime Minister, where detailed evidence of wrongdoing was placed in the hands of the RCMP, the Metro Toronto Police and the Law Society of Upper Canada and absolutely nothing of consequence was done.

Yet the U.S. justice department, after looking at the very same evidence, have laid 34 indictments against Mr. Eagleson, issued a warrant for his arrest, have frozen his American bank account and have initiated extradition proceedings to have him stand trial in the United States.

These incidents strongly support the allegations of Mr. Stamler that there has been political interference in the administration of the RCMP and in the administration of justice, that politicization of the RCMP under the Mulroney government did occur and that evidence of wrongdoing by government members and friends of government was not, and has not, been properly investigated.

I have been advised by individuals close to the situation that it would be much easier to politicize the Canadian Security Intelligence Service than to politicize the RCMP. When I asked my sources to explain this I was told that the Solicitor General has the power under the federal statutes to demand secret and classified information, including complete files and names of informants from CSIS.

This is supported by the fact that at least eight boxes of secret and highly classified documents seized from Brian McInnis's residence came directly from the Solicitor General's office. Why does the Solicitor General have to have possession of such highly secret documents? Why does he have to have possession of CSIS documents at all?

This is evidence that Doug Lewis, the former Solicitor General, was directly involved in the operation of CSIS. This was not an arm's length relationship. Mr. Lewis was directly involved.

• (1345)

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act grants the Solicitor General full knowledge and power of direction over the policies, operations and management of CSIS. As well, the assistant deputy Solicitor General sits on the CSIS target approval and review committee and has direct input into what groups and individuals are targeted by CSIS.

The question is to what extent, if any, did the former Solicitor General politicize CSIS either through the assistant deputy Solicitor General who sat on the committee that determined who and what CSIS was to target or his own direct involvement or both? This question must be answered.

In the speech the Solicitor General gave in the House today he attempted to negate the Bloc's request for a royal commission

hearing into this matter by claiming that SIRC has a mandate to do the same work. This is not true. SIRC advised the subcommittee looking into this matter that it could not investigate matters once they reached the Solicitor General's office. This means that SIRC has no power whatsoever to determine whether the former Solicitor General politicized CSIS. This is a central question beyond the mandate of SIRC. Was CSIS used for political purposes under the direction of Doug Lewis?

Therefore, there is a need to look not just at this matter but to look at the whole question of the politicizing of our federal institutions by the Mulroney government, including CSIS and the RCMP.

There is the clear suggestion that there has been a deliberate dismantling of the division of power between those who create the law and those who administer and enforce the law. This is the much broader and more serious question raised by this whole McInnis–Bristow issue and that is has the rule of law been destroyed or harmed in this country?

Therefore I reject the submission made in this House today by the present Solicitor General that SIRC can do the job. It is obvious SIRC cannot look into misuse and abuse of political powers within the office of the former Solicitor General or any other institution of government. Therefore its mandate is inadequate.

Our hopes must rest with the subcommittee. If the subcommittee fails to get to the bottom of the issue and answer all relevant questions, the demand for a full scale inquiry will be justified at that point.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I must admit that it was with some surprise that I took note last night of the opposition motion that a royal commission be invoked to deal with a number of allegations that have been put in the media of late, over the last month or two, in relation to both the mandate of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the security of documentation that emanates from CSIS and as it might make its way to the minister who reports to this House for CSIS which is the Solicitor General.

These events out of which the allegations arose took place two, three, four years ago. In any event, the opposition has made its motion. Before dealing with the substance of the motion I would take note, as others perhaps have done before me, that the use of the word illegal in the motion might be construed as unparliamentary. That word has been found to be unparliamentary in the past. I recognize the courtesy of the opposition in changing the wording of the motion earlier today to allegations of illegal activities.

I would have preferred to see the words allegations of improper activities because no one has been very particular about what illegality there might have been.

• (1350)

Any illegality there might have been would surely have been related to the mandate of CSIS. To draw an analogy, if someone in the department of agriculture decides they are going to do something involving the Department of Health that is surely not a matter of illegality per se.

In any event, I will abandon the technical issues and attempt to speak to the motion.

Other colleagues in the House have noted appropriately the work of CSIS on behalf of Canadians. CSIS has for 10 years been carrying on this type of work which involves gathering and analysis of intelligence and preparation of security clearances, providing security reports and analysis to other departments of government.

The member who just spoke referred to a security clearance by the RCMP. The RCMP does not do security clearances. This is the job carried out for Canadians by CSIS.

The work of CSIS focuses primarily around what are called threats to the security of Canada and these defined threats are outlined in section 2 of the CSIS act and they include espionage and foreign influenced activities. Sometimes CSIS activity is described under the category of counter intelligence. Some of that work includes the so–called spying which occurs in Canada on the part of some operations of other governments.

There is the area of counter terrorism. Terrorism may or may not involve a foreign government and there is also a category of threat to Canada which we call subversion but in relation to which the service does not carry on any investigative activity without the expressed consent of the Solicitor General. The last time we checked here on the parliamentary side we did not find any ongoing CSIS operations in relation to subversion.

Most of what CSIS does, most of the good work it does, never gets reported. Because of the nature of the work it does not prepare press releases every Friday afternoon for consumption by the media or for that matter consumption by anyone. Most of its good work is done quietly at desks using paper and computers and good common sense. That work carries on both in making security assessments and in the gathering of data mostly from open source. Most of the data it gathers come from open sources and it also has data that come from other non–open sources which it gathers using appropriate and legal methods.

It assists both the Government of Canada and generally the citizenry by keeping an eye on foreign government theft of industrial secrets and it also keeps an eye on what we would call foreign meddling, meddling in Canada by governments outside Canada using whatever means it wishes. That is probably a bit of a cat and mouse game that goes on in all countries of the world.

Why does the official opposition request a royal commission? We have in this country a statute that governs CSIS, a statute

that by comparison to other countries in the world is relatively modern, up to date, effective.

• (1355)

I am not one of those who takes the view that the CSIS statute is perfect. The record will show that I have attempted to make constructive comments both in the House and in the CSIS five year review on ways in which we could alter the CSIS statute. I point out that not all countries do have statutes that govern their security intelligence system.

As we speak today, I understand that the people of Great Britain are about to invoke a statute which was recently passed and codify a statute which oversees and regulates the work of the security agency known as MI5. That is quite a step for the people of Great Britain to take. They have never had a statute that governed the area that James Bond used to work in. They will then develop their statute as they see fit.

Australia has a foreign intelligence gathering agency which has no statute. I believe that everyone in the agency is employed by contract to one person and that person is employed by their government. A single person constitutes this particular agency. There is no statute that would confirm or deny even the existence of the operations which that agency carries out.

In addition to our statute which has a series of sections that oversees and monitors what CSIS does, we have the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC, whose job it is to review all of the work of CSIS, all of the work done under its mandate, to make sure that work is done within the law and efficaciously. There is a whole range of challenges there for the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

The Speaker: It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

DOMINIC CARDILLO

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues from Kitchener and Waterloo in paying homage to Kitchener Mayor Dominic Cardillo.

Dominic Cardillo is being honoured today by the citizens of Kitchener for his tremendous contribution to their city. He was first elected as alderman in 1963 and has served as mayor of Kitchener for the last 11 years. Such longevity during a time when politicians are not very popular is a testament to Dom's integrity and hard work.

Mayor Cardillo must be congratulated for his tireless promotion of the interests of Kitchener. During his tenure Kitchener has grown in population and has matured as a city. His greatest achievement is the new city hall which provides a strong, people oriented focus to the municipal government and downtown Kitchener.

Dom Cardillo has been a model civic leader whose dedication to the interests of his constituents will long be remembered.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEFENCE CONVERSION

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières): Mr. Speaker, in the red book, the Liberal Party promised to support defence conversion. However, this promise applies only to the English–speaking provinces, as the CNTU revealed yesterday.

The Maritime provinces, which lost 3,000 jobs when military bases were closed, have now received $20 million to help diversify their economy. Quebec lost nearly 1,000 jobs as a result of similar cuts and received a meagre $200,000.

Furthermore, during the past four years, Quebec's defence industry lost 7,000 jobs and is still waiting for the federal government to adjust Defence Industry Productivity Program.

This is one more example of the injustice done to Quebec. The Prime Minister's only concern is how to put Quebec in its place, and he is doing a good job of it.

* * *

[*English*]

YORKTON—MELVILLE

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report that this past week the 10th Annual Canadian Student Leadership Conference was held in my riding of Yorkton—Melville. This conference originated 10 years ago in Yorkton and has been growing ever since.

This year over 1,000 high school delegates and leaders came from every province and territory in Canada, and even some students from south of the border. It was an opportunity for them to share their experiences with other student leaders and to encourage one another in achieving their dreams.

At the same time as the student leadership conference, the first annual Canadian high school finals rodeo championship was held in Yorkton as well. This rodeo was also a highly successful event and I am proud to report that the best high school rodeo team is from Saskatchewan.

The top male high school champion was Jason Resch from Saskatchewan and the top female high school rodeo champion was Kelly Rood, also from Saskatchewan. Let us tip our hats to our future leaders. Congratulations to all the organizers and participants.

By the way, the conference next year will be held in Bathurst, New Brunswick.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, last week I received letters on a very serious issue from the mayors of Brampton and Mississauga and the Coalition for the safety of our daughters.

Both Mississauga and Brampton have bylaws that prevent strip clubs from hiring persons under the age of 18. But many municipalities across Canada do not have such bylaws in place or do not have adequate resources to enforce them.

I join with the mayors of Brampton and Mississauga and with the coalition in calling upon the Minister of Justice to immediately amend the Criminal Code of Canada to provide for the prosecution of strip club owners who employ persons under the age of 18.

* * *

AUTUMN FAIRS

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, as the colours of the country's landscape begin to change and farmers begin to harvest their crops, the annual fall fairs are now in full swing. The fair is a longstanding tradition in Canadian communities where families, friends and neighbours come together to celebrate the autumn season.

In my riding of London—Middlesex I have had the opportunity to attend and participate in the Dorchester Fair; the Thorndale Fall Fair; the Lambeth Harvest Festival; the Iderton Fair; and southwestern Ontario's largest, the Western Fair.

Tremendous community spirit and long hours of hard work make these fairs memorable events enjoyed by both my rural and urban constituents alike.

Congratulations to all the dedicated people in London—Middlesex who worked so hard to make fairs the great success they are.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Barry Campbell (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians are quite distressed by the attempt of some to distract us from the legitimate debate which must take place about guns in Canadian society.

A large majority of Canadians want tougher gun control because the presence of guns in our cities, our towns and our homes decreases the safety of all of us. I understand the need of hunters and farmers for long guns but gun ownership in this country is a privilege, not a right.

These are the basic facts: Guns kill people and handguns in particular have no other purpose. Registration of all weapons would only be a minor inconvenience for those who need long guns to hunt. Handguns and assault weapons are not needed for hunting or by farmers for pest control.

I respect the right of Canadians to choose their hobbies but hobbies should not dictate public policy. Demolition car drivers do not control highway policy. Sport shooters should not try to dictate gun policy.

I urge the government to ensure that public safety is paramount in our gun policies. All considerations are not equal in this debate. We must address the smuggling of weapons and the use of guns in the commission of an offence, but outlawing handguns and a registration system will contribute to a safer Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is determined to remain silent about any plans he may have to tax our RRSPs and refuses to make a formal commitment not to tax them.

The Minister of Finance turns a deaf ear to public opinion and is using current consultations to deflect any questions. Senior citizens have often saved for years to have a decent income in their old age.

What is the minister telling them today? That he cannot guarantee their incomes will not be further reduced.

• (1405)

The government wants to change the rules in the middle of the game. Although the minister has been stalling for several days, he will have to make a decision. Seniors hope he will select the only fair option: no taxation of RRSPs.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, remember when you were a kid and your mother forced you to eat broccoli even though you despised it? It looks like good old mother corp is trying to force Canadians to swallow yet another concocted dish. This one tastes more like stale fish.

First, the government floated the idea of taxing theatre tickets and movie rentals to raise revenues for the floundering CBC. I guess giving it over one billion bucks per year just is not enough. Now CBC television wants cable companies across the country to carry a new French language all–news station. It seems the companies do not want to carry it so mother corp wants the CRTC to force them to run it, even if no one wants the service, and this with our national debt exploding at over $530 billion.

At least when mom forced us to eat our broccoli she had our best interests in mind and she did not charge us for it.

* * *

HUMANITARIAN AID

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in their actions are demonstrating our prowess as peacekeepers and as providers of humanitarian aid.

I think of a resident of Brant and a good friend of mine, Sidne Maddison, who one day in June received a phone call asking for her assistance in Rwanda with *Médecins sans frontières*. By the end of the day she had left her job and her family and left for Rwanda to act as a nurse.

On her return home she spoke of other Canadians who worked with her in her organization, in the Canadian Red Cross, and of course our armed forces personnel who daily risked their lives in the name of peace.

These people truly are ambassadors for Canada. I salute them for their courage, for their commitment to humanity, and for extending the good name of Canada across the world.

* * *

BRAVERY

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday a man was saved from drowning in Prospect Bay by two brave men. Gary and Richard Peddle of Whites Lake in my riding of Halifax West demonstrated great courage as they pulled 74–year old John Laverdure from the water.

Mr. Laverdure, a neighbour of the Peddle family, was more than a metre under when Gary plunged into the chilly waters of Prospect Bay and pulled back to the boat. District 4 volunteer firefighters are also to be commended for aiding Mr. Laverdure once back to the wharf.

I am pleased to inform the House that John Laverdure has been released from hospital and is very well, thanks to the efforts of Richard, Gary, and the entire Peddle family. It is indeed heart warming to know that such acts of selflessness and bravery still exist.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we celebrate National Translation Day. Many of us on Parliament Hill regularly take advantage of the exceptional services provided by interpreters, translators and terminologists who belong to the Canadian Union of Professional and Technical Employees.

[*English*]

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that translation is offered in both official languages and indeed in over 100 languages for the Government of Canada, its elected members and its civil service. We are fortunate to have such dedicated, efficient, capable personnel to provide us with these exceptional services.

I extend to them very sincere thanks on behalf of all of us in the House.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that he has found no indication of a commitment on the part of the previous government to pay Quebec for its expenses in the Charlottetown referendum and it is on that basis that the Prime Minister refuses to pay Quebec. However, in the case of Ginn Publishing, where there had been a verbal commitment, the Prime Minister did not hesitate one moment to honour that commitment, quite the contrary.

It is obvious that verbal commitments do not all have the same weight in Ottawa. The federal government prefers to honour a shameful, anonymous and unacceptable commitment rather than an honourable agreement between the Prime Minister and the Premier.

Quebecers are fed up with paying for such an expensive government system. They have had their fill of the federal excuses. You wanted proof, you have it. Now pay up.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

REFORM PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt stated that the Reform Party brass, not the grassroots, decide what policies would be debated at our assembly.

This is absolute nonsense. The membership of the Reform Party controls every step of the policy making process. Not only does its members decide what will be on the agenda; their votes at assembly actually establish party policy.

I am very pleased at the member's conversion to the principles of democracy. After all, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt was hand picked, or should I say anointed, by her party leader in the last election. Despite numerous protests from the riding association the Liberal Party elites refused to allow other candidates to contest the nomination.

Liberals from Saskatoon—Humboldt were denied the most basic democratic right: to choose their own candidate. The Reform Party not only allows the grassroots to participate—

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[*Translation*]

IRVING WHALE

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, last week the hon. member for Laurentides quite belatedly took up the issue of the *Irving Whale* wreck. I think it is now time to recall what this government and other members of Parliament have done to solve this 24-year old problem.

On the second and third of March, the Gagnon-Easter Committee held public meetings in Prince Edward Island and in the Magdalen Islands. On March 18, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Transport announced that the Government of Canada had decided to refloat that boat that has been lying in deep water for almost 8,600 days.

It took only 135 days for this government to remedy the situation. It should be stressed that the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Minister of the Environment, had refused to intervene even if he was aware of the dangers of that time bomb and despite the recommendations of the study report on the security of tankers that he had commissioned.

Our public hearings and the environmental evaluation have confirmed that the refloating option was the best solution and the safest for the environment as well as for the local population.

The *Irving Whale* wreck will be refloated next summer, as the government has promised to do. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, on this issue, we have faced up to our responsibilities.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, gun control is part of an important package of crime prevention measures the government is serious about embarking upon.

This week I met with members of the Burlington Rifle Club, an organization located in my riding with members from several area ridings. The club's safety director, several of its members and I had a terrific discussion about ways we could improve safety in our communities and measures gun owners and gun vendors could take to help the government help our communities become safer for women, for children and for men.

The package of justice bills currently before the House, the new National Crime Prevention Council, the work of several of our ministers and more effective gun control will improve and protect the quality of life for all Canadians.

Let us all work together toward these objectives.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, with great anticipation I attended the CAVEAT convention in Hamilton, Ontario. I believed, in listening to various groups and individuals attending, I could get some new ideas and new procedures that would help address the problems in our justice system.

I heard many good suggestions, but I also heard that getting support for these good suggestions would be difficult because there are no funds to improve justice, victims' rights, restitution and safety for the citizens.

I mention this because no sooner did I hear the government had no funds for justice than I was told the government had $12 million to build a commercial building in Edmonton that would house doctors, lawyers, private associations, a bank and a restaurant, all private enterprises that could fund their own working environment.

It seems the government can spend $12 million to support associations, professions and private enterprise but has no funds to give to justice and give justice to Canadians.

We now know what is important to the government, and one thing is for sure: it is not justice.

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BILL C-41

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs will eventually embark on an analysis of Bill C-41. Among other things the legislation proposes changes to section 745 of the Criminal Code.

I rise in the House today to encourage members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to give serious consideration to the elimination of section 745 of the Criminal Code. Clearly the time has come to revisit the appropriateness of a legal loophole that allows first degree murderers to apply for a reduction in their parole after serving only 15 years of a so-called life sentence without parole for 25 years.

• (1415)

Many of my constituents, community groups, organizations, people right across this great country have said enough is enough. The status quo is unacceptable.

The choice is clear. Section 745 of the Criminal Code must be eliminated.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The minister has been refusing for the past few days to rule out the possibility of taxing RRSPs in his next budget. Several analysts have come out against this retroactive tax penalizing middle–income taxpayers. Claude Picher, from *La Presse*, states that it would be very unwise of Ottawa to keep dipping into the taxpayers' pockets. He adds that it would be all the more objectionable since the first ones to be hit would be unorganized private sector employees.

Does the Minister of Finance not realize that, by hiding behind his pre–budget consultations to avoid undertaking not to tax RRSPs, he is the only one to blame for causing fear and worry amongst taxpayers in Quebec and Canada?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, as I told the hon. member, who ask the same question for the third time yesterday, he is the one causing worry. I can only repeat it again, in response to the question he has already asked four times this week.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): All the Minister of Finance has to do, Mr. Speaker, to dispel worry is to say that he will not do it.

Does he not recognize that, by taxing RRSPs, he is changing the rules of the game in mid–game and taking actions which make his government seem to be cheating by completely changing the investment rules in planning—

The Speaker: Order! Perhaps the hon. member could be so good as to choose another word.

Mr. Brien: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance recognize that, by taxing RRSPs, he is changing the rules of the game in mid–game and that taking actions associated with an irresponsible government, by disrupting the financial planning of seniors who depend on the income from their RRSPs to ensure a comfortable retirement for themselves?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, it is the hon. member who is irresponsible when he tries to disrupt the pre–budget consultation process and in fact prevent it from taking place. I hope that he will raise these issues at the finance committee when it deals with this matter.

* * *

[*English*]

SOCIAL REFORM

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, while the government and the Bloc are squabbling about who is going to pay $47 million for the referendum I point out that the national debt is growing by $47 million every nine hours. That is putting things in perspective.

The premier of Quebec says he will not play ball with the government's social review. We all know that the separatists have no interest in making a positive contribution to Canada. They just want out.

Will the Prime Minister commit to implementing social reform in spite of obstructive tactics of the separatists.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada intends to proceed constructively. I am sure that the members of the Bloc Quebecois when they see the basis for the social policy reforms will be working with the government to try to make positive changes for Canada.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Human Resources Development misrepresented the Reform position on spending reductions.

It is the government's own deficit target, your own deficit target, that calls for up to $15 billion in total spending cuts.

Will the finance minister acknowledge that reaching his deficit target of about $25 billion from a current deficit of about $40 billion that the government will have to cut up to $15 billion and is the minister going to cut spending or increase taxes?

• (1420)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear that government is going to have to cut its spending. We look forward to the consultations with the finance committee in order to determine exactly where Canadians stand.

We are also looking forward to hearing from the Reform Party, which has talked so much about cutting spending, and seeing if they can come up with any constructive suggestions as to where.

An hon. member: It is in the blue book, not the red book.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): On raising taxes or cutting spending?

The Minister of Human Resources Development has indicated that the major focus of his action plan will be child poverty. Can the Minister of Finance explain how the government can help anyone out of poverty when it is mortgaging our future by running up the deficit to the tune of $1,500 for every man, for every woman and for every child in the country?

Your deficit spending is adding to their poverty, not solving it.

The Speaker: I know it is a small oversight but please address the Chair.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the nature of the problems facing the country is in no doubt because of the very large financial deficit. This country is heavily indebted and we have to come to grips with it. We did so in stage one, which was the last budget. We intend to do so very clearly in stage two, which is going to be the next budget.

The member opposite raises the question of child poverty. It is quite ironic that question is coming from a member of the Reform Party, which is prepared to acknowledge, as we do the very severe financial deficit in the country, but it has never once acknowledged the very severe human deficit which we in this side of the House intend to address.

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[*Translation*]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, in an interview shown on the "Téléjournal" on October 1, 1993, the Prime Minister promised not to raise taxes during the first two years of a Liberal government. The Minister of Finance, for his part, said yesterday that no option or suggestion should be ruled out in the pre–budget consultation process, including that of taxing RRSPs.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. How can the Minister of Finance leave the door open to taxing RRSPs, when the Prime Minister, his Prime Minister, promised during the election campaign not to raise taxes in the first two years of Liberal rule?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister said is that the tax burden of Canadians must not be increased. Besides, we stated very clearly in the red book that ultimately—that is one of the reasons we must reduce the deficit—any government has a responsibility to lower the level of taxation.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance should read again the newspaper article in which the Prime Minister clearly said that taxes would not be raised in the first two years of a Liberal government. Not the tax burden but taxes themselves.

Does the Minister of Finance not think that he would be acting more responsibly if, instead of penalizing taxpayers by taxing RRSPs, he made a commitment right now in this House to reduce the Liberal government's huge operating expenditures and to make his friends, the friends of the wealthiest Canadians, pay by eliminating the tax loopholes they enjoy?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had read the last budget, he would have seen that we eliminated many tax loopholes, like the $100,000 capital gains exemption. We certainly eliminated corporate tax loopholes. Had he read the budget, he would have seen that we took very significant measures in the last budget and we intend to do the same thing in the next budget.

I hope that the hon. member—and I urge him to do so—will offer us constructive suggestions during sittings of the finance committee.

* * *

• (1425)

[*English*]

RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, you will know that one of the most ancient and most basic rights of Parliament is the right of free speech. Furthermore we practise this extensively to the point of tolerating 54 members of Parliament who use it for the primary purpose of breaking up the country.

According to press reports it is now the policy of the government that this right cannot be exercised when it involves government members whose moral and religious views may conflict with government policy.

Can the government categorically deny these reports and assure the House that government members, and all members, have the right to object to government policy on moral and religious bases in the House and outside of the House, whether those views are the same as those of the Minister of Justice or not?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind the resolutions that emanated for the table of the Reform Party conference coming up, I think the member would be well advised to look after the affairs of his own party as compared to the affairs of the Government of Canada.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, as we have come to expect, that answer was wonderfully irrelevant.

The supplementary question I have is on the issue of free votes. It has been the practice in the House and in most legislatures that on basic moral issues there are free votes. Even the NDP government in Ontario recently allowed free votes on issues related to sexual orientation.

Will the government remove the whips and allow free votes on issues of sexual orientation that pertain to government legislation?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is the position of the Government of Canada to defend the policies of the Government of Canada. One of the policies of the Government of Canada is that sexual orientation should not be grounds for discrimination and we intend to so proceed with the Canadian Human Rights Act.

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[*Translation*]

FORESTRY

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, during the last election campaign, as a result of which we were elected, the government gave thousands of Quebecers in eastern Quebec to understand that the federal contribution to private forest development in Gaspé and the Lower St. Lawrence would be maintained until 1998. The Minister of Natural Resources said in the House that she did want the program to continue but that her colleague responsible for regional development in Quebec would have to release the funds required to finance it. The newspaper *Le Soleil* tells us today that her colleague is waiting for recommendations from the minister—

The Speaker: Order! I would ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if she was able to convince her colleague responsible for regional development in Quebec to extend the Eastern Plan? If not, can she explain to us the reasons for her failure?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, let me assure my hon. colleague that everyone on the government side understands and appreciates the economic importance of private woodlot owners to Quebec and in particular, the region of eastern Quebec and the Gaspé.

Let me also say that since February I have taken the opportunity to meet with private woodlot owners from Quebec and elsewhere on six separate occasions.

As the hon. member pointed out, my colleague, the minister responsible for regional development in Quebec, and I have made a commitment to meet with private woodlot owners in eastern Quebec. He and I will deliver on that commitment in an attempt to resolve this acknowledged important issue for the province of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, the wood producers have had enough of committees on development in their area. However, the question is straightforward. Can the Minister of Natural Resources tell us whether or not the federal government is withdrawing from the Eastern Plan and thus abandoning the thousands of workers who depend on it?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, let me beseech, let me implore, my friend to suggest to his provincial counterparts that they send a political delegation next week to the ministers of forestry meeting in the province of New Brunswick, in Fredericton, where the issue of continued federal involvement in the forestry sector will be discussed.

As I say, I beseech him to encourage his provincial colleagues to be there at the political level to engage in this discussion. That is where resolution will take place.

* * *

• (1430)

TRADE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, one of the Prime Minister's most important foreign affairs jobs is promoting Canadian exports outside of this country. This is what will provide jobs, jobs, jobs. We support this role and the Team Canada approach in China.

However I must ask: How is the Prime Minister going to handle the threat posed by Mr. Parizeau and Mr. Landry to sabotage the upcoming Canadian trade missions by using them as a forum to spread their separatist agenda?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear and open about the fact that it is important to involve the provinces in the job of Team Canada. He is very concerned in fact that the premier of Quebec should be there with Team Canada. The invitation is open to the premier.

The Prime Minister knows that the premier of Quebec was elected on an economic platform. We hope he joins the Prime Minister and all other first ministers in the job of selling Team Canada so that we can create Canadian jobs in every province, including Quebec.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, the jobs created by our export promotion missions are for Canadians, including Quebecers. Therefore any disruptions by the PQ will be costing the people of Quebec jobs. That is the point we have to make.

Is it not time for the Prime Minister to proceed and involve the Quebec business community in the trade mission and ignore the disruptive politicians if they continue?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec business community is very supportive of the Prime Minister's trip. I am sure members of the Quebec business community will be communicating to their premier how important it will be for him to be part of Team Canada.

* * *

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, it has been announced that a second north–south runway at Pearson International Airport will be completed as soon as possible. This runway has far reaching safety and economic implications.

Can the Minister of Transport assure the residents of Mississauga that the new runway will be used for landings only? Will he assure them that any discussion of further construction in the form of new east–west runways and all such decision making will not occur until the new Canadian airport authority is established to take over the operation of Pearson?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we have announced that we will complete the work that has already begun on the north–south runway at Pearson. A lot of work has been done and we intend to complete it. It will be used relatively few times and only when it is required for weather and safety conditions.

With respect to the east–west runways, we now have all of the nominees from metropolitan Toronto for the Canadian airport authority at Pearson. The federal nominees have been chosen as well. I an awaiting a response from Premier Rae for the province of Ontario nominee. When that is done we will try to put in place a transitional team based on those appointments to assist us in making decisions with respect to the future of Pearson.

I want to assure the member and the citizens who would be affected by the construction of the east–west runways that absolutely no decision will be taken on that matter until the CAA is in place and functioning at Pearson International Airport.

[*Translation*]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup just pointed out, thousands of jobs depend on extending the Eastern Quebec Development Plan. The issue is not whether the Quebec government will be represented at a conference, but whether the minister responsible for regional development will extend the agreement to 1998, as he promised to do.

Considering that hundreds of jobs hinge on the extension of that plan in one of the most hard-hit regions in Quebec, will the minister pledge today to allocate the necessary funds requested by his colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources?

• (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier we on the government side are fully aware of the importance of private woodlot owners to the economy of Quebec.

I have met with representatives of private woodlot owners in Quebec. My colleague the minister responsible for regional development and I will meet again with those individuals. We hope to resolve this important economic matter in the near future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, if the government is really concerned about this issue, why did the minister responsible for regional development promise to meet all those involved in the region last summer and then go back on his word?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, let me say in defence of my colleague the minister responsible for regional development for Quebec that indeed a meeting was planned and due to my schedule that meeting had to be cancelled. We are in the process of organizing yet another meeting with the private woodlot owners.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the Victoria *Times Colonist* is reporting that DFO is in a shambles and morale has never been lower. Not only that but a leaked DFO document given to me by Ernie Fedoruk of the *Times Colonist* blames the unprecedented levels of poaching of salmon on Vancouver Island directly on a shortage of enforcement officers.

In light of the mounting evidence does the minister still have the audacity to stand up in this House and tell us what a fine job of protecting the resource his department is doing?

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Delta for his question.

As the minister and I have indicated in this House before, there is an independent review going on which the hon. member stood up and asked for. Part of the mandate of that review is to look at enforcement.

Unlike the hon. member across the way, we will look at all facts and will not start making allegations or accusations without getting the facts. That is what the independent review board is all about. Once we have seen the facts this government will act as it has in the past, in a comprehensive, rational and pragmatic way, not in a knee jerking panicky way.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the minister fines fishermen in Newfoundland thousands of dollars for jigging a few cod for supper and looks the other way while thousands of fish are poached in B.C.

The leaked document and others indicate quite clearly that management problems at DFO extend beyond the Fraser River and beyond the professional capabilities of scientists appointed to the minister's review panel.

Will the minister disband his in–house collection of scientists and request a judicial inquiry into DFO's management of the west coast salmon fishery?

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): No, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton): Mr. Speaker, environmental assessment hearings surrounding low level test flights over Labrador started last week. The Innu Association of Labrador has chosen not to participate in the hearings because it feels the process has not been an open and fair one.

What assurances can the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment give us that the concerns of the Innu are being fairly addressed and that the process is a fair and open one?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as I reported in the House earlier this week I had an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Innu community yesterday. We had some very broad discussions around the role of the panel. I assured them that if there is one shred of evidence that the panel is biased I will be the first to act to replace panel members.

Those discussions are continuing. In the absence of any evidence I am working with the Innu and urging them to come back to the table. If they want the environmental process on low level flying to work, their voices need to be heard and the process has to be a fair and open one. We are committed to that fair and open process and we want them to participate.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIRPORTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my unexpected question is for the Minister of Transport.

• (1440)

Last July 13, in the middle of summer, when Canadians were on vacation, the Minister of Transport announced a national air transportation strategy. This strategy is patterned on the airport policy which will impact all regions of Quebec and Canada.

Does the minister have a contingency plan to keep airports open, should local airport authorities become unable to fulfill their management mandate?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member just mentioned, the implementation of a national airport policy was made public and three levels of airports were identified. I hope that, with the co–operation of all those concerned, we will succeed in implementing an efficient and safe system, as well as one which will reduce the taxpayers' burden.

We do not want to prejudge how things will go. We have two to five years to come up with final solutions based on problems experienced in each of the affected locations. I hope to be able to count on the hon. member's co–operation to arrive at the best possible solution. If things do not workout, we will review the situation. However, based on the results so far, I am very confident that the system announced last July will be a real success right across the country.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, before making his plan public, did the minister ensure that municipalities had the necessary financial resources to manage regional airports without any reduction in services?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member knows that there are some 725 certified airports in Canada.

Transport Canada is involved in the management of only 150 of those airports, either as owner or operator. Already, in every province, there are airports operating very successfully, without federal involvement. The hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans and his colleagues from the opposition keep reminding us of the need to manage our operations efficiently and to reduce the deficit. This is precisely what we are trying to do.

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal promise to restore trust and public confidence in the government has been broken. The Liberals criticized the Conservative government for the appointment of its political friends. They said they would appoint people only on the basis of competence. There are many very competent people who are not high level Liberals, yet once again yesterday or the day before we saw that this government has appointed one of its own.

My question is for the Prime Minister. I notice the Prime Minister is not here but it is directed to him.

The Speaker: I invite the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Schmidt: I stand corrected. My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

How can the public trust be restored when this government continues to blatantly make patronage appointments to reward their loyal Liberals?

The Speaker: The hon. member for Verchères.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, while Canada has won all the binational panel reviews on the matter, the American government is now considering the possibility of paying back the 800 million dollars it owes to timber producers in Canada and Quebec. United States politicians and businessmen are furious against Canada and the very integrity of the Free Trade Agreement is threatened.

• (1445)

Meanwhile, the Minister for International Trade can do no better than hope that a cheque will come in soon.

My question is for the Minister for International Trade. Why is he content with just waiting for the Americans to pay us back? Why does he not demand that this circus be stopped and that the sums owing be paid immediately? All we are asking is for the government to put its foot down on this issue.

[*English*]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the United States is reimbursing the amounts collected after March of this year. With regard to the amounts collected prior to March, the process is under way for the full reimbursement of the outstanding amount plus interest.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, we would like this government to assume its responsibilities towards the timber producers. Can the government assure this House that it will take all the steps required in order to solve this problem before the end of the current year? The minister seems to forget that almost a billion dollars are at stake here.

[*English*]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I fully share the member's eagerness to see this situation resolved. We have pursued our discussions with the United States administration at the highest level. We have received assurances that the amounts will be fully refunded.

* * *

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, a report on the funding of interest groups is scheduled to be completed by the Treasury Board tomorrow.

Will the President of the Treasury Board commit to immediate action and tell this House how soon we can expect big cuts to special interest groups, saving the taxpayers millions of dollars in wasted spending?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, there will be no announcement tomorrow if that is what is anticipated by the hon. member.

However, I will say that the staff of the Treasury Board has been working on guidelines. We will issue guidelines to the various departments with respect to dealing with the issue of special interest groups and their funding. We will be asking the different departments to address this issue in the framework of the program review.

I do anticipate, like all other aspects of the program review, that there will be cuts because we do need to have these cuts to get our spending in line and get the deficit down. Therefore, we will be issuing those guidelines to the various departments to examine their grants.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, we were led to believe that an announcement was coming tomorrow. There had been a study commissioned by the previous government that was produced last February. Here we are talking about more discussions and having more debate about when and where we are going to cut.

How soon will we get serious action on the cutting of funds to special interest groups so that the Minister of Finance can make some real cuts in the deficit which has to be addressed today?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, it will be part and parcel of the program review which is in turn part and parcel of the consultation process that the Minister of Finance will be engaging in. When the budget is out next February members will see those cuts and how they are going to be made.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PARTY FUNDRAISING

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General and Leader of the Government in the House. During a recent debate in the House of Commons on the financing of political parties, many members from all political parties supported a motion to ensure democratic and popular financing of political parties, by putting a $5000 ceiling on public contributions to federal political parties.

Since a dozen of his government colleagues supported that motion, does the Leader of the Government recognize the need for the democratization of the financing of political parties by using the Quebec model?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we already have a democratic system for collecting election funds, but we could conduct a study on this matter by using the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It is not my responsibility to take such a request to that committee, but I think it would be a useful matter for the committee to examine in due time.

• (1450)

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, must we understand from the response of the Leader of the Government in the House that he prefers unlimited financing by big corporations as opposed to ordinary citizens to ensure the operation of his party, the Liberal Party of Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think that the member got me wrong. All members in this House are interested in that matter and that is why I suggest that it be examined by the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, although the motion was rejected by a majority in the House.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada approved silicon breast implants, many of them made by Dow Corning. Many women today are suffering because of that decision.

Now the health minister has commissioned a study to look at the effects. Who is financing that study?

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that I will have to take under advisement and ask the Minister of Health because I do not know of any such study at the moment.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, Dow Corning has just settled out of court in the U.S. for some $4 billion. Who do you think is funding this study?

The Speaker: I take it the question is posed to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and not to me.

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the settlements that have been made in the United States are an entirely different matter from the hon. member's first question.

You know that the Government of Canada had applied to—

The Speaker: Order. I would ask all hon. members, please do not forget I am getting lonely up here again.

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is probably aware that during that settlement the Canadian government did intercede on behalf of Canadian women who were involved in the settlement by applying to become a friend of the court. We also have a 1–800 number for Canadian women to call with regard to this issue.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Yesterday I was very much surprised when the Prime Minister said he had not been informed of the commitment his predecessor made with respect to the referendum. I made inquiries, and I later found that before Question Period yesterday, the Prime Minister knew that his predecessor had promised the Government of Quebec he would submit to his government a request to compensate Quebec for referendum expenses.

I would like to know from the government why the Prime Minister did not give this information to the House of Commons yesterday?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, I think the present situation is quite clear and has been explained several times in the House. There is no evidence in our files that a commitment was finalized. In the past few days, the Prime Minister got in touch with the former Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, to find out whether there had been a definite commitment, and he asked him to indicate, in writing, what his position was. As soon as we know the former Prime Minister's

position on whether he made a definite commitment, we will act accordingly.

• (1455)

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, my question to the government is quite clear and it is this: Yesterday, the Prime Minister knew, because his predecessor had told him before Question Period, that he had made a commitment to submit Quebec's request to the government. I would like to know why yesterday in this House, the Prime Minister did not share that information with Parliament and why instead, he insinuated there had been some unlawful activity?

[*English*]

The Speaker: This question is, if I understand it, directly posed to the Prime Minister who is not in the Chamber at this time.

Is it to the Deputy Prime Minister?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made no insinuations whatsoever. Today, the only insinuation has come from the hon. member for Sherbrooke. Now, the Prime Minister is waiting for a letter from Brian Mulroney because a lot is said on the telephone. We want to see the truth in writing, and that is what we are waiting for. The Prime Minister said that as soon as he sees a commitment by the federal government in writing, he will act on that commitment. That is exactly what he said yesterday in the House.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Some Canadians have the wrong impression that immigrants take jobs and abuse our social security system. I have serious concerns about the growing backlash against immigrants and refugees.

What is the minister doing to address these concerns and to inform the Canadian public about the real and positive contributions that immigrants do make to Canadian society?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question which is a good question, because sometimes we allow mythology to wrap itself around this policy we call immigration. Rather than point to government, we should perhaps look at the study that was released by the Clarke Institute this week, a study of 1,300 former Vietnamese boat people spanning some 10 years.

It found individuals who were a tremendous success story. One out of every five started a business; 99 per cent of them became Canadian citizens; 7.3 per cent used the social system rather than the 10 per cent of the rest of Canadians.

What this paints is a distinction between fact and fiction. Hopefully that lesson is not lost on these customers who continue to spin mythology around immigration.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Prime Minister was supposed to be in the House today. That is the information we were given. However, at the beginning of the sitting, we were advised he would be late and, with your consent, we agreed to wait with our questions. Since he is not here, I will have to put a question to the Deputy Prime Minister, following the answer she gave the hon. member for Sherbrooke. I realize we do not have enough time, so I will ask only one question. But do not worry, we will get you next time around!

• (1500)

Am I to understand from the Deputy Prime Minister's reply to a question from the hon. member for Sherbrooke that the Prime Minister was aware, as a result of a telephone conversation he had with Mr. Mulroney, that the latter had promised to treat Quebec equitably and compensate it for its referendum expenses, and that the Prime Minister will not take Mr. Mulroney, who is an honourable man, at his word and wants to see this confirmed in writing?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister spoke to Mr. Mulroney, they agreed that Mr. Mulroney would send him a reply in writing, stating his position on the existence of an agreement between the Government of Quebec and the federal government.

That is what the Prime Minister stated in the House, and the situation has not changed.

* * *

[*English*]

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

I wish also to draw the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Geoff Smith, Minister for Lands, Queensland, Australia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Government House Leader to indicate what the business of the House will be for the next few days.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue with the Bloc opposition day. Tomorrow we will begin by returning to the debate on Bill C–22 regarding Pearson airport, followed by second reading of Bill C–52, the government services and public works reorganization bill.

On Monday we will begin with second reading of Bill C–53, the Canadian heritage reorganization bill, followed by Bill C–52 if that was not completed on Friday. We will follow this with Bill C–42, the miscellaneous amendments to the Criminal Code.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of next week the business will be in the following order. We will begin with second reading of Bill C–51, the Canada Grains Act, followed by second reading of Bill C–47, the foreign affairs reorganization bill.

If the House has not already completed Bills C–52 and C–42 we will then turn to them in the order mentioned. We will then return to other debates already begun but not completed in an order that we will consult on with the other parties.

On Thursday and Friday of next week we are proposing that a take note debate on the initiative of the government be held on the discussion paper on social security reform which is to be tabled, I believe, next Wednesday. This is to enable members to make their views known in this important, ongoing national discussion.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINT OF ORDER

PROCEDURE IN THE HOUSE

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order on two matters. I also want to mention, since it just happened, that after Question Period, you called the usual Thursday question, but I always thought that after Question Period, Questions of Privilege and Points of Order were called first.

• (1505)

I just mention this in passing. It is not a point of order but I think it is important to bring this up, because we have certain traditions and customs.

The Speaker: The Chair recognizes members as items are called. I did not see anyone else. If the hon. member is referring to himself, I did not see him, except when the hon. member for Roberval was speaking. That is why I got back to him, but I am very much aware of the Standing Orders of this House.

Mr. Charest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I realize it may sometimes be difficult to see this far, but it is all part of what we expect the Chair to be able to do. That is why I sent you a note, advising you that I wished to rise on a point of order.

I wanted to raise the following matter. During Question Period, you rose twice to ask to whom members were directing their questions. To my knowledge—and my memory is not infallible—when a member of the opposition puts a question, it is necessarily directed to the government. He addresses the Chair, in other words, he must address the government through the Chair. As for the particular person to whom the question is directed, that person is indicated only as a matter of courtesy.

I am merely pointing out what I assume to be the usual custom in this House, since the government is perfectly free to reply through any member of Cabinet.

The Speaker: The hon. member is absolutely right. There is no doubt about that. The second time was indeed a mistake and I apologize. If that was the purpose of your point of order, you are absolutely right that when a question is put by a member, that question is directed to the government. I agree with that, if that was the purpose of your point of order.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may finish my comments, since there was another matter I wished to raise. You may have noticed that my question was directed to the Prime Minister. Like other members in this House, I had understood the Prime Minister was to be present during Question Period. That is why I directed my question to him. Subsequently, you said that the Prime Minister was not in the House.

I must admit this bothers me, and I will explain. We also have a Standing Order that is well–known in this House, which prohibits anyone from drawing attention to the absence of other members. A Standing Order that is usually observed.

The Speaker: Dear colleague, you are absolutely right. I was at fault and I apologize. It will not happen again, and I accept your comments in the spirit in which they were intended.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, my discourse was interrupted by Question Period. I will attempt to pick up roughly where we left off.

We were describing before we broke for Question Period the request of the Official Opposition for a royal commission and it was my view at that time, and it still is, that is an ill advised request.

• (1510)

We were discussing that in Canada we have statute law that oversees and creates CSIS. We have the Security Intelligence Review Committee that reviews the work of CSIS. We have a justice committee and a subcommittee on security and intelligence which looks at the same area. We also have the Solicitor General who stands in this House, responsible to Parliament and to the people of Canada for all of the matters under his ministry, including CSIS.

Why do we need a fourth or a fifth level of scrutiny or inquiry? Why do we need a royal commission? This House through its justice committee in the last Parliament in reviewing the CSIS act made 117 recommendations. Only two of the 117 recommendations were adopted by the government at that time. That was regrettable.

Thank heaven for small mercies. Two were adopted. One which was not accepted by government was the creation of a committee or subcommittee that would work in this area of security and intelligence. The government basically said to Parliament it does not want one. The justice committee said beg your pardon, excuse us, but there will be one.

All of the parties on the justice committee unanimously agreed to create the subcommittee on national security. That particular subcommittee was reborn in this Parliament. That provides Parliament with a particularly precise window with the ability to look into this area, the subject of debate today.

One of the reasons we believed the subcommittee was necessary was that although the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC, works for Parliament and for Canadians on their behalf, the linkages between SIRC and Parliament were not strong. SIRC makes one annual report each year and can make section 54 reports to the Solicitor General whenever it is deemed appropriate.

Those section 54 reports do not come directly to Parliament. I think I am correct in saying the reports do not ever get to Parliament. The procedures have not been live and green. As a result there needs to be a better linkage between SIRC and Parliament.

That is one of the reasons we have created the subcommittee, to provide that linkage, that relationship, between the oversight or review mechanism that SIRC is and Parliament with its general oversight mechanism for all of government.

I want to discuss the issue of potential cost of royal commissions. I think it was adequately addressed by one or two colleagues in the House. Some of the more recent royal commissions have cost between $9 million and $25 million per item. That is a lot of toast.

From my perspective the existing mechanisms of the statute of the Solicitor General, of SIRC and the subcommittee are able to cover the field and adequately address the questions that have been raised. If I am wrong then someone might be able to make a case for a royal commission, but at the moment I do not believe I am wrong. Time will tell. The next year or six months will tell. We will see how well SIRC, the subcommittee, the justice committee and members in this House deal with this particular set of issues.

Let us deal with the justice committee and the subcommittee on national security. For members here and for Canadians I want to acknowledge the resources that will be used as an alternative to a royal commission are already bought and paid for by the taxpayers. We are adequately resourced. We have research capability and we have the power to compel attendance. We have a subcommittee which is working in a relatively non–partisan fashion and a justice committee which is working in a relatively non–partisan fashion. I believe that we can do the job that Parliament has set out for us in the standing orders.

• (1515)

As I say, we have the resources. We have the power to compel. The wording of that power is called the power to call for persons and papers. That is basically the power to compel attendance and to require an answer. It is part of the law of Parliament. The law of Parliament has been here ever since this House was built and this country was formed. The law of Parliament began developing back when the barons forced King John, in the Magna Carta of 1215, to submit to a people's Parliament. They took some authority from the king. The Bill of Rights of 1689 is another large slice of authority for Parliament derived from the king.

We have the power to compel attendance. The power has been described with some derogation as an absolute power. I will not get into details on that now but it is an effective power.

We in the House want Canadians to know that we will not hesitate to use the authority that Canadian citizens have given us if we need to use them. I can point respectfully to the mace that sits on the table which is, as a symbol, the repository of every one of the powers and authorities that Canadians have given all of us in the House.

What are the allegations that the Official Opposition would like to see investigated? There are two categories. First is the allegation that an alleged informant of CSIS had involved himself in some fashion in intelligence gathering or other with a CBC journalist, in another instance with some activities of the Reform Party of Canada, in another instance in an attempt to obtain an address list of members of the Canadian Jewish Congress and in another instance, potentially some intelligence gathering in relation to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Those are four categorized items for which allegations are being investigated as we speak by the Security Intelligence Review Committee which has three staff permanently working on them.

The second issue has to do with security of classified documents. Essentially put the question is: How did a box of allegedly classified documents make its way out of a secure environment and into the basement of a residence somewhere in Ottawa and on to the pages of a major newspaper? That is a very reasonable question. That particular question is not one that the Security Intelligence Review Committee would ordinarily be able to look at, but it is one that the parliamentary subcommittee can and will look at.

There are other related questions, hypothetical allegations, what ifs. Those questions have been asked publicly and the subcommittee will do its job as will SIRC. The subcommittee will consult with SIRC as it goes about its job and vice versa. My colleagues on the subcommittee will inquire into all of these questions over the next few weeks.

Finally, in my view a royal commission at this point is absolutely unnecessary, ridiculously expensive and procedurally redundant in the extreme. I want to assure members in the House and Canadians that colleagues who are on the subcommittee will deal with the issues in a responsible way, in a rational way, in a manner that does not duplicate and waste resources and in a way that we hope will continue the faith of Canadians in the way Parliament works and in the way CSIS and SIRC operate.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, we have been told that the cost of a royal commission of inquiry would be in the order of $9 to $25 million. We are a government striving to limit costs and I believe that the people have demonstrated, again and again, that they want better control of spending.

Since a royal commission of inquiry like the one proposed by the opposition would cost between $9 and $25 million, I am curious to find out the real cost of the sub–committee chaired by my colleague, and I would like to know whether this sub–committee can exercise substantially the same authority as a royal commission?

[*English*]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

On the question of cost, as Canadians know and members know, every member of Parliament is paid a salary. Each committee and subcommittee will have a clerk, a researcher and such other staff as the committee may need but within a budget that comes from the House of Commons, all of which is relatively closely controlled these days.

The cost of the members of Parliament, the cost of the offices, the cost of the office space—we are not going to go out and lease a floor of an office building somewhere in Ottawa. We already have committee rooms that will be put to use—are being absorbed almost exclusively at this point in the existing budgets of the House of Commons.

In terms of the powers and the mandate of the subcommittee, or any committee of the House for that matter, those mandates are primarily set out in the standing orders of the House, but they are very general. The mandate of the subcommittee in this instance is more than adequate to cover the subject area that we are dealing with.

As I stated earlier, the power to compel attendance, the power to require disclosure are virtually absolute. I will not say they are absolute because there are very few absolutes left any more in law and politics. They are virtually and precisely as great or as small as the members of the House will them to be in their work, in committee or on the floor of the House.

There is plenty of opportunity, mandate, power and resources to do the job.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to tell the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River that I share his views regarding the powers of the sub–committee he is chairing and the authority of Parliament to review all decisions made by government agencies.

The problem is neither with the Sub–committee on National Security nor with the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, the problem is with the people who make up the review committee, SIRC, who, when they appeared before the sub–committee on September 13, hid behind a particular interpretation of section 54 of the act when refusing to answer the questions of members duly elected to this House.

This is the problem, a problem which will last as long as this Parliament: How to get answers from these people? This is why a royal commission of inquiry seems appropriate. Looking at what goes on in the United States before parliamentary commissions reviewing national agencies, we can probably say that if American witnesses were to behave the way our witnesses behaved before the sub-committee, they would be sent away for a while to think about it.

• (1525)

[*English*]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I suppose it is fair to say that my colleagues in putting the matter the way he has, makes a point. I cannot disagree that the Security Intelligence Review Committee appears to be less than forthcoming when it comes to the subcommittee's needs.

I hope he will acknowledge that there is a certain amount of bridge building and educating going on, both with respect to the goals and powers of the subcommittee.

I would not expect that everybody who comes in the front door of a committee room is going to know right away the extent of the powers that committees may have from time to time, especially in light of the history of this place.

These powers have not been used effectively or clearly over the last several decades. As a result not only do ordinary Canadians not realize the under utilization, but in my view looking in other areas it appears that the courts themselves are not fully aware of parliamentary law and of the implications of sections 4 and 5 of the Parliament of Canada Act. It is not their fault. This is perhaps the fault of Parliament itself, which may have over the last few decades, maybe the last 50 years or so, failed to develop in the modern context. This is a challenge for all of us now. I hope the current exercise will play a part in that development.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Could the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup tell the Chair whether he his going to share his time with his colleague? Ten minutes followed by five minutes for questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be sharing our time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Fine.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, let there be no doubt about it, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is a good thing per se. We are not questioning the fact that we need such an agency. The problem is that somehow CSIS is the offspring of the RCMP. If the past is any indication of the future, there is trouble ahead. This is the reason why we want to make sure the agency is properly monitored.

There are many examples illustrating the fact that with this kind of agency, it is important to have appropriate safeguards to differentiate between a security mandate and the mandate to defend a particular government or party.

In the past, on several occasions, the RCMP interfered with the democratic activities of political parties, which resulted in the creation of CSIS. When the membership list of the Parti Quebecois was stolen in 1973, I was probably on it together with a number of members of this House. It was totally illegal and irrelevant.

Following that, CSIS was created, but it seems that history repeats itself. We now have a critical situation in which a well-known political party, an opposition party, the Reform Party, is being spied on and we do not seem to be able to shed light on the whole thing. This is not due to bad faith on the part of parliamentarians or the committee members, but rather because not enough light is being shed.

When we ask for a royal commission, the argument regarding its costs is no more valid that in the case of the Canadian justice system. You could say that it would be easier to solve problems by chopping off people's heads and hands than by bringing them to court and allowing them to present their defence. You could easily say that. Similarly, you could say that a royal commission is not worth it because it costs too much. Some principles are not a matter of cost and, in all fairness, it has to be mentioned.

• (1530)

For example, in the present case, if someone acting for CSIS has infiltrated the Reform Party and in so doing ultimately influenced the election results, even if only in a limited way, it is casting doubt on the very basis of our system and I believe it warrants a thorough examination. We must ensure there is no unacceptable situation casting a shadow on our democratic system.

There is another reason for ensuring that members of Parliament are able to verify more directly and specifically if agencies like the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service abide by their mandate. Let me read a few excerpts from the agency's 1993 public report. We can see that, sometimes, members of agencies such as this one share opinions that are very close to being partisan or akin to a particular vision about the country's evolution. Those who do not think the same way are outlawed. They can no longer be full members of society.

For instance, we can read that "more important is the fact that the increase in the number of independent power centres in the world brings forth an increase in the number of potential threats". In other words, everything would be fine if there was only one country in the world and if everyone was alike. It would be so much easier to administer, but that is not the way it is. There is a value judgment about a society's future in that kind of statement. I think that if, on the one hand, an agency like the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is going to adopt such

an attitude, we, on the other hand, should make sure that a good eye is kept on it and that changes be made if need be.

There is another excerpt that makes me wonder and, in my view, argues for monitoring. It says that, while the RCMP is responsible for enforcing the law, CSIS collects information and provides operational or tactical advice on individuals, groups or activities that may constitute threats to the security of Canada to enable the government and police authorities to act.

It would be important to know what they mean in that kind of agency by "groups or activities that can constitute threats to the security of Canada". I could be of the personal view that what constitutes the greatest threat to the security of Canada is the way the country is run, a view the government would certainly not share. The agency may consider that such or such political party constitutes a threat to Canada, as seems to have been the case. That too is unacceptable.

So, based on the experience of past abuses by the RCMP and the attempt to remedy the problem by establishing CSIS, one critical step remains to be taken: we must get to the bottom of the matter and know everything there is to know about the agency, its mandate, the way it carries it out and all this information must be made available to the people in whom the public has placed its confidence, that is, the elected members of Parliament.

Some may say that reports are made to the Solicitor General CSIS activities, but these reports are confidential. We can understand that certain aspects must remain confidential, that certain matters must not be debated publicly, but reports could be submitted in camera to a parliamentary committee responsible for ensuring that things are done according to the law and depending on the circumstances.

I will give you examples of reports filed by the SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which are classified secret or top secret. That is how they are classified. They deal with security screening on university campuses. It is rather important to know why this kind of agency is involved in security screening on campus. Is there another witch hunt on? Is what happened in the United States 30 or 35 years ago going to happen here now? What makes one person on campus a threat to the security of Canada and not another? There may be very clear–cut cases as well as abuse. We need to make sure appropriate control is exercised over all this.

• (1535)

There is another study whose title in itself is so ambiguous, it would be worthwhile to look into it. I am talking about the CSIS regional studies. What do they need regional studies for? Did they find that the people living in a region where the unemployment rate reaches 20, 25 per cent are more dangerous than the residents of a community with an unemployment rate of 10 or 12 per cent? What is in these studies? These are things we should be able to look into.

There is another document I would like to mention, namely the review by SIRC of CSIS activities involving Aboriginal Canadians. Why should Aboriginal Canadians be the subject of separate investigations? Why are such investigations being conducted? When they told us the titles of these studies and said they received studies on this, they suggested that there were specific reasons for investigating these groups, that is, university campuses, Aboriginal Canadians and various other groups, although there is no evidence that the report eventually submitted contains any accusations. All we know is that there was an investigation.

It is a little like when someone is accused of something in a newspaper, only to be acquitted three months later. The acquittal headline is one inch high while the accusation is announced in two–inch–high letters but the effect is the same. The decision has already had a negative effect, which I think is quite unacceptable.

I would like to give you another quote from the public report which outlines what we should expect in the future. It says that in general, the world has become less predictable and the power, more diffuse. It means that our society is undergoing all kinds of changes so that the people monitoring them must follow global developments closely and be able to understand exactly what they mean.

Without judging the quality of SIRC's current membership, it can be said that the current situation is rather hard to accept because some of these people have been appointed on the recommendation of parties sitting in the House of Commons during the last Parliament. No Bloc or Reform member was involved in appointing these people. SIRC members have very few links with the current Parliament, even with the Liberals, because most of them were appointed from the Tories' list.

For all these reasons, I think that the government should agree to the opposition's request so that we can meet the goal set when CSIS was founded, namely to achieve the most appropriate level of transparency in the delicate field of security and prevent past excesses from occurring again in the future, especially now that Canada faces major political challenges. The democratic debate must in no way be undermined by institutions exceeding their mandates.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I find it very strange that reference is again made to history being a guide to what will happen in the future. To be sure, the United States had the McCarthy affair and the Rosenbergs. France was involved in sinking Greenpeace's ship, the *Rainbow Warrior.* We have seen all sorts of abuses in other countries but nothing like that has happened here.

Certainly, if someone wants to make a comment—and this is getting to the question which I would like to ask the hon. member—last night, Bernard Landry was on the CBC talking about Quebec's delegates general abroad and he wanted to know if they were true sovereignists. I think he threatened them with dismissal if they were not.

This is another demonstration of intolerance towards the opinions of all Quebecers, if their opinions do not suit the party in power. But I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker; at least we set up a committee of inquiry, a sub–committee, chaired by one of our own people, but also with members of the Bloc Quebecois and Reform Party represented, which will shed light on this matter. Nevertheless, I would like to remind the hon. member that some of his colleagues in Quebec want to investigate good Quebecers whom they do not think are true Quebecers.

• (1540)

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, what the member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine says makes me even more suspicious, because there is a very big difference between that and saying publicly: "We will ensure that appointees conform to our objective as a government, which the people gave us; our objective is to make Quebec sovereign and we will give ourselves the democratic means to achieve this result."

This is very different from giving a mandate to an agency whose composition you do not control that will investigate subjects that you do not know—you do not know what they are investigating or how they will do it. Between these two ways of governing, I have just found another reason to make Quebec a very different country from Canada.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I find these comments very regrettable. Canada is a tolerant society, but it is not right, now that there has been a change of government, to point a finger at people who have served in the Quebec government, who have tried to promote Quebec's development outside that province and who have convinced foreign investors to come here. There is a lack of continuity and, unfortunately, I think all this is beginning to sound like McCarthyism: you are not true Americans, you are not real capitalists, etc.

It is unfortunate. This is what makes that argument a dangerous one. This is the reason why the government seeks to promote tolerance and welcomes opposition members and stakeholders to come and voice their concern and views on how to manage CSIS.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine is comparing apples and oranges. We are talking here about a dramatic situation. We are not talking, as I said earlier, about people who have been mandated by the public and who form a proper and transparent organization.

We are talking about situations such as investigating the CBC, a national broadcasting network, or Mr. Bristow having infiltrated the Reform Party. In my opinion, CSIS is an organization which, in a way, chooses its own clientele. In the seventies barns and farms had to be set on fire before investigators were hired to set up the security intelligence service. Nowadays, they try to influence recognized political parties, enough to warrant investigation.

There is a true lack of transparency which must be corrected. Indeed, in a society, it is important to know what is going on, otherwise perceptions from the past will persist in the future.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I would like to preface my speech by pointing out that a review committee was set up in 1990 precisely to reform the CSIS Act. The committee members were astonished to find out about another organization called the Communications Security Establishment, commonly known as CSE, and the extent of its powers.

CSE comes directly under the Department of National Defence. It is a collateral organization similar to CSIS. According to the sub–committee's estimates, CSE has a supposedly secret budget of about $200 million, even though the House of Commons or any of its committees or sub–committees has no say in CSE's activities.

As I said, CSE's budget is buried away in the overall budget of the Department of National Defence so that we cannot come up with an exact figure. Using estimates, the sub–committee reckoned at the time that CSE had a budget of about $200 million over which we have no control.

Even worse, the members of this 1990 review committee reported that even SIRC had no say in CSE's intelligence activities. In 1990, this committee made 117 specific recommendations.

• (1545)

Since then, only two or three of these recommendations have been adopted, and by the previous government at that. Why? Because the committee recommended that the Communications Security Establishment be formally set up by a piece of legislation that we could oversee, examine and review.

The committee also wanted SIRC to ensure that CSE's activities were carried out in accordance with the law and to report to Parliament.

Why were the members of the 1990 review committee so concerned, and what exactly is CSE? In an article published last May, the daily newspaper *Le Droit* explained a little bit what could be learned about CSE and I quote: "The Communications Security Establishment carries out its activities in total secrecy, resorting to electronic surveillance to pick up messages from many areas of the world. This high–tech equipment, which is

worth tens of millions of dollars—and is apparently among the most sophisticated in the world—can pick up messages to troops stationed in Siberia or even listen to your own private telephone conversations with friends overseas." All that in the name of security.

CSE provides intelligence services akin to those of CSIS, but without reporting to Parliament. Both agencies also signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation. The activities that are carried out in the Chomley Building, in Ottawa, where hundreds of CSE employees work on nine floors full of top secret electronic surveillance equipment, are very similar to those of the CSIS.

The same year, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that a device supposedly allowed CSE to listen to 10,000 telephone conversations all at the same time and to tape specific ones on "Iran" or "sovereignty", for example, just by entering these words in a computer. But it seems we are safe.

Does CSE communicate its intelligence to CSIS? We do not know. Does CSE violate Canadian laws? We do not know. No citizen, no member of Parliament and no member of SIRC knows. Nobody knows. Yet, according to the Solicitor General and his parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, SIRC is supposed to review intelligence services on behalf of the members of Parliament who are democratically elected by the people.

How many untold Bristow cases are still to be unveiled inside CSE? It is difficult to say. One has to wonder if ministers across the aisle know more about this than Opposition members. We do not believe they do.

CSE has a staff of 900 civilians and about 1,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces. It has facilities everywhere in Canada: in Ottawa, in the North and in large cities.

I would like to read another excerpt from the article published in *Le Droit* which says: "The work of the CSE is so secret that its 1,000 or so employees are asked never to travel on commercial flights in case the plane is hijacked or they are taken hostage". But there is nothing to worry about, right?

Does the CSE gather information on legitimate political parties such as the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois? We do not know. Can a citizen make a formal complaint to a monitoring agency? The answer is no. Why do we have a charter of rights and freedoms if CSE employees can, whenever they wish, listen to our phone conversations without prior judicial authorization and without ever having to report to a parliamentary body or an intelligence agency?

In short, the CSE is not monitored by Parliament nor by any other body. The government does not want to ask SIRC to review the activities of the CSE. Nobody knows why. And the Sub-Committee on National Security that everybody on the government side is raving about cannot get any answers from members of SIRC and, I will say it again, has no authority over the CSE.

• (1550)

But there is nothing to worry about. Or so we are told.

That is why we need a royal commission of inquiry to explain to all Canadians and Quebecers as well as to members of this House how intelligence agencies and secret services are constantly keeping track of what we say and do.

[*English*]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to hear my hon. colleague's remarks because I am particularly qualified to answer at least some of them.

I am the author of a book called *Best Kept Secret* that deals with the early history of the CSE and brings it up to the present. It was published last November. The member is welcome to get it. I regret however it was published only in English, but I would greatly appreciate it if the member could find me a French publisher, a Quebec publisher, so it would be available to him in the language of his choice.

The history of the CSE goes back to the second world war. I will help the hon. member by giving him some background. It was part of the allied effort in code and cipher breaking during the second world war. It began with the examination unit that was in the house next door to the Prime Minister's residence during the second world war.

It was engaged in breaking codes and ciphers primarily Japanese and Vichy French. The breaking of codes and ciphers was a shared arrangement, both diplomatic, economic and military during the second world war. The Americans specialized in Japanese ciphers in particular and the British specialized in German and Italian. The Canadians were left with some Japanese and Vichy French.

The reason Canadians got involved—and this is important so the member will understand the perspective right now—was that Canada was the best country in the world for picking up radio signals. It was because of the radio skip phenomenon where the radio waves bounce in the atmosphere and come down in various parts of the world at focal points. Canada was excellently situated to pick up all kinds of messages. That is how we got involved.

Naturally during the second world war this was a highly secret endeavour. It went into the post war period. Canada continued to be involved first as the communications branch under the National Research Council and subsequently it became the Communications Security Establishment.

There is no secret about what the Communications Security Establishment does. If the member would look at my book, I cite in it a particular presentation before a committee, the name of which is in my book, by the deputy clerk for security intelligence, Ward Alcock, a couple of years ago. He explained that the mandate of the Communications Security Establishment was to listen in on telecommunications worldwide, just as do the Americans, the Australians and the British. The idea was to try to pick up intelligence that may have a bearing on Canada's political and economic security.

There might be a case where Canada has entered into international agreements and one party or another is not obeying those agreements. Am I going on too long, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the member have a question or a comment?

Mr. Bryden: I am coming to it. I will speed it up. I am sure my hon. colleague is interested because it is apparently—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): With the greatest of respect to all colleagues in the House, the member spoke for 10 minutes and we have 5 minutes for questions or comments. When I rose for questions or comments there was more than one member rising. I would like to keep the debate flowing as much as I possibly can, for and against, so we might have the best possible debate in the Chamber.

I would ask the member for Hamilton—Wentworth to conclude his remark or ask the question directly to the member for Terrebonne.

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I will try to make it a very quick question then. I am sorry for the delay.

In a situation where an organization is charged with monitoring foreign intelligence sources, does the member agree it is very difficult to bring it before a parliamentary committee for open examination because of the tremendous political, social and economic implications of possible leaks of confidentiality?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sauvageau: Mr. Speaker, I think that, as elected representatives, we are entitled to know the main organizations who manage this country and Quebec.

• (1555)

The hon. member opposite said: "We monitor conversations that can be detrimental to national unity". Given what we hear in this House, does that mean they can eavesdrop on conversations in Quebec? Surely not, but one has to wonder.

Concerning the translation of his book, he could have done like one of his former colleagues, Senator Hébert, and have it translated in the Senate. Our only question is: Why should we have a security intelligence service without any supervision scanning the airwaves and recording conversations around us?

My hon. colleague wrote a book on secret services. I would like to know why the 117 recommendations made by the committee have never been implemented. If there is no secret, why do we read things like this: "The CSE headquarters is located in the south end of Ottawa in a building surrounded by a high fence topped by barbed wire. The roof is covered with a myriad of antennas, but the name of the occupant is nowhere to be seen. If you try to take a picture—and let this be a warning to Canadians—you will most probably be challenged within minutes". But there is nothing secret.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what my colleague, the member for Terrebonne, had to say and it frightens me in a way. We all know that the SIRC was created following enquiries. I am talking particularly about the Keable enquiry which was held in Quebec towards the end of the 1970s. It was sparked by a unimportant event. A former RCMP officer had been caught placing a bomb. Somehow this expanded and led us to find out about very disturbing facts.

The RCMP had set fire to a barn, stolen lists of Parti Quebecois members, illegally opened mail—a totally democratic way of doing things after all—placed bombs and written false press releases in the name of the FLQ. Those events made us realize the need for a special service, one which would be totally independent from the RCMP, the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

Given what we are learning today, given the reasons why the committee was established, given the fact that it is totally impossible to know what is happening there, even though we repeatedly made requests, does the member feel that security is now better, worse or equivalent to what it was in those days?

Mr. Sauvageau: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank my colleague from Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies. I want to tell him that I feel less secure, especially when we hear the number one officer of CSIS say to the committee which is supposed to solve all the problems: "I have learned never to say yes or no."

That is what the number one officer of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service says. He says to the subcommittee which is supposed to solve all the problems: "We do not need any royal commission because we have a subcommittee. I have learned never to say yes or no." The other witnesses appearing before the subcommittee never want to answer the questions.

Therefore, do I feel secure? No. Do we need a royal inquiry commission that would be independent instead of a subcommittee with a majority of Liberals? My answer is yes.

[*English*]

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the opposition motion. The motion is to denounce the government for not appointing a royal commission to inquire into the "illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service".

The hon. member is putting the cart before the horse. Why would the government wish to mount a royal commission when there has been no evidence of illegal activities? It is true there have been allegations of wrongdoing but they are just that, allegations.

Yet on the strength of unproven allegations the member wishes the government to mount a royal commission which would cost the taxpayers of the country hundreds of thousands of dollars. The hon. member may be prepared to take such liberties with the public purse, but the government has made it clear that it is committed to a program of fiscal responsibility.

Fiscal considerations aside, there is a more serious concern raised by the hon. member's motion. Implicit in the wording of the motion is the idea that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is an organization that is not subject to the authority of Parliament or to any type oversight mechanism. This motion, by suggesting such an idea, does a grave disservice to the reputation of CSIS and to the House which in 1984 put in place an extensive array of legislative safeguards and oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability, control and review of CSIS activities. Operating within this legislative framework, CSIS has proven itself to be a responsible security intelligence agency on a professional par with those of other western democracies.

• (1600)

Central to the control and direction of CSIS are the principles of ministerial control and accountability which are also central to Canadian parliamentary democracy. The CSIS act ensured that the minister would have full knowledge and power of direction over the policies, operations and management of CSIS. Subsection 6(1) of the CSIS act is unequivocal in its message that the minister provides direction to the director of the service.

The CSIS act also supplied the minister with the means to control and guide the service. Ministerial control is to be distinguished from ministerial accountability. Though they are sometimes used interchangeably, the terms have distinct meanings. Control refers to the minister's power of approval, the minister's ability to set policy and give direction and the means at the minister's disposal to ensure that decisions are implemented.

Accountability refers to the minister's obligation to answer before Parliament and the duty of officials to answer to the minister. A principal means by which the minister exercises control over CSIS is through the power of approval. By the normal rules of government, a minister must be consulted on all important matters related to the minister's portfolio.

In addition, the CSIS act and ministerial directions issued to the service require the minister to personally approve a wide variety of operational activities, particularly sensitive operations. The CSIS act stipulates that the minister must personally approve all applications for judicial warrants, all CSIS arrangements with other federal agencies and departments, provincial authorities and foreign governments, and the service's assistance in the coalition of foreign intelligence in Canada.

The minister also exercises control over the service through statutory power to establish the policy guidelines for the service. This is achieved through the issuance of ministerial directions.

An act of Parliament can construct a legislative framework but legislation alone cannot provide detailed guidance covering every aspect of operational activity.

For this there needs to be a policy framework to assist interpretation and implementation. Legislation governing the creation of a security intelligence agency has a special need for such a policy framework if there is to be public confidence in how the agency operates.

Policy frameworks in support of legislation are normally achieved in two ways; through the formulation of regulations and the development of operation guidelines. Neither mechanism however is entirely satisfactory in the security intelligence context.

Regulations as public instruments are obviously unsuited for conveying detailed instructions on how secret operations are to be conducted. Internal agency rules on the other hand would not provide a sufficient level of confidence.

A third device was therefore embodied in the legislation in the form of ministerial direction issued pursuant to subsection 6(2) of the act. Ministerial direction helps to ensure that the Solicitor General is the linchpin of the legal and policy framework.

In practice the minister issues all instructions of consequence in written form regardless of subject. Through the experience of working with the CSIS act the government now defines direction pursuant to subsection 6(2) as "written instructions of a continuing nature issued at the prerogative of the minister that relates to policy standards or procedures".

The strategic work for ministerial direction is clear. Over the last 10 years a set of ministerial directions has been developed setting out the Solicitor General's governing principles for the service and its activities. The directions may be grouped into

seven major categories relating to; arrangements to assist the director's accountability to the minister; the government's annual priorities for intelligence on threats to Canada's security, known as the "national requirements"; guidance on the service's statutory duties and functions; guidance on investigative methods and techniques; instructions dealing with the service's corporate management practices; standards for negotiating co–operative arrangements with domestic and foreign organizations and, policy and file mismanagement issues, particularly the service's retention of files inherited from the RCMP security service.

Currently some 50 ministerial directions are in effect. Directions are converted by the service into operational procedures for use directly by CSIS staff. This logical progression from statute to ministerial direction to operational procedure provides a manageable and auditable means of ensuring that the service is fulfilling its duties and functions in an appropriate manner. I remind all members that SIRC is copied on all these directives.

There is also great provision in the act for accountability. A general direction also exists to ensure the director's accountability to the minister. It describes the roles and responsibilities of the Solicitor General, the Deputy Solicitor General and the director and outlines formal reporting requirements such as the director's obligation to prepare an annual report. The minister has also established guidelines for the scope and content of the director's annual report.

Direction on service operational policy in respect of the service's security intelligence mandate is particularly important to ministerial control. It ensures that the service's collection, analysis and reporting activities respond to the government's annual national requirements for security intelligence and provides practical guidance in interpreting important terminology of the CSIS act.

The operational methods also are clearly laid out. A general direction on the conduct of investigations serves as an umbrella for other more specific directions providing guidance on operational methods. It implicitly endorses the five fundamental principles for controlling investigations espoused by the McDonald commission. The rule of law must be observed at all times.

The investigative means used must be proportionate to the gravity of the threat posed and the probability of its occurrence. The need to use various investigative techniques must be weighed against possible damage to civil liberties or the valuable social institutions.

The more intrusive the technique, the higher the authority required to approve its use. Except in emergency circumstances, the least intrusive techniques of information collection must be used before more intrusive techniques are applied.

A direction on joint operations recognizes that in certain circumstances Canadian security interests may demand the active presence in Canada of investigators from foreign security and intelligence organizations. The principles that are to guide the service's activities in this field are that Canadian sovereignty and law are to be fully respected and protected; the objective and potential product of the co–operation must be of benefit to Canada and serve Canadian national interests; and CSIS must exercise effective control of the co–operative activity.

A direction on foreign investigation provides guidelines governing the service's foreign investigative activity in relation to threats to the security of Canada. It stipulates that the approval of the Solicitor General is required before CSIS may undertake operational activity abroad.

The direction applies to human source travel, foreign security intelligence investigations by CSIS officials and service operational assistance abroad to foreign security and intelligence organizations.

A direction on domestic liaison provides guidance on the establishment of arrangements between—

[*Editor's Note: The fire alarm having sounded:*]

Ms. Minna: Shall I stop, Mr. Speaker, or continue?

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We will suspend to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 4.08 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 4.25 p.m.

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I was talking about liaison and co–operation. Direction on domestic liaison provides guidance on the establishment of arrangements between the service and other federal or provincial institutions. A primary example is the ministerial direction on RCMP–CSIS co–operation.

The principles governing domestic liaison ensure that arrangements are consistent with the service's mandate and that they are in place when there is a requirement for access to information, operational support, information exchange or organizational consultation.

Similarly a direction on foreign liaison sets out principles to guide CSIS in the establishment and conduct of liaison with foreign security and intelligence organizations. The Solicitor General will issue new directions as necessary to ensure that Canada has a responsive and responsible security intelligence agency.

Other cornerstones of the accountability framework established by the CSIS act of 1984 were the review roles of the Security Intelligence Review Committee and the Inspector General of CSIS. SIRC has a mandate to review the propriety of CSIS activities, with emphasis on the delicate balance between national security and individual freedoms. Section 38 of the

CSIS act directs SIRC to review generally its performance in the service of its duties and functions.

This includes reviewing such things as CSIS annual reports and certificates of the Inspector General, ministerial direction, CSIS arrangements with domestic and foreign governments and agencies, section 20 reports on unlawful conduct, and regulations.

Section 40 of the legislation makes SIRC responsible for reviewing the service's compliance with the CSIS act, its regulations and ministerial direction, as well as reviewing CSIS activities to ensure they do not involve an unreasonable or unnecessary exercise of powers.

An equally important review function is carried out by the Inspector General of CSIS. The post of Inspector General is unique; it has evolved over time in response to practical experience and ministerial expectations. The basic role of the Inspector General is to conduct independent internal reviews for the minister.

The CSIS act identifies three interlocking functions for the Inspector General: to review the operational activities of the service, to monitor the service's compliance with its operational policies and to submit certificates to the minister.

To ensure the Inspector General is able to exercise these functions effectively, the act stipulates that the Inspector General is entitled to have access to "any information under the control of the service" that relates to the performance of the functions of the office and to receive from the service "such information, reports and explanations" as the Inspector General deems necessary. Under section 31 no information other than cabinet confidences may be withheld on any grounds.

I have provided this detailed overview to illustrate the comprehensive type of legislative safeguards and oversight mechanisms in place to ensure that CSIS operates within its mandate and within the law at all times. Taken together these safeguards and oversight mechanisms provide a solid legislative foundation for CSIS that is in keeping with the best traditions and principles of a free and democratic nation.

The motion before the House would have us turn our backs on these traditions and principles and on the years of work and experience that went into creating a modern and effective legislative framework to govern Canada's national security system.

I am sure the hon. member's motion was prompted by concern for the wellbeing of our national security system. However I would suggest we wait for the SIRC review and the work of the standing committee, of which hon. members across the way are members, before we draw final conclusions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments of my hon. colleague who just gave us a list of the legislative authorities which would allow us, according to her, to make sure that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is a body that we can control to a certain extent.

She also said that, to some degree, CSIS is accountable to ministers who are empowered to control its activities.

• (1630)

I would like to repeat to my hon. colleague that the RCMP was also, in fact, a regulated body and accountable to ministers. That did not prevent it from committing inexplicable criminal abuses. We now have created a new Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We put into place legislative measures and we now pretend that the problem no longer exists. What difference does my hon. colleague see between the situation that existed from 1970 to 1980 and the current situation?

[*English*]

Ms. Minna: Mr. Speaker, it is not exactly the same. I believe the controls on CSIS currently are much stronger.

The allegations that have been made against CSIS and discussed in the House, if they were true, and I stress the word if, I believe there would be cause for us to be concerned and for the government to take a look at how the issue might be addressed or what things might need to be changed.

However, we do have a process in place. SIRC does have authority to investigate all of the activities of CSIS. The standing committee, as the hon. member said earlier, is also holding hearings. Some members opposite are members of this standing committee. They will also be having hearings and reviewing the reports that SIRC has. They will be meeting in front of SIRC yet again.

If at the end of that process, when the report from SIRC comes out and when the standing committee reports to the House on this issue, at that point if hon. members still have problems or this government finds that there are major problems we would be the first to deal with the issue.

I would like the hon. member to at least allow for the process to go through and for the standing committee of the House, which is representative of members of this House, to go through the process rather than engage in a major royal commission which, as I said earlier, costs a great deal of money as we all know. Royal commissions do not always wind up when they are supposed to wind up and they are quite a cumbersome process to set in place when we already have a process. There is no need to duplicate that process at this time.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, the reason CSIS was formed was due to irregularities in surveillance by the previous security organization under the control of the RCMP.

It is well documented that the RCMP broke the laws of Canada investigating a legitimate political movement in Quebec. It is also well documented when this illegal behaviour was revealed the government of the day not only authorized deep investigation but also formed CSIS so its actions would be responsible, law–abiding and within the scope of the law.

Now we have independent concern that CSIS may have encouraged a private citizen to gather information on another legitimate political movement.

What is the difference between the activity of the former security service and the alleged illegal activity of CSIS? I do not see any difference.

On page 48 of the Security Intelligence Review Committee's annual report it states, under the heading surveillance that SIRC is concerned about the large amount of information gathered by CSIS in the course of surveillance operations. On the same page, under sensitive operations, SIRC also is concerned that CSIS undertook a sensitive operation when no definite indications existed that there was actual or potential reason for the intelligence activity.

On page 47 of the same report SIRC expresses concern about the targeting of surveillance. It stated on one occasion the reason for surveillance, and in this case stretched its meaning too far.

• (1635)

SIRC is telling Canadians that CSIS had no real reason to target or conduct surveillance on its target, but it began and continued to monitor and observe its target even though SIRC confirmed it had no legal authority to engage in that behaviour.

SIRC also stated that CSIS used inappropriate or imprecise reasons based upon section II of the CSIS act to target for surveillance. SIRC stated that CSIS had difficulty understanding what was considered an actual threat to the security of Canada. Yet there is no reference that SIRC ordered CSIS to better understand and follow the legislation that governs its operations.

There is another instance in the annual report where SIRC indicated that CSIS targeted another investigation improperly. SIRC announced when reviewing the reasons for the investigation that its investigators said CSIS did not have any justification to pursue its surveillance. Again SIRC reported CSIS was running amok, but there is no record of SIRC doing anything about it.

The act governing CSIS states quite clearly that CSIS must not have used and cannot use its powers unreasonably or unnecessarily and must perform its duties and functions effectively, efficiently and, most of all, legally.

If CSIS paid a private citizen to infiltrate, assist in forming and spreading a message of supremacy, that clearly illustrates that CSIS violated the abuse of powers section of the guiding principles in the CSIS act.

If CSIS allowed this same private citizen to encourage white supremists to join and infiltrate a legitimate political party, that is certainly violating the concern about abuse of power.

The Reform Party of Canada is not a group of terrorists. It is not a group of agents of hostile intelligence services and it is certainly not a threat to the security of Canada. The Reform Party, whether this government likes it or not, is the party of choice for the law–abiding citizens of Canada.

How can this Liberal government expect law–abiding citizens to continue their respect for the law when a government agency is accused of blatantly and with disregard for the legitimate purpose break the law with impunity?

At the very least the government watchdog for illegal activity by CSIS, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, must announce to Parliament in no uncertain terms if CSIS allowed its informant to be a mole in the Reform Party, if CSIS allowed its informant to encourage white supremists to join the Reform Party? If this occurred SIRC must make that knowledge known to the entire public.

If CSIS knew the private citizen was actively involved with white supremists, becoming active in the Reform Party would publicly damage the reputation of this legitimate political movement.

SIRC and CSIS are responsible to Parliament for their actions and Parliament is responsible to the people of Canada. At the very least, this Liberal government must tell the people of Canada whether CSIS allowed a loose cannon to sully a legitimate political party.

If CSIS was actively involved in initiating a supremist group, forming a supremist group and funding a supremist group through the actions of their informant, full disclosure of this despicable act will not be a threat to Canada's security or to Canadians.

If CSIS was involved the only threat full disclosure will have is to the authorities in charge of CSIS.

• (1640)

Considering if the illegal activity was sanctioned by those in charge, this Liberal government must give a full, detailed and in–depth disclosure to all parliamentarians and the people of Canada the reason CSIS considered a legitimate political party, my party, the Reform Party of Canada, a target for surveillance.

Since this Liberal government refuses to initiate a royal commission into the possible illegal activities of CSIS we must consider why this Liberal government is trying to hide behind secrecy and the CSIS act. All Canadians must consider why the governing party in the House of Commons refuses to initiate a thorough investigation of possible illegal activity by a department of government, displaying a total disregard for the laws of this land.

A previous government not only investigated illegal activity by Canada's previous secret service, it disbanded the organization and formed a new service.

No one is suggesting this Liberal government waste tax dollars disbanding and organizing a new service. All Canadians are strongly telling this Liberal government a full investigation, detailed disclosure and removal of those from CSIS, if any, who had knowledge of and supported any illegal activities must take priority over any minor embarrassment that this government could suffer.

To refuse a full inquiry and detailed disclosure to Parliament tells Canadians this government condones unnecessary secrecy and is now abusing the trust given to it by the people of Canada.

This Liberal government may full well claim it does not or did not have anything to do with the possible illegal activity of CSIS because it was not in power when this activity occurred. Refusing to have an investigation into what may have been done will not satisfy the law–abiding people of Canada.

This Liberal government has everything to lose by not holding a full inquiry. It will lose the trust of Canadians and as a governing party that loss of trust can never be regained. That loss of trust may continue diminishing government in the eyes of Canadians, and that can never be allowed.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments made by the hon. member. I can assure the hon. member that no one on this side considers the Reform Party a terrorist organization.

There are all kinds of allegations out there on improprieties and we have set up a mechanism, SIRC, which was established 10 years ago as he very well knows, to look into those kinds of allegations.

Furthermore, we have gone one step further. In co–operation with the opposition benches, Bloc and Reform we have set up a subcommittee on national security issues. One hon. member dealing with this subcommittee has done commendable work. We are looking forward to all the proposals made by the opposition. We are awaiting reports from SIRC. I believe the subcommittee is going to pursue its research on these allegations made against the service.

I want to make sure it is perfectly clear to the opposition benches that never would this government condone spying on legitimate political organizations such as the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois.

Since Reform is so concerned about accountability and the way we spend money and controlling the deficit, does the hon. member really believe that by spending $20 million to $25 million on a royal commission we would not be better served by giving the subcommittee on national security issues the time and the chance to look into this and as well as SIRC to report to us and Parliament on what happened or what has allegedly happened? I would like to know if it would be preferable for us to wait before spending $20 million to $25 million of taxpayers' money.

• (1645)

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his assurances with regard to the feelings of the Liberals about this particular activity.

I am shocked that anybody from that side of the House would suggest that spending money is wrong. Good grief, it has not shown it in any other direction or area. Spending money has become a very positive, happy thing for this group to do.

I certainly do not believe for a moment that there would be any reason to think this kind of investigation would call for that kind of money. I am pleased to see that this committee has been set up and I hope this government can assure us that once that committee has finished its investigation the Canadian people, not the Reform Party, who have a right to know are thoroughly satisfied that this thing is resolved and if not would it please assure us that we will get to the bottom of it and that it must never occur again in this kind of activity.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have a very quick question.

The member mentioned in his speech that a parliamentary review must be taken which would cost $25 million because CSIS is accused of breaking the law. The word the hon. member used was accused.

Does the hon. member not think we should wait until there is some evidence before we actually launch such an expensive inquiry rather than going on the basis of an accusation?

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would not suggest for a moment that we run hairy–scary into some kind of thing that is going to cost millions of dollars. I do not think I indicated that at all.

I did indicate that there is a special group of people put together called SIRC and I think it has a big responsibility to report everything that happens and when I suspect for a moment and when we have reasons to suspect that is not happening, my question in return would be is this Liberal government going to make absolutely certain that these people who are on the payroll

are going to be accountable to the Canadians in earning the bucks that they make. Are they going to do their job or not? Do we have to go to extremes such as a royal commission?

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that members on this side of the House are planning to take their work very seriously and we have countless assurances that members of the security committee including members on the opposite benches are going to look through this thoroughly.

I hope, thanks to the questions raised by the hon. member and his colleagues, that we are going to clarify this thing once and for all.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to speak to this motion. I think there is always a place for this kind of debate. I do not feel this motion is correct. I do feel it is flawed. Nevertheless I think it is always a topic that we on all sides of this House should look at from time to time.

Let me address the motion first and foremost. The word used in the motion is "illegal". A royal commission is to be called because of alleged illegal activities. This appears to rise from allegations in the press, in the media, this is the way we understand events, that would suggest that CSIS has been involved in impropriety that requires an investigation.

I would like to address that because one of the accusations in the press was that the CBC was being spied on by CSIS. I think it was that story more than anything else that fueled the reaction that has led to the debate we have before us and the various studies that are going on as to CSIS activities.

• (1650)

I would like to comment on the story that was in the Toronto *Star*. I have a document here and I wish to show it. It is relevant. The headline from the Toronto *Star* states: "Spy agency kept watch on CBC". I believe this was a page one story at the time.

Naturally a headline like that is going to cause a lot of concern on all sides of the House and with the public at large. When one examines the actual body of the story that is in question here about the CBC being spied on by CSIS, one discovers that this headline is entirely based on one paragraph in the story. That paragraph reads: "The source reported attempts by Howard Goldenthal, a researcher for the Fifth Estate, a CBC program, to obtain information from the Heritage Front leader Wolfgang Droege about whether members of the Canadian airborne regiment in Somalia had any links with racist groups in Canada.»

It was the Fifth Estate, a CBC program, but it could have just as easily been a CTV program or it could have been an inquiry from the press itself. What we really see here is the informant replying to a legitimate concern that was connected to the possibility that there was racist infiltration of the Canadian airborne regiment.

I think we would all agree that it is legitimate for CSIS to want to examine possibilities such as there may be infiltration of the Canadian forces by a group that represents racist elements. That was the tenor and the content of that particular story. However, the headline was: "Spy agency kept watch on CBC". This is the sort of headline that has probably generated more than anything else this type of public concern.

At issue there is the whole question that we are pursuing something, and I mentioned it to the member for Wild Rose, where a whole debate has been initiated on the basis of allegations and not evidence. I cite that as an example and there are other examples in the media that are basically only allegations that are not supported in any way by fact that we know.

Before we go to a royal commission I stress to the members present that we have to go a little further than allegations that appear in the press.

I would like to go on a bit further. This situation concerns me greatly. We have story that suggests that CSIS had an agent, an undercover person, in an organization that may have sometimes been associated with very right wing activities, and that this agent may have engaged in activities as part of his cover that could be construed as right wing or even racist.

What is the difference between this person, if he really did exist, and a police undercover operation involving a plain-clothes person penetrating a drug ring? Surely we would all agree that it is perfectly proper for a police agency in an effort to expose crime, in an effort to ferret out threats to national security or municipal security, if you will, to have an undercover agent and we would expect as part of that cover that the agent would take on the persona of the group he is trying to penetrate.

I will take that a step further. I do not have any background any more than any other member here about what was actually occurring. I submit that if this Grant Bristow was an undercover agent doing a legitimate task for national security and as a result of the leaks to the press has been disrupted in a project that had great value to the security of this nation, then I would say something very unfortunate has occurred.

• (1655)

We should be disparaging of what occurred, not coming down on CSIS on mere allegations. CSIS, because it is a security agency and an agency engaged in secret intelligence, does not have the ability to speak out and simply defend itself without jeopardizing agents like somebody who may be doing an undercover operation.

There is another issue here, the whole question of the leak of the documents that led to the disclosure that CSIS was engaged in certain undercover operations.

The one involving the Heritage Front I do not know what damage is involved and I do not know whether it is true. However, I will draw the House's attention to something everyone seems to forget. There was a first leaked newspaper story in connection with this business. That leaked story resulted in a headline in the Toronto *Sun* on August 13, 1994, sometime before the Toronto *Star* headline that I mentioned, and it stated: "CSIS—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. Colleagues, there is a rule which refers to our not being able to use any form of exhibits in the House. I know that quite often all of us engage in quoting from materials, including the newsprint, which is correct in debate, but certainly I would encourage all members to be mindful of the rule regarding exhibits and not to display them in an open fashion to the attention of viewers or others in the House. I would ask the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth to continue his intervention.

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected on that. I will read the headline because it is not relevant to display it: "CSIS spied on metro Somalis". The gist of the story, based on a leaked document, was that CSIS did have agents engaged in some undercover work in connection with the Somali community because it feared that there were some violent elements in this community that were a threat.

Certainly with the very recent history of the problems in Somalia, we would all agree that CSIS had legitimate cause for concern. We would probably also agree that its wanting to get information from the Somali community in this case was proper.

What is not proper is the fact that this document was leaked and the story appeared in the newspaper. I do not fault the newspaper because newspapers must run with the information they receive. The fault was the fact that a document was put out that very obviously was designed to or at least would have had some result in damaging a very legitimate operation on the part of CSIS.

That brings us to a very important point which is that we should be deploring in this House the fact that somewhere along the line the system went awry and that an individual in a trusted post was able to collect CSIS documents with the apparent intention of leaking them to the newspapers for whatever reason. We can only be grateful that the Toronto *Star* actually ran a photograph of one of these leaked documents leading to the person who was leaking them.

I do not want to sound very narrow and rednecked about this, to use that expression, but I really do hope that the government does take some very positive steps—and I hope it has the mechanisms—to prevent civil servants and people in trust from leaking documents of this nature. We must have orderly government, be it in connection with the secrets or intelligence agencies or cabinet confidentiality or whatever. This was a very serious precedent and we should all be concerned.

I believe I have time to move on to another topic which is the issue of accountability that has been raised time and time again and which I believe is the aim of the motion. It is a very important issue. I have heard the speakers on all sides and heard the explanation from my own members on the structure that has been set up to try to make CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment accountable.

• (1700)

In the final analysis, when any agency or any government department is engaged in secret work, as many are—the military, for example, certainly is engaged in secret work; it has to do military testing and that kind of thing—the guarantee of accountability is the quality of the civil servants and the strength of democracy.

We can put the legislative controls in place but nothing is guaranteed because people work of necessity in the shadows. When we are dealing with foreign intelligence or counterintelligence we have to work in the shadows. Despite what has been said I do not really believe that members opposite think we can expose that to parliamentary committee examination. It really is impractical. We would lose all our allies if we did that, at the very least.

It still is a problem. How do we bridge the gap of confidence in the personnel who are engaged in activities that are not immediately seen, that are not laid out before you?

The answer ultimately is having a strong democracy and a strong screening process. The only thing I would add to that, and it is a pet thing with me, is that I would have a very carefully documented accountability.

Over and above what we have heard here, the only way we can control these individuals who must work behind the scenes, is to require them to put their orders always on paper and have this paper record preserved in perpetuity. We have to have a control that will not allow people to destroy records.

I believe when democracy is strong with a strong and dedicated bureaucracy, the control on the bureaucracy for doing the right thing when it has to operate in secrecy is to be answerable to history. When the historian comes along 30 or 40 years later and looks at it and sees that even if the decision was marginal or borderline or questionable, at least he sees the bureaucracy operated in good faith. The vast majority of people in our bureaucracy, certainly in this country, operate in a spirit of good faith and try their very best. This is an important point to bear in mind.

I will conclude by talking about the future of CSIS. This also is at stake in this debate, the fact that the world has changed radically, as we know, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and so forth. This has to and must change the face of counterintelligence.

CSIS is primarily a counterintelligence agency. We must be very clear on that. New threats are spread across the board. We now have situations where very small countries can pose very great threats. We all realize there is a terrific problem now in keeping controls on plutonium. The great stocks of plutonium that exist in the former Soviet Union may pop up in any third world country. I regret to say that the technology for making small bombs is well known. This is a fundamental threat.

Fundamental again is the threat of biological and chemical warfare agents, particularly biological warfare agents. These are the weapons and dangers of very small nations. We have to have a constant and very alert secret service that examines these dangers worldwide. We also have to examine these dangers internally.

We have an open door immigration policy, which I think is wonderful, but we have to understand that with that open door immigration policy we are also open to genuine security threats. It is not just obvious criminals, but the ones that are not obvious, the ones that may be carrying the torch of hatred from the animosities of their homelands which they might employ against other ethnic groups in Canada. We must have a strong organization to look at that.

• (1705)

I have one more thing to say. This pertains to the Communications Security Establishment, which we alluded to before. The world is a global village. The threat now goes beyond just security threats. The threats are also economic and political. We have to be aware of the fact that Canada is a nation that relies enormously on trade.

I see the Minister for International Trade is here. He will agree with me that Canada's future is delicately balanced on our ability to compete worldwide. Not every country competes fairly. Some countries are willing to resort to intelligence gathering in various ways and in other illegal activities, which may affect our ability to trade honestly and adequately.

The role of our intelligence organizations involves making sure Canada is always dealt with fairly. We must have a strong intelligence service that will back us up because the record of history shows, going back to previous centuries and this century, that a nation with a strong intelligence service will use it and use it sometimes, I hate to say, on the weaker. We must be strong in order to compete.

Finally, if ever there was a reason against separatism, against the break–up of the country into smaller pieces, it is the expense of running a comprehensive and professional intelligence service.

If we separated, the new piece—a separate Quebec—would have to set up its own intelligence service. It would lose all it has gained from the very fine intelligence services that we have had since the second world war. It would be on its own and it would not have friends. That is a very dangerous situation to be in.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments. I listened to them carefully. He cautioned members of the House, correctly so, that we should not condemn CSIS simply based on allegations and rumours or innuendo.

Yet I have sat in the House and listened to members across the way label members of the Reform Party as racists and bigots. I have heard those words spoken in the House. In fact the Deputy Prime Minister had to recall the fact that she called one of our members a racist during debate. That is on the record.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order concerning unparliamentary language. I would like to know if the hon. member has any source or if this is actually printed in *Hansard*.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I am not aware of the allegations or of the exact scenario that has been referred to, but I will take the time to remind everyone that in the conduct of the business of this Chamber we should all be respectful of one another and this institution.

• (1710)

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I would just conclude that those kinds of comments we have been subjected to without proof, without evidence have been done simply for the purpose of political partisanship.

I would like to ask the member if it is a fact that this Bristow individual infiltrated the Reform Party in order to discredit it, who would benefit from that? Why would anyone in CSIS want to discredit the Reform Party of Canada?

My analysis of this situation is that no one would want to take the time or energy in order to discredit the Reform Party. But who would benefit from it if the Reform Party was in fact discredited? It would be the political parties because we were vying for support from the Canadian public.

Is it not reasonable that these two bodies, SIRC as well as the subcommittee, should examine whether the Solicitor General of the day politicized CSIS in order to do that very thing and received the benefit that would come if this party was discredited by those kinds of labels? I would ask my hon. colleague to comment.

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I certainly think that the examination of this issue should go wherever the parliamentary committee deems it ought to go and call whatever witnesses the committee thinks appropriate.

I do point out that there is an enormous assumption of dishonesty here. Is my colleague opposite suggesting that the previous government was so corrupt, and it would be corruption, that it actually could politicize CSIS and do what he said? Otherwise, unless that assumption is made there is no reason, no motive to believe that this Mr. Bristow did infiltrate the Reform Party.

I submit that the apparent lack of motive makes it enormously probable that this did not happen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member who just spoke mentioned the role of CSIS in connection with our economy and the protection of our patents here in Canada. I know that several years ago, there were frequent complaints that Canada was a sitting duck for this kind of espionage. I think that was one of the roles CSIS had to play.

Since the hon. member appears to be very familiar with the agency, with CSIS, I want to ask him, since we want an inquiry, whether this could also be part of the inquiry, in other words, why Canada is a sitting duck for industrial espionage. We are told it is terribly easy. People come from all over the world and apparently have no trouble taking or stealing—I think that is the word—something on which we have spent a lot of time and effort.

Since we do a lot of research in this country, why is it so easy to come and steal the results of our research? Perhaps this should be included in the inquiry the Bloc Quebecois is calling for, so we could find out what the problems are and why it is so easy to get away with that.

• (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I think it was a very good one indeed.

The reason Canada has been perceived in this way—and I think it is a very serious problem—is that perhaps not enough money has been invested in CSIS in the past. Perhaps CSIS has not had the support it deserves. I am aware that there was a major investment in CSIS just recently. A new CSIS building has just gone up south of the city here. I think progress is being made.

I do not think a royal commission, if I may say to my colleague, is the way to go in getting to the root of his particular concern which I share. I think this should be the subject matter of the appropriate parliamentary committee.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, in my speech I used the word if quite often, as did the hon. member across the way. We have a couple of speeches with a lot of ifs. I think his if was a little bigger than my if. He was talking about it being a shame if Mr. Bristow happened to be on the right track of something and this whole thing interfered with it.

I know what I believe. I do not think there is any doubt about it. One thing that has been lost in the country is the trust of the people who sent us here. That trust has been lost in the public. All we have to do is open our ears and listen to the fears of people about corruption, suspected corruption or supposed corruption, for the last 30 years.

So far no one has accused me of it, but I have seen surveys asking people what is the most popular occupation or who are the most valuable persons in the country. When we see doctors and teachers on the list and find politicians underneath lawyers I think we in the House have something to think about.

I like the assurances of the parliamentary secretary, but I am afraid assurances like those ones have become nothing more than political rhetoric for Canadians. They have heard it before. They probably heard it before that hon. member was born. It has been going on and on.

What does the member suggest as a basis of the ongoing studies on what actions SIRC should take when it has obviously identified some serious problems? What actions does he think the committee will take if it verifies even some of the allegations?

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member commented on the public's lack of trust. I submit to him that we do not help the public's confidence or trust when we engage in major, shall we say, witch-hunts based on unsubstantiated allegations as in this case and as occurred many times in case of the previous Parliament. When the House is drawn into debate and people make allegations across the floor without proper evidence we erode the public's trust.

On his other comments, I cannot forecast what a review committee or the people reviewing the matter ought to do until they see the evidence. They will make their own decisions.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to also rise in support of this motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Bellechasse, whose riding happens to be next to mine. I think it would be worthwhile to remind the hon. members that the motion in question reads as follows:

> That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the alleged illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I listened with interest to the remarks made by previous speakers and I think that what the opposition is suggesting is not that all activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service be abolished but rather—and the Bristow affair was the pretext

for introducing this motion—to ensure that the Canadian public, and particularly the government and the House of Commons, be as well informed as possible on the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The public has reason to believe that illegal activities have taken place. During hearings held by the House sub–committee looking into this matter, our colleague, the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm asked a number of questions which, to tell the truth, remained unanswered for the most part. That is an important fact.

I think that the Canadian public, the Canadians taxpayers who are paying to receive services, are entitled to get as much information as possible. Often members are asked questions and if those of us who sit on committees are unable to get the information required to answer these questions, how are we expected to adequately inform the public?

This motion is about setting up a royal commission of inquiry to do everything possible to make sure that, at least the members of Parliament sitting on the commission, hear all the facts.

Let me tell you about my personal experience as a Quebecer. It is a fact that we have gone through some rather quiet times, but I recall an event that many Quebecers of my generation remember. There was this incident in 1973 when a barn was burned down and a list of members of the Parti Quebecois, illegally seized. Quebecers of my generation remember that incident. The younger people were not around then and cannot remember, but it has remained in the minds of many Quebecers.

At that time, some measures were taken; then there was the Keable Commission which was finally able to establish that some illegal acts had been committed. Of course, not as many people were convicted as should have been, but the facts were proven. After that, there was a relatively quiet period.

In spite of all that, in the more recent past—I refer to a certain affair which I prefer not to name—there was evidence of an attempt to infiltrate not a political party but the Government of Quebec.

The Bristow affair is another case that has come to our attention. Everyone saw it on the news.

• (1725)

This was not just an attempt; another political party was actually infiltrated. This time it was not the Parti Quebecois but the Reform Party. I find such infiltration unacceptable on purely "democratic grounds".

Problems of infiltration by secret agents from foreign countries were mentioned. That may be, but since the Berlin Wall fell, I do not think that there is a really big threat from foreign sources. I listened to my colleague from Longueuil; yes, a security intelligence service may indeed be necessary, but it must operate legally, within a legal framework.

The issue here is not the one raised by the member for Longueuil, but rather illegal activities. Given what such a security service costs, I think that not only Quebecers but all Canadians are entitled to answers.

I will mention some questions that could be raised in a royal commission of inquiry. Has CSIS directly or indirectly obtained information on Canadian media or political parties since 1989? We admit that we must not go back too far, but since 1989. Yes or no? We were unable to obtain that information. Without necessarily disclosing the information itself. However, if the answer is yes, it should perhaps be studied by a sub–committee. There could be some really important things. We should at least know whether or not information was gathered directly or indirectly on the Canadian media or on recognized Canadian political parties. Not small groups from abroad but legally recognized political parties that are among this country's democratic institutions.

Could we have an answer on this? That is the kind of question to which Canadians would like an answer.

Did the Inspector General of CSIS and the Security Intelligence Review Committee find cases where information was gathered on the media, unions, political parties and other legitimate Canadian organizations?

Rightly or wrongly, as a member of Parliament, and before that as a member of public organizations, people told me personally on many occasions—that is not hearsay—of their concerns regarding some individuals then involved in militant and union activities—I could give examples of CSIS collaborators infiltrating the CNTU, a major union body in Quebec. Infiltration may be acceptable but I think that dynamite, arson and theft warrant investigation.

I have a general question: What is the basis—I would very much like to know that—and the scope of the contacts which CSIS has with foreign intelligence services and with the Communications Security Establishment of the Department of National Defence? This should not be an official secret. What is the basis and the scope of the activities of that service? We should be allowed to know that. Why is it not the case?

Does CSIS receive information from other Canadian or foreign intelligence services on activities conducted by Canadians within our borders? If so, is the receipt of such information by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service legal under the CSIS Act? Is it legal or not? Bench marks are required. If such bench marks exist, then they must be known.

• (1730)

In the Bristow case, when did CSIS become aware of Mr. Grant Bristow's participation—this is very important—in political events held by the Reform Party of Canada? Did CSIS end its relation with Mr. Bristow at that point?

Regardless of its nature, has information gathered by Mr. Bristow been used for judicial purposes, in Canada or elsewhere, since 1989? Yes or no? These questions do not touch upon official secrets, and they can be answered by a simple yes or no. We could not find out.

These vague answers, or even the lack of answers, leave Quebecers and Canadians with an uneasy feeling which may well undermine their confidence in certain institutions. Yet, we should reinforce public confidence in those institutions. The setting up of a royal commission of inquiry, as suggested by the Official Opposition, is justified since it would hear all those who can shed some light on certain activities. I am alluding to presumably illegal incidents. The idea is not to question the system as a whole but, rather, some specific actions and facts.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I would like again to say to the opposition that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service does not cover the legitimate activities of any advocacy or protest organizations. It does not spy on legitimate organizations like political parties or unions, as the member opposite claimed.

Again, the opposition keeps harping on about events which took place over twenty years ago. Since then, we have had the McDonald Commission which helped to create the civil service as we know it today as well as SIRC. I also have the feeling that the opposition tends to remember only what suits its philosophy, and that is unfortunate.

Last night, as a Quebecer, I was very disappointed by the new Quebec government, when I heard Bernard Landry himself state publicly that he would weed out federalists hiding in all the Delegations General of the province of Quebec and that he was appointed to find out if they are true sovereignists. Sometimes, I think the opposition should look at itself and ensure that the government of Quebec will still respect the great majority of Quebecers who are federalists and not separatists.

I still want to point out to the hon. member opposite who is yelling at me that Canada is, after all, a land of open arms, a free country that first and foremost respects individual freedom. I think our government has made a commitment to examine in detail the allegations made against our services and to take remedial action if needed.

So, I do not see why we should spend $20 million to $25 million on a royal commission of inquiry, when we have not yet completed our own investigations, mainly through the Sub–Committee on National Security and the upcoming SIRC report. However, I want to add that I am deeply disappointed by the hon. member, who belongs to a separatist party in the province of Quebec and wants to weed out the federalists, as suggested by Mr. Landry. I think this is unacceptable in a democratic society such as ours.

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, this is a funny way of getting out of a predicament. If we were in the military, we would say it was a good diversion tactic.

• (1735)

While talking about shifting the limelight to the National Assembly and what is going on in the new government in Quebec, incidentally, before 1976 we had a Liberal government that had an intelligence gathering services referred to as the CAD, which the Parti Quebecois government—I realize the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine is too young to remember that, but this may be useful to other people who are listening—later removed.

What we are talking about today, however, is the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. As for shifting the focus to Quebec— The hon. member's answer is particularly disturbing since he is saying, more or less, that now the National Assembly has a new Parti Quebecois government, the separatists are in power, and the hon. member gets all upset and blurts out this type of question. The more I hear this "nervous" reaction the more I am convinced we should be concerned about the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. I must say that to me, this kind of nervous–Nellie reaction to the new Parti Quebecois government is all the more reason to support the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Bellechasse.

I would just like to remind this House that the members of the Bloc Quebecois and the members of the Parti Quebecois were elected in the same way as the hon. member. I respect the fact that he was elected to represent another party in my province. I respect him as an elected representative, elected by constituents who put their trust in him. However, when he goes on in this way, he infers that the people of Quebec—and I will not be unparliamentary—showed poor judgment in electing members of the Parti Quebecois, and because of that, people should be wary and feel insecure about this new government, but after all, like the members of the Reform Party who were elected in Western Canada by people who used their good judgment, after a democratic debate, these people were elected to represent them.

[*English*]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague.

Sometimes separatists say that after separation the new Quebec can still retain a shared currency with the rest of Canada and even a shared citizenship, which is somewhat contradictory in my view.

Does the member feel that the new, separate Quebec should also expect to share CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, although more calm than his predecessor, the hon. member nevertheless suggests, when talking about separatism, that we are wicked people who wish to inflict hardships on members on the other side, whereas we wish to remain good neighbours and friends as much as possible.

As regards the question, you will understand that I represent the Official Opposition in the House of Commons. I am willing to act as a messenger or an interpreter and to pass on the question, but I think that it should be answered by an elected Parti Quebecois government after it has won the referendum. Therefore, I believe the question is rather premature or that it should be asked instead during a referendum campaign. Please understand that as a member of the opposition, I have no precise mandate to talk in the name of the Government of Quebec. That could be the kind of service that could be maintained.

I take good note of the member's question and I thank him for his interest but this is all I can do for the time being. As a member of the opposition I am more used to asking questions than to answering them.

• (1740)

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the hon. member that he does not represent all Quebecers, and neither do we, I admit.

But we have to take into account the commitment of our government, of this sub–committee, which is to look at this question in depth. I believe that today's question was to determine whether or not we needed a parliamentary commission. This sub–committee includes one member of the Bloc Quebecois and one member of the Reform Party, and along with them some of us on this sub–committee want to shed some light on the allegations against the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I can assure the hon. member that once the reports of the sub–committee or even the SIRC have been submitted to Parliament, he will have the opportunity to look at them, and make enlightened judgments.

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, my answer will be very short, as requested. It is precisely the lack of clear answers and, in some cases, the total lack of answers that the member for Berthier—Montcalm who represented our party on the committee had to endure, which motivated the opposition.

If, during the summer, the member, acting as our official representative, had been able to get the answers he was looking for, obviously this motion would have been very different. In our view, if the government is willing to change its attitude and wants to get to the bottom of this, as we do, the only way to proceed is to call for a royal commission. This is what we contend.

[*English*]

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, in the interest of time I think I might begin with my conclusion and then get to the beginning part.

It is my feeling the hon. member's motion is flawed and that it assumes the veracity of the recent allegations that have come to light in the media. The allegations have in no way been substantiated by fact or tested by the accountability of the system that is already in place in the CSIS act as it exists. The motion is premature, if not inappropriate at this time.

The Security Intelligence Review Committee has appeared at the subcommittee of the House and offered assurances that its review of the matter will be painstaking, thorough and complete, and I expect nothing but that. The House should respect that commitment and await the outcome of the legislative process of review prior to reaching any conclusion on the matter.

A basic principle of any democratic system should be the presumption of innocence. Unsubstantiated allegations which lead people to reach immediate conclusions of guilt fly in the face of this basic principle. Whether it is an institution or whether it is an individual, it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that due process is followed and that only facts are entertained in reaching a decision.

To date we have not been apprised of the facts. Nor have we been allowed due process to be followed. Sensationalism and innuendo, a lot of it in the House, have no place when we are dealing with national security issues.

The CSIS act provides Parliament and all Canadians with both a process and an opportunity to reach factual conclusions. Regrettably in recent weeks we have seen a frenzy of unsubstantiated allegations and finger pointing that has undermined public confidence, about which many members have spoken today, in an important institution charged with significant responsibilities in ensuring the public safety of all Canadians.

Members of the House, the media and all other Canadians have a responsibility in allowing the effective systems we have in place to run their course. Our national security ultimately depends on the public's confidence in the people and the institutions which are designed to ensure it.

CSIS as part of this regime implicitly depends upon public co–operation to meet its mandate. It is our responsibility in the House to ensure that the review regime as prescribed in the CSIS act is allowed to run its course and address any doubts about our national security system.

In the meantime members of Parliament should not encourage the distrust the member for Wild Rose spoke about. They should follow the process, review the information, and then if we are unhappy with the outcome the motion might be in order.

It is important to remember how CSIS got here. In fact many members have spoken about that.

• (1745)

It has been 10 years since Parliament passed the act which created the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. This was done following lengthy deliberation and with the full participation of the then members of Parliament following the conclusion of the McDonald commission of inquiry into the activities of the RCMP security service.

This latter inquiry was extensive and exhaustive in addressing concerns about the activities of the RCMP security service. The recommendation was clear that the national security interests of Canada would best be served by a civilian agency. I believe that the regime and the powers created by Parliament in 1984 by the enactment of the CSIS act fulfil the requirements of accountability to the Canadian people because the act itself fulfils the five basic principles which emerged from the McDonald commission.

I will remind members of Parliament what those principles were. The first was the provision of security and intelligence is essential to the security of Canada. Second, there is an adequate legal framework within which a security service would co–operate under the rule of law while recognizing the democratic rights of all Canadians. The third was an effective management system to ensure responsible direction and a respect for the law. The fourth was effective accountability to ministers who are responsible to Parliament or responsibility subsequently assigned by Parliament to the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The fifth principle was openness to satisfactory external review, ensuring that the agency does not abuse its power and that it is not misused by governments.

These principles were adopted by government in the drafting of the CSIS act and confirmed in Parliament in 1984. In 1989 Parliament met the statutory requirement of the CSIS act by reviewing the effectiveness of the act and its stated objectives.

It has been some five years since this review and I see no reason to question the validity of that document produced at the time. The recent flurry of allegations about CSIS are just that, allegations. The allegations have not yet been subjected to the full scrutiny of the review regime outlined in CSIS.

It is worthy to note that the CSIS act is comprised of 29 pages, half of which are devoted to the control and review mechanisms applied to CSIS in the performance of its duties and functions. This fact alone should provide us with initial comfort in assessing the concerns that have been raised over the last seven weeks in the media. Each year for the last 10 years the House has been provided with an annual report from the Security Intelligence Review Committee. While initially it was critical, it has in the last few years been much better and much more clear in its issues because of course CSIS is getting better and better in its operations.

It is important to remember that here we are in 1994 and there still are threats to Canadian security. International terrorism remains a threat to world order. From time to time Canada is a base for activities in support of terrorism in other countries. Terrorist acts can have direct impacts on the lives of Canadians. The guests of Canada can also be the subject of terrorist threats.

We do not want to be subject to violence in this country nor do we want our reputation as a nation internationally damaged. It is important to remember that this does exist. The technology of terrorism is becoming more accessible. The World Trade Centre bombing confirms that this is so. The sources of terrorism remain strong: nationalism, religious and political extremism, state sponsored terrorism, ethnic unrest and regional conflict.

Canadians thankfully in recent years have been spared in large part from those acts of terror but we live in a world that is becoming increasingly smaller as a consequence of globalization. What happens in a distant part of the world can have an immediate impact in Canada. We are no longer isolated from what was at one time viewed as a far off regional conflict. We have responsibilities to assist our allies and protect ourselves in countering the effects of international security concerns.

Our borders are long and open and we are part of a global transportation and communication system. Canadians and Canadian soil are not immune from security concerns. Terrorism is not an abstract force sowing its horror in a foreign land. Canada and Canadians are vulnerable and have been vulnerable in the past. Canada's evident prosperity and open society make it sometimes all too inviting a venue.

The CSIS act defines the roles and responsibilities for the Solicitor General, the deputy Solicitor General and the director of CSIS.

This regime provides a full measure of checks and balances in ongoing CSIS operations, particularly those of a most intrusive nature. Approvals are required from a federal court judge for the utilization of these most intrusive measures.

This is a clear reflection of the priority and concern that the public and parliamentarians attach to the potential for abuse of power by a security service, given the extraordinary means that it would have at its disposal to intervene in the private lives of Canadian citizens.

As a member of Parliament, I am very concerned about this. For these reasons special care, precision and clarity were used in describing the mandate of CSIS in the act and the role of the various review bodies in control mechanisms.

The system has evolved over a 10–year period and works effectively to guard the integrity of CSIS conduct. Certainly the process we are now in will determine whether that is the case.

In addition to the the Security Intelligence Review Committee, the Solicitor General also has available the Office of the Inspector General to ensure CSIS complies with policy, procedures and ministerial direction. By international standards this is the most complex control and accountability system in the world. We should all be proud of that.

This is what Canadians demanded in 1994 and creates the balance we see in the system today. Let us see the system work. Then we will have motions like this if they are appropriate and needed.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.50 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 81(19), debate on the motion is now concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reaffirming its commitment to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as you have indicated, the motion that I seek approval for today is that the government should consider the advisability of reaffirming its commitment to seek to achieve a goal of eliminating child poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

On November 24, 1989 the then member for Oshawa put forward a motion essentially in the same terms as follows: "That this House express its concern for the more than one million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000".

That motion received unanimous support from this House. All members present voted in favour of that motion. They voted to commit this country to eliminating child poverty by the year 2000.

That gave rise to Campaign 2000, a group of organizations fighting for the implementation of this motion, fighting to ensure that our most precious resource, the resource which will provide for our future, receives some attention in Canada today.

As many will know, the number of Canadian children living in poverty has increased since that time, now amounting to some 1.3 million children. Not only have we not brought a downward trend in child poverty, but in Canada it has increased.

Canadians who care about children and children themselves will be watching Parliament's response to this motion. Does this Parliament care about children as it did in 1989? Does it want to reduce and move to eliminate poverty among Canadian children, our greatest resource? Does this Parliament view child poverty as an emergency situation, which surely it is in Canada today? Or will it try to turn a blind eye and a cold heart to those 1.3 million poor children in Canada?

At the end of my speech I will seek unanimous consent to make this motion votable, as it was in 1989, in the anticipation that this Parliament is as committed as the Parliament in 1989 was to Canadian children. We may believe there are different ways to eliminate child poverty in Canada. We have different philosophical and economic perspectives on how to achieve this most important and laudable goal.

It would be remarkable if anyone in this House would not support a motion to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000.

• (1755)

As I said, since 1989 child poverty has worsened in Canada and I would like to give some indication of how deep and how serious this matter is by quoting some statistics. I will do that at some length because I am sure many Canadians are unaware of how serious this problem is in Canada. They may have a sense of the numbers involved but I do not think many have a sense of how deep and how serious this problem is and how important it is in the long term for Canada because of the economic and social costs which are incurred as a result of not addressing this very serious social problem today.

The high school dropout rate for children from poor families is 2.5 times that for non–poor families; children in families with incomes in the bottom 20 per cent of the population were twice as likely to be living in inadequate housing than in families with incomes in the top 20 per cent, and 1.4 times more likely than children living in middle income families.

The infant mortality rate is twice as high among families at the lowest income level as it is among families at the highest level. Low birth weight is related to poverty as well; it is 1.4 times more common among babies born in the poorest families than children born in the richest families. Children from low income families are 1.7 times more likely to have psychiatric disorders than children from other families and almost twice as likely to perform poorly in school and twice as likely to develop a conduct disorder, a behavioural problem.

Teens in low income families are almost twice as likely as teens in higher income families to smoke and to have alcohol problems, and 1.5 times more likely to use drugs.

Children who grow up in low income families are less healthy, have less access to skill building activities, more destructive habits and behaviour, live more stressful lives and are subject to more humiliation. In short, they have a less stable, less secure existence and as a result are likely to be less secure as adults.

It is sometimes thought that people are poor because they do not work. Yet half those who live below the poverty line in Canada do work. Half of Canadians who are poor work to earn a living and still cannot sustain themselves above the poverty line.

The total number of poor households has grown substantially over the last two decades. The number of poor families increased from 700,000 in 1973 to almost one million in 1992, a jump of 41 per cent. Similarly, the number of poor unattached individuals grew by 79 per cent. The total number of poor households in 1992, the last year for which numbers are available, was 2.36 million, an increase of almost a million since 1973.

A family is five times more likely to be poor if the head of that family has not worked during the year. One earner families face four times the risk faced by two earner families. Twenty–five per cent of the heads of poor families and 15 per cent of poor unattached individuals work a full year, but in spite of this they are still poor.

What distinguishes poor families from other families is on the whole lower levels of formal education and lower levels of employment.

Let me say a brief word about aboriginal peoples because it is there where we find the greatest level of poverty. The incomes of aboriginal peoples tend to be lower than the incomes of other Canadians; almost one–half have incomes well below $10,000 compared with one–quarter of other Canadians. Almost three–quarters of aboriginal peoples have incomes under $20,000 compared with only 50 per cent of other Canadians. The proportion of aboriginal people falling below the poverty line is increasing and is about 20 per cent higher than the Canadian population at large.

Let me also say a word about persons who are disabled in Canada because that is another group that is over–represented in the poverty group. Those with disabilities are 25 per cent more likely to be poor than Canadians of the same age.

Part of this problem is because income distribution in Canada is getting worse. The gap between rich and poor is increasing and is at around 1951 levels. The top 20 per cent of Canadian households, the richest 20 per cent, receive about nine times the income of the bottom 20 per cent. That gap is increasing in spite of some measures taken in the 1970s and 1980s.

• (1800)

The number of poor families in the 1980s and 1990s increased by 18 per cent. One of the most significant increases was among younger families. We have essentially addressed to a large measure the problem of poverty among seniors because we cared that seniors who had provided so much to the country should be able to live their last years in dignity. We addressed the problem of poverty among seniors because we had the political will to do so.

We sometimes hear from the government that more education is the answer to the problems of poverty that people face or the inability of people to participate effectively in the marketplace. Over the last decade it has become clear there is a large increase of families living in poverty whose heads have post–secondary degrees. The number of poor families where one or more of the adults held a post–secondary degree almost doubled in the decade of the 1980s. Therefore higher education is no guarantee against poverty but it is clearly an important element of the fight against poverty.

Unless employment and the income picture improve, the poor will increasingly represent a larger portion of our population. We know about the incidence of poverty among single parent families. We know too that it is increasing.

We also should bear in mind that the poverty gap, the gap between what people need in order to live at the poverty line and the money they actually receive from income and from other government supports is increasing. Indeed the increase in that gap was almost $3 billion in the decade of the 1990s due largely to an increase in the number of poor.

The numbers go on and on and they are be depressing enough for everyone and should be enough to make us feel urgently of the need to address this important issue.

The numbers of people living in poverty, the numbers of children living in poverty are growing. The gap between what they receive in increment and support systems and what they need in order to survive at a moderate level of dignity is increasing. The numbers of people working full time and nonetheless poor are increasing.

Without an effective strategy to deal with this problem Canadians will continue to suffer with the second highest child poverty rates in the world. As we all know, only the United States has a worse child poverty rate than Canada and yet as we

see with the suggestions for social security reform the government is proposing that we move to a more Americanized social security network. We need to do something about our tax system. We need to do something about our economic system so that there are adequate jobs for those who need them to raise their families.

It is not a question of people not wanting to work, not being able to work. It is a question of insufficient jobs to provide income through the traditional workforce for all who need it.

In making a few suggestions for where we should proceed let me just say that children who just happen to be born to poor parents, and after all children do not choose to whom they are born, if they are unfortunate enough in terms of economic opportunity and social depravation to be born to poor parents, on average, they will be born with lower birth weight. They will be sick more often and when they are sick they will be sicker than those richer children. They do less well at school. They will be more likely to drop out of school. They will have more accidents. They are more likely to be unemployed. When they are unemployed they are more likely to be unemployed for longer than children of richer parents. They are more likely to experience behavioural problems and they will die several years younger than their richer counterparts. That is the legacy we present, that we enable to take place, for poor children.

We should be ashamed of what we have done in this country with regard to children of those who are less well off. It is not the case that this is the only solution. In particular, if we look at the northern European countries, Norway, Sweden and Germany, certainly West Germany before the joining of the two, those countries had child poverty rates of about 5 per cent. We have child poverty rates of about 25 per cent, five times as high as countries who have committed themselves to solving this problem.

• (1805)

The so–called solutions of the past have not worked. Child poverty and poverty in general have increased while over the last 20 years federal governments have cut social programs, cut taxes to the rich and large corporations, built up enormous deficits and engaged in trade, monetary and fiscal policies which have sucked jobs out of the Canadian economy. At the same time little has been done to address the structural problems of the economy which has led to the second highest child poverty rates of rich industrialized countries.

As I said, while the U.S. has the worst poverty rates, the government is setting out this week to further the Americanization of Canada's social programs, continuing in the Mulroney tradition.

The only solution to poverty and child poverty, and I want to stress that, is to make it a matter of national urgency to address the apparent inability of the Canadian economy to create the jobs required to enable those four million Canadians who are not presently part of the paid workforce to find work, four million Canadians who want to be in the workforce so they can feed their families.

Further cuts to social programs can only make matters worse and yet that is what the government intends to do. Training can only help if there are jobs to do when that training has been received.

The real problem is not social programs, but unemployment. As a country that is what we should be focusing on. If the government had committed the resources both human and in dollar terms to the job side of the equation that it has instead committed to social program review, we would be in a much better position to show hope and opportunity for those 1.3 million children presently living in poverty. They would have a much better chance of breaking that poverty cycle.

Two further brief points. As a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Canada recognizes: "the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development".

Canada by this article is obligated to take and again I quote: "appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programs particularly with regard to nutrition, health, clothing and housing".

We have not done that. We have not lived up to our international responsibilities. As a country we have not lived up to our responsibilities to our children.

Last I would like to go back to the point I raised at the beginning. I know all members will regard this matter as a serious one and one of considerable importance. I believe that everyone in the House believes that we should work toward eliminating child poverty and assisting Canadian children and their future.

I would now ask if there is unanimous consent to make this motion a votable motion, to recognize the critically important part that children will play in our future and our critically important responsibility to children we have today. I would like to seek unanimous consent to make this motion votable. If that was available I am sure we could choose a time to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Ethel Blondin–Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to debate this very important motion presented by the hon. member.

Child poverty is on the minds of many Canadians. We know from surveys that 91 per cent of Canadians make the reduction of child poverty a major priority. Considering the enormous riches we have in the country, there is no excuse whatsoever for Canada to have so many children living in poverty.

Estimates vary as to the number, but a commonly cited statistic is 1.25 million children live in low income families. Clearly this is not acceptable. There are those who believe that poor children is not an isolated issue, but that poor children come from poor families, poor parents. It is a complex issue that we can appreciate only too well.

This is not a simple matter. Child poverty is more than a little boy or little girl going without adequate nutrition or warm clothing for school. Yes, it is that. But it is so much more. Child poverty can stem from family breakdown, or a parent or parents not having a job, or not having a job that pays a decent wage.

• (1810)

What do we need to do? We need to work together with our partners in the provinces and the non–governmental organizations to come up with constructive solutions that will address the underlying cause of child poverty. Let us do it right. Let us work in a co–operative, constructive way. Let us take the necessary steps to make a real difference in alleviating the plight of so many Canadian children.

I extend an open invitation to hon. members and to all of our partners to contribute their input. That to me is what social security reform is all about. It is not about whose toes are being stepped on or how the status quo is going to be affected. No, it is about finding real solutions for real people and real problems.

Let us explore a broad range of ideas and then zero in on the most effective measures to prevent children from falling into poverty in the first place rather than always reacting to the situation once it is there.

Let me assure you however, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government is already contributing to the welfare of Canadian children through a number of initiatives. For example, in 1994–95 under the child tax benefit program we will provide $1.6 billion to families with incomes below $30,000. Under the Canada assistance plan the federal government will provide to the provinces and territories some $1.3 billion for welfare payments, $315 million for child care and $440 million for child welfare.

In the red book document the government outlined a commitment of $720 million over three years to expand the availability of quality child care. Last February the budget set aside money for the first two years of this initiative.

We will have to develop a consensus in co–operation with our provincial partners and parents across the country about how that money should be spent. Discussions on child care have already begun with provincial and territorial governments but invest we must because our investment in children is an investment in our future.

I am pleased to say that the Department of Human Resources Development is also working with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to improve child care for First Nations children living on reserves. As a government we also have the initiative of the head start program that is being headed up by the Department of Health.

Hon. colleagues know that I have a special empathy and so do they for aboriginal children and the appalling conditions that they face daily. I am reminded of a 1990 report by the National Youth in Care Network. It is estimated that of the more than 303,000 children 17 years of age and under, 51 per cent of status aboriginals and 27 per cent of the Metis children live in poverty.

It is no wonder that we have tremendous child poverty in aboriginal communities. On average aboriginal income is about one–half to one–third less than for other Canadians as a whole. This is a statistic that has been used quite often in different efforts to create equity.

Both the unemployment level and the level of illiteracy is twice that of the Canadian population. Aboriginal students are only one–half as likely to receive a post–secondary education as are Canadians generally. There are significantly fewer aboriginal students who complete high school. In some northern communities as few as 5 per cent of aboriginal youth complete grade 12.

This situation which we should be especially ashamed of cries out for our immediate attention. The Canadian Council on Social Development reminded us last week that while we focus on social security reform to make our programs more effective we need to also look at the labour market and how it can supply good paying jobs.

Of course, it all ties together. I am sure hon. members will agree that child poverty is linked to education and employment.

• (1815)

I heard my hon. colleague refer to the fact that there are educated people, heads of households with degrees, who live in poverty and their families that live in poverty. We realize as a government in terms of education and life–long learning that it is not that they learned something, that they have certain skills and certain talents, but that their skills are matched to opportunities.

We have to approach the whole issue of learning with a difference. Not only will we be challenged with making tougher choices, but we will also be guiding people to make the right choices, better choices and smarter choices for their employment and other opportunities.

In 1993 there was a 17 per cent increase in jobs for students with post–secondary education. There was no growth for those with only secondary education. There was a 17 per cent decline in jobs for students with less than secondary education.

The Canada Council report says that children from poor families are more than twice as likely to be school dropouts. Let us face it, the better educated and the better trained a person is on the whole, the better chance he or she has of landing a well paying job.

Last spring the Minister of Human Resources Development and I collaborated with provincial and business partners to implement an employment and learning strategy for Canadian youth. The strategy for which we have budgeted $684.5 million in the current fiscal year is helping our young people in the difficult transition from school to work. It is addressing barriers such as high school dropout rates, access to post–secondary education, lack of work experience and effective job training.

Youth Services Canada is one of the strategic measures aimed at putting unemployed and out of school young people back to work. The mission of Youth Services Canada is to strengthen young people's sense of accomplishment, self–reliance and self–esteem and to enable young people to gain meaningful work experience.

I point out that the majority of the program funds will go directly to youths and that eligible participants will receive financial assistance to help them pay for day care while they are working.

As we reform our social security programs the whole employment and learning strategy will help to ensure that young people, the future leaders, the future builders of this great nation, will have every chance to become productive and self–reliant.

This is the thrust of social security reform. It is a springboard, not a cushion that robs people of initiative and self–esteem. It is an effort to reintegrate, to pick people up and to help them to reintegrate into the mainstream, not to marginalize them and not to create dependency.

Another aspect right now of the 1.25 million children living in low income families is that over 40 per cent live in single parent families headed by women. In the Northwest Territories in 1991 the average income for single parent families was $17,100. Someone familiar with the politics and the economic demographics and otherwise of the country will know that the cost of living in the Northwest Territories has been stated as 30 per cent to 40 per cent higher than that of southern communities. North of 60 there is a real difference in the cost of living, not to mention the lack of infrastructure and the lack of opportunities for employment. There are situations that are quite limiting so we are definitely at a disadvantage.

We need to do much more to help sole parents, mostly of course single mothers, by providing more quality affordable child care services. Helping these sole parents become self–supporting will go a long way toward alleviating child poverty.

One example of building self–reliance is a project announced by the government on September 16 in Rimouski, Quebec. For 27 weeks beginning the middle of next month the government and its partners in the Rimouski region will give women with no income access to a training program that will enable them to enter the labour market by creating their own businesses. This is an empowering process. These women entrepreneurs have sound business ideas but they have no income to launch their businesses. By training them, by enabling them to attain specific skills, we are helping them to get their businesses off the ground.

• (1820)

Human resources development is supporting the initiative in Rimouski. Each participant will receive financial assistance in the form of weekly allowances, which includes child care costs for those who require them. We know it is very limiting when individuals are faced with extra hours either to learn or to perform their duties on the job and are not provided with any kind of assistance.

Three weeks ago in Winnipeg the government signed an agreement with the Government of Manitoba to assist 4,000 single parents currently on welfare. It is called "Taking Charge". This five–year project will give single parents access to a storefront office where they will receive help with needs ranging from child care training to family support to job placement.

I conclude by saying that I hope we will not hear complaints and cynicism that nothing can be done. If we work together we can do a great deal. There is plenty of optimism among Canadians. Let us tap into that hope and develop a social security system to serve Canadians in the 1990s and for decades to come. Poor people are not poor by choice; they are poor because of circumstances.

I appeal to all my colleagues to have a heart for the poor children of Canada. They are not poor by choice; they are the victims of circumstances. We have to work to alleviate those circumstances and set the record straight for those people to have a better future in our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to rise in the House today, as the Official Opposition critic for training and youth, to support the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing. The motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reaffirming its commitment to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

In a country that has already won international recognition for its quality of life, it may seem strange that it should be necessary to advise the government to deal with a problem as serious as that of child poverty. Children are a country's greatest asset, and it is thanks to them that nations develop and evolve. Thanks to them, we can look forward to the future.

However, according to a recent study by the Canadian Institute of Child Health, in 1991 1.2 million children in Canada were living in poverty, which is 500,000 more than in 1981. Today, 20 per cent of our children live in poverty in this country.

The hon. member who moved the motion mentioned more recent figures—1.3 million children—which indicates a trend and shows that the situation continues to deteriorate.

Forty–two per cent of child deaths before the age of one year can be attributed to prenatal conditions. The mother's quality of life before birth is crucial to the life expectancy of the child. The incidence of learning disabilities and mental health problems among children from poor families is double that of children in the rest of the population.

If I may, I shall digress for a moment. I was told recently that even in the supposedly richer areas, children in increasing number go to school without breakfast or a nutritious lunch. No wonder their failure rate is so high and they eventually become high–school dropouts.

One cannot talk about child poverty without talking about poor families. As we all know, in the past few years, the average family income has not kept up with the cost of living.

• (1825)

According to the same report on child health I quoted earlier, in Quebec, in 1993, a single parent earning the minimum wage had to work 73 hours to have an income equivalent to the poverty level. In Canada, the same single parent on social assistance, with one dependant child, would receive 65 per cent of that. In 1991, 453,200 single parents were women whereas a mere 83,600 were men. Therefore, we cannot talk about child poverty without talking about the poverty of mothers, especially single mothers.

Single families make up 20 per cent of all families, but the most alarming situation is that of single mothers with children. Indeed, in Canada, close to 90 per cent of children living with a single mother live in poverty.

Our young people, and that includes children of course, find themselves in a situation we had not seen since the Depression, that is to say that they are in a worse predicament than the previous generation. They have less opportunities than their parents had. The report on child health in Canada, which was published this week, and from which I got my statistics, was funded mostly by the federal government. I would like to hope that the federal government reacts quickly and with concrete measures in the light of this troubling conclusion because it would be obscene for the government to commission a study and then to ignore its findings, particularly when it comes to the health of our children.

As my hon. colleague who introduced the motion indicated, this is not the first time that the House of Commons looks into child poverty. On november 24, 1989, at the initiative of the hon. member representing Oshawa at the time, the House unanimously passed a resolution similar to the one before us today, to eliminate poverty among children by the year 2000.

May I digress for a moment to say how disappointed I was when we did not get unanimous consent to vote on this motion, while consent was granted in 1989 and all the hon. members present at the time voted in favour of the motion. That was five years ago. Things are getting worse instead of getting better. Why is that? A resolution was passed, but why has the situation deteriorated? I say that it is because the Conservative government of the day did nothing to correct the situation and in the past year, the Liberal government has continued, as we heard again this week, to consult the people on social program reform, but this reform will only take effect next year, yet another year away.

That will make six years since a unanimous resolution was passed to fight child poverty. However, the Liberal Party at that time was in favour of the resolution as it voted unanimously for the motion in 1989. Members then, even some who are ministers today, said many things which are worth quoting. Even the member for St. Boniface, whom I see in front of me, spoke in favour of this motion in 1989.

Mr. Duhamel: I am still in favour of political reform, my friend!

Mr. Dubé: I will go more quickly, but one quote in particular attracted my attention because this speech was made by the present Minister of Human Resources Development. He said that members should set aside the fine speeches prepared by the departments and open their eyes and their hearts a little.

• (1830)

They should try to face reality and talk about Canada's real problems. Not one day went by in the House without a minister or member of the Conservative government talking about the deficit. That is what they said at the time.

I never heard the then finance minister talk about Canada's real deficit of one million children living in poverty. That is where we should be investing. That is the real tragedy. In 10 years these children should be our educators, business people, politicians and journalists but they will never get that far because they cannot get a head start. One million children living in poverty is a tremendous loss. That is the big deficit we must face. Yet, nothing was done to solve that problem.

In 1989, the current Minister of Human Resources, the same member who is now a minister, authorized the cut in the UI program, did not provide more daycare spaces, voiced his intention to cut social programs to fight the deficit, and did not, in my opinion, table a real program to create permanent jobs. Let me give you an example: The Youth Service Corps is a program designed to give $150 per week to young Canadians. In other times, it would be nice to create part–time jobs for our young people, but these are not real jobs.

Such a program maintains duplication in the field of vocational training and this is costly for everyone. In the meantime, his colleague, the Minister of Industry, refuses to allocate funds for the conversion of military and civilian industries. I raise this issue because we have an industry back home called MIL Davie, which waited in vain for a year to get an answer from the Conservative government regarding a simple ferry, and which has now been waiting for another year to get an answer from the new Liberal government. If approved, this project would create at least 700 jobs.

We are poor because of the deficit. We cannot help needy children since we are poor. In the meantime, there are costs. I am truly disappointed because the members of this House—some of whom seem to approve—will not even seize the opportunity to vote and confirm our commitment to fight child poverty.

[*English*]

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to the motion to recommit to eliminating child poverty in Canada by the year 2000.

What is poverty? The Oxford Dictionary definition is: Being poor, not having means to procure comforts or necessities of life, in deficiency, in want.

Distinction must be made between basic financial deficiency for which there may be economic solutions, and social deficiency where individuals are deficient in relation to others, emotionally or otherwise, and the deficiency is more than just simple finances.

Socially each individual may find themselves poor in some aspect of their life in relation to others, a situation which can never be helped. The purpose of government social programs is not to make people equal in every way.

There is however, potential for government to find solutions to long term financial hardship by reducing taxes, reducing debt and reducing spending. It must be clearly understood that there is a world of difference between poverty, which is a situation where the basic needs of life are not being met, and the situation in Canada where we have a portion of population living with low incomes relative to the majority.

These low income Canadians would be considered well off as an income group if compared to the citizens of most other countries in the world. However, because it is more common for us to compare ourselves to our neighbours to the south rather than to people in Brazil or Morocco, it is this comparison that forms the argument for the anti–poverty lobby in Canada.

• (1835)

There is at this time no existing fiscal definition of poverty. In Canada this is a general measure of low income that is widely misused by various advocacy groups as poverty line and it is called the low income cutoff of Statistics Canada.

Statistics Canada has publicly and consistently stated that the low income cutoff is not a measure of poverty. Based on the premise that any family with an income less than the low income cutoff is in poverty, the child poverty lobby has falsely concluded that over 1.2 million children, that is one in five, must be living in poverty.

Barbara Greene, the chairman of the House subcommittee on poverty in the 34th Parliament studying the issue, stated that the goal of eliminating child poverty is impossible to attain because the low income cutoff measure is a relative measure.

Because the low income cutoff is a relative measure we will never be able to eliminate poverty if it is defined this way because we will always have a similar percentage of Canadian families statistically described as low income.

As an example of how weak a substitute the term "poverty" is for low income consider that 18 per cent of the low income cutoff population owns their own home mortgage free.

There are some generalizations that can be made from studies done on low income earners. Low income can be attributed to youth, unemployed persons, recent immigrants, single parents and native communities. The first three groups, youth, unemployed and recent immigrants, will undoubtedly increase their average earnings over time as their employment opportunities improve with their skills and experience.

Single parents will clearly be helped by the reversal in family policy proposed by the Reform Party as family will be promoted through the tax system and the cycle of welfare dependency will be broken through the reform of social programs.

Native communities will benefit from Reform's commitment to abolishing the department of Indian affairs and a move to full participation in Canadian society.

I have described the confusion and have shown the distinction between real fiscal poverty and low income in Canada. Regardless of whether one accepts the premise that real poverty, meaning lack of food, clothing and shelter, is not a reality in Canada, we are debating the question of child poverty.

It is possible that some children have faced such desperate situations through no fault of their own, as a child is a dependent. As such, a child is not expected to have an income or provide for its own needs. Canadian law recognizes this fact and makes provision for this fact in the Criminal Code of Canada. Section 215 states that everyone is under a legal duty as a parent to provide necessities of life for a child under the age of 16. According to Canadian law failing to provide these necessities is not child poverty, but child abuse and neglect.

Child poverty advocates claim that they just want to help the hungry children but are there really 1.2 million hungry Canadian children as the advocates imply? Is there evidence of such a major crisis? Realistically there are children who are living in broken families and low income families but this does not mean that the basic physical needs of these children cannot or are not being met.

In Canada the generous welfare system already in place is more than sufficient for parents to meet the basic physical needs of their children regardless of employment or family status. The government can never meet all the needs of children. How could government ever provide love and affection? Government can, however, provide a non–intrusive economic climate in which families can grow and prosper.

Reformers believe that the state has no business attempting to raise the nation's children and that full responsibility for children must reside with their parent or legal guardian. The only time the state must intervene is in situations of clear neglect or abuse. Should parents find themselves in situations in which it is difficult for them to provide the necessities the responsibility to do so should remain with the parents. These parents may in these situations request help, first from relatives, but failing family support, private social service agencies and then as a last resort governmental agencies.

There may well be isolated cases of individual suffering on the part of some children due to neglect or abusive parents just as there are cases of child sexual abuse, infanticide and child pornography. This is of great concern to all Canadians. Reformers believe that the proper enforcement of existing law and the promotion of family values in society are the most effective ways to deal with this sort of tragedy.

• (1840)

Health researchers and others have correctly pointed out that statistically there are problems those in low income situations are more likely to have compared to those of higher incomes: problems such as greater school dropout rates, more domestic violence and higher health concerns. It is clear that these problems do not occur as a result of low income but as a result of family breakdown, illegitimacy, structural unemployment and a loosening of societal values.

However the child poverty lobby believes that low income itself is the problem. Low income or poverty, as they call it, is not a disease that people catch. It is a situation that is the result of other factors.

The child poverty lobby has proposed some solutions to the situation of low income earners. They want more day care, more welfare and more state intrusion in the lives of families. However studies by Dr. Doug Allen of Simon Fraser University show that 80 per cent of low income families do not collect welfare. Clearly for the large majority of low income families, more social programs are not the solution.

The Reform Party recognizes that low income is not the problem itself, but rather one symptom of a much deeper problem in our society. Broken families, divorce, illegitimacy and unemployment are many of the factors that lead to low income status. These problems have quickly increased during the past 30 years due to intrusive policies of Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments.

These are the tax policies that discriminate against stay–at–home parents or discriminate based on family type. These are welfare programs that provide disincentives for people to find work and that encourage and sustain illegitimacy. These are policies that fail to punish crime, especially youth crime, adequately and a massive debt that has led to structural unemployment in our economy.

What do we propose as the solution? We believe government must get out of the day care business. We believe in a tax policy that does not discriminate based on the type of family one has. We believe in a non–intrusive system of social programs that helps the truly needy. We believe in a tax policy that continues to recognize the costs associated with raising children. We believe in spending cuts in all areas to deal with the debt and the deficit. We believe long term tax relief must be achieved so that families may have more freedom to make their own choices.

Reformers are interested in promoting healthy Canadian families and in helping the truly needy. We do not believe more social programs are the solution to society's problems. We do believe in the promotion of the family as the best possible solution to the majority of Canada's social dysfunction.

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me tonight to speak on this issue, although a sad one at the same time.

Child poverty in Canada is a clear indication of the failure of social programs in a society. I believe very strongly that this is something that we must as a nation take in hand, and take in hand very quickly.

Poor children are not poor by themselves. They are poor because their parents are poor. Child poverty does not make for a healthy future in our society. Our human deficit will be the future deficit of this country. I believe that firmly.

We talk about the need for a better educated, skilled labour force all the time in the House. We talk about the deficiency of skills in the workforce. We talk about the need to train and educate. We discuss youth crime and retribution. We talk about how we must punish these young people and put them in jail and throw away the key sometimes. We talk about harsh punishment for young children.

We do not discuss openly and honestly why they are that way. The horrible blight on Canada is child poverty. It is a shame for this country to be in that position. We must work to eradicate this.

Children do not get involved in crime and problems all by themselves. Society has a hand in helping from the time that they are born whether it be because they are poor, or whether it be because they are abused in their homes or what have you.

• (1845)

In my view poverty is not just poverty from the point of view of not having enough food, shelter or clothing. It is also poverty of the society and the environment around them. Children are abused in homes all the time.

It is true, so there is no point in arguing about it, that we do not have social programs that meet the needs of children. We have seen mental health programs cut when children who need these programs are in line-ups across the country. That is unacceptable. How do we expect them to cope when we are not providing the support system they require? We do not have a proper child care program. We must provide one. Parents need that support. We need to have a comprehensive and supportive system for parents in this situation to cope.

We heard a member across the way talk about the fact that the only way to recognize poverty was to look at basic fundamental deficiencies. He indicated that we were looking a little too high at poverty and that low income was somehow too high a threshold. He referred proudly to a former member of the House, Barbara Greene, who was busy trying to raise the threshold of poverty so that it could be technically wiped out of the books. That does not get rid of poverty. The people would still be there. The children would still be there. They would not disappear. We can change the jargon. We can change the verbiage. We can change how we describe it. However they are still there; they do not disappear.

It is the state's business to worry about the children of the nation. We have a collective responsibility toward our children. They are the best resource of the nation to survive as a nation. We collectively make decisions about iron ore, forestry and all kinds of things, but when it comes to children the member across the way talks about the sanctity of the family and not doing anything. He says that we have no say or no role as a collective society. We do have a very strong role as a collective society.

Child care is very important. Proper support systems are very important. Low income is low income. Deficiencies, whether they be social, physical or whatever, are deficiencies. Supportive services in social programs are terribly important. We cannot blame the children. We must accept that raising children and preparing them to lead the country in the future is a collective responsibility that cannot be neglected. The member does not agree.

The UN has said that Canada is the best country in the world to live in. That is a wonderful thing we can be very proud of, but for certain individuals, namely children, it is not the best country in the world to live in. That is something we should be ashamed of and deal with tout de suite.

If we accomplish anything at all in the country it must be the eradication of child poverty in all its forms. We must develop a social support system that is comprehensive and supportive to children and their families.

I look forward to working with the upcoming social security review process and working hard with members of the House and Canadians to develop a system to address the basic needs of families and children at the very least. I hope all members of the House will participate in the process and in the end come up with something can be very proud of.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Under the right to reply, I recognize the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing for a maximum of two minutes.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond. It is clear there are some different philosophical concerns in the House. There are some who see the urgency of dealing with the problem and there are others who want to talk about philosophical issues while children stay hungry. It is offensive to me that we are having a philosophical debate about why children are hungry when we do not have a commitment to solving the problem of child hunger.

How can Reform members look in the eyes of hungry kids and tell them they are not hungry? It is a disgrace to hear people saying those things. You say it is a question of parental responsibility. Maybe it is, but what about the hungry kids who do not have that parental responsibility administered to them? Are you just going to let them stay hungry because you do not like the way—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I would remind members to make their interventions through the Chair and I would ask the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I get angry. I see poor children on a daily basis in my riding and it is offensive to me that people do not respond in an adequate way to their plight. They are hungry and they need help now; they do not need it in 10 years.

We need a commitment to resolving the problems we face. Children are poor because they are born to poor parents. They do not choose to be born to poor parents; it just so happens that that is the way it is.

The hon. member may think it is funny but it is not. The problem of hunger is serious. He should treat it seriously and not in the facile way he is doing it.

We need a national commitment to job creation. People are poor because they do not have jobs, four million of them. We need real and progressive tax reforms so that Canada will have the resources to deal with poverty. We need changes to trade and monetary policy so that we can solve our child poverty problems. Without a real and determined focus on these real problems we will not find a real solution.

I think we all know poor children. We all know the pain they face and the hunger that they face. Surely we need to respond to them in the most humane and careful way that we can. Children do not need ideological debate. They need answers. They need food. They need support. I only wish the Reform Party would have supported the motion being votable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 6.52 p.m., as there are no members available for the proceedings on the adjournment motion, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.52 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 30, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

MEMBER FOR CENTRAL NOVA—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the matter raised Tuesday last by the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway concerning the speech of the hon. member for Central Nova on September 20, 1994 during the debate on Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof.

[*Translation*]

I have carefully reviewed the representations of these hon. members. I also want to thank the Chief Government Whip and the hon. member for Lethbridge for their contributions.

[*English*]

From the comments that were made Tuesday and from the *Hansard* of September 20 there can be little doubt that there exists a profound and fundamental difference of opinion among members.

It is evident from having reviewed *Hansard* that the opinions of the hon. member for Central Nova were stated during the cut and thrust of debate. Further, the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway did indeed have the opportunity to challenge, refute and question the hon. member on her speech, as did the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. This is the very reason for debate.

It is not the role of the Chair to be the arbiter of opinion. Rather it is the role of the Chair to ensure that debate on any issue can proceed under the rules which the House has set for itself.

Held against that standard I am satisfied that the words of the hon. member for Central Nova were not directed at any one individual or any member specifically. Rather, they were the hon. member's personal opinions on the matter. .

[Translation]

I would refer hon. members to a ruling made by the Deputy Speaker on November 4, 1987, at page 10741 in the *Debates*. At that time, he said, in part that if remarks "were not aimed at a particular member, the remarks are not unparliamentary".

[*English*]

My colleagues, paramount to our political and parliamentary systems is the principle of freedom of speech, a member's right to stand in this House unhindered to speak his or her mind. However when debate in the House centres on sensitive issues, as it often does, I would expect that members would always bear in mind the possible effects of their statements and hence be prudent in their tone and choice of words.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AGREEMENTS ACT

The House resumed from September 28 consideration of the motion in relation to the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C–22, an act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today with respect to the amendments made to Bill C–22 by the Senate.

Bill C–22, respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of Terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport, proposes, among other things, immunity for the government from any legal action resulting from its disengagement vis–à–vis Pearson Development Corporation, with respect to the project to privatize this airport.

The Bloc Quebecois is entirely in favour of this provision of Bill C–22, and furthermore the position of our party on this issue is unequivocal; we are asking for a royal commission of inquiry to take a thorough look at the role played in this matter by the

Canadian financial establishment and the Conservative and Liberal parties, as well as the lobbyists.

In addition to clauses 7, 8 and 9 of Bill C–22, which free the government of all legal responsiblity regarding agreements made by the previous Conservative government with Pearson Development Corporation, subclause 10(1) states that subject to the approval of Cabinet "if the Minister considers it appropriate to do so, the Minister may—enter into" agreements to provide for the payment of damages.

However, subclause 10(2) states, and I quote: "No amount is payable under an agreement entered into under this section in relation to (a) any loss of profit, or (b) any fee paid for the purpose of lobbying a public office holder—".

The Bloc Quebecois is, of course, opposed to the payment of any amount whatsoever to the Pearson Development Corporation; we are clear on this. We understand that the Liberal government, by opening the door to compensation in the form of agreements wishes in a roundabout way to reassure the friends of the regime, of whatever stripe.

However, the action for damages that Pearson Development Corporation wants to institute is for $200 million in unrealized profits. This is unbelievable.

Bill C–22—as we just saw—rejects this option under the pretext that the bill violates a basic legal principle, "as it deprives the parties of their fundamental right to ask the courts to rule on their disputes with the government". This right is enshrined in the constitution of nearly all civilized countries, but the attitude of Pearson Development Corporation clearly goes against any kind of basic social ethics.

Such an attitude shows capitalistic greed worthy of unrestrained economic liberalism without any kind of protection for ordinary citizens. As far as I know, the right of a corporation to sue the government and the company it represents for unrealized profits is not enshrined in the constitutions of almost all civilized countries. This bill does not deny the right to sue the government; it simply applies to a specific case, a single corporation, a single project in depriving Pearson Development Corporation of the right to extort $200 million from the Canadian people. That is very clear.

So, to use the same words as corporation officials, it is not a government attempt to put itself above the law. The Bloc Quebecois' position goes beyond simply defending Bill C–22. Our party is defending the very principle of democracy, that is, people's right to live in decent conditions, in a society that is well managed politically and economically and protected against any form of exploitation by capitalist or state enterprise.

• (1010)

In this case, Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Quebecois is rising against Pearson Development Corporation's shameless attempts to dip into the public purse by invoking constitutional law.

As for the Senate, its attitude in this matter is most deplorable and confirms the urgent need for Canadian society to get rid of this archaic institution and for Quebec society to withdraw from the federal system. The Upper House once again shows itself as clearly undemocratic by amending a bill designed to protect, albeit very incompletely, the interests of Quebecers and Canadians.

The amendments proposed by senators support the interests of Pearson Development Corporation, as the Senate proposes to delete clauses 7, 8, 9 and 10 giving the government immunity from any legal proceedings under the bill, thus leaving the door open to all financial claims from Pearson Development Corporation.

In endorsing the corporation's position, the Senate places itself squarely on the side of Canada's financial interests and shows its bias in favour of unrestricted capitalist exploitation without any kind of protection for society in general. It promotes the proliferation of lobbyists and infiltration by financial interests, while opening the door to the corruption of politicians in Canada and Quebec. Nothing less. A great majority of Quebecers do not want the Senate and I hope that this House clearly understands this desire.

A major theme of the government's red book, the Liberal Party's veritable manifesto in the last federal election campaign, of which they remind this House, is to question the disproportionate and decisive behind–the–scenes influence of lobbies on government policies. Their goal is to remake this same government's image in order to restore public confidence.

So be it, and democracy will be much better in Canada as a result. Therefore we urge the government to keep its commitment by refusing any compromise with the lobbies, senators and companies and by not bowing to this country's financial establishment.

The Senate is as archaic as it is useless. I think I demonstrated that in this House on June 8, when, on behalf of the Official Opposition party, I opposed the funding for that other House.

I repeat, that other House is nothing but a pretext for the government in power to reward friends of the regime, be they Tories or Grits, who will then do partisan work either for the government or for the interests they represent, and it is important that everyone know this.

The Senate has no democratic legitimacy as an institution. Its members are appointed by the Governor General who, by convention, acts on the initiative and advice of the Prime Minister, who actually makes the appointments. Since the senators are not elected, the Bloc Quebecois considers the second chamber to be a political anachronism, a convincing sign that Canada's federal system is outdated.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Official Opposition, I also denounce the unacceptable waste which the budget of that House represents; the Canadian Senate costs some $26.9 million, plus statutory expenditures of $15.7 million, for a total of $42.6 million. Given the current tough economic times, with a debt over $500 billion, and unemployment which is especially high in regions like the one represented by the hon. member who is trying to interrupt, Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, this amount could be used for economic recovery and his riding could benefit from it.

Canada's public debt is partly due to outdated political structures, such as obsolete political centralism, a constitutional monarchy that is an unnecessary waste of public funds and an Upper House that is really just a golden retirement for politicians or others who have well served the traditional parties, be they Conservative or Liberal.

• (1015)

The Senate of Canada is modeled on the House of Lords in the British Parliament. It is a chamber of highly distinguished persons. In keeping with the British tradition, great importance is placed in the division of legislative powers between two separate chambers each representing a separate social class: the people and the nobility.

Regarding the Pearson International Airport affair and the Senate amendments to Bill C–22, the action of the Upper House is in keeping with this tradition, nobility having been replaced by the financiers of the Canadian establishment, represented by lobbyists and paid by the people.

On the other hand, the structural illogicality of having such a legislative chamber in a parliamentary system based on the British model must be recognized.

Mr. Gagnon: "Allons, enfants de la Patrie"—

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): You can hide many things from everyone, day after day—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I want to remind the hon. member it is not appropriate to sing in this place.

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): This is a matter of blackmail. The very existence of a second legislative chamber in a British-type parliamentary system is structurally illogical. Clearly dominated by the executive branch, parliamentary systems give the Upper House an absolutely ridiculous, if not to say insignificant, amount of power and yet it costs us a fortune.

To conclude, we consider the proposed amendments to Bill C–22 inadmissible and undemocratic. The Bloc Quebecois, as the Official Opposition, is against any legislative activity on the part of the Senate, an institution which should plainly and simply be abolished, and asks that a royal commission of inquiry be held to get right to the bottom of the Pearson International Airport privatization issue.

The Deputy Speaker: While the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe was speaking, the hon. member for Simcoe Centre reminded me that he did not get to complete his speech last time. So, with the hon. members' permission, I suggest that we let him speak five minutes more.

[*English*]

I hear a voice telling me that unanimous consent is required and I think that is probably correct.

On the basis that the member had not completed his time, there was an error on the part of the Table or the Chair and he was not given the floor first. I would ask for unanimous consent that the member might be permitted to complete the five minutes that are still remaining to him.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the point I was developing in the first part of my presentation on Bill C–22 was the fact that what we were doing here actually flies in the face of what we should be doing to help restore the trust and confidence that have been lost between the politician and the voter. I had just completed dealing with the fact that the 30 day review of the Pearson contract was done by a well identified Liberal. Without getting into the question of how competent that individual is, the fact that it was done by somebody so well connected with the party just flew in the face of what needed to be an open and honest evaluation of that contract.

The next step in Bill C–22 was that there was a well identified Liberal appointed to review the compensation package. Again this flies in the face of what the public told us during the election campaign, that it wanted something done differently here and it did not want a continuation of the old politics. This again flew in the face of that.

• (1020)

If it was going to be done it had to be done by a non-partisan, somebody completely removed from the political arena in order to restore the confidence that in fact what was happening here was in the best interests of the taxpayers.

The bill is unprecedented in that it denies the right of companies involved to the due process of law. Again in the minds of the public this raises questions. Why is that in there? Are we trying to hide something? It comes back to the question of trust in the system.

We tried during the committee stage to open up and give these people an opportunity to come in and defend their position, the people whose names and reputations had been called into question, but this was denied.

To my thinking there is no other option available now than to go through the courts in order to clear the air so that taxpayers will indeed know the truth about the original deal but, more important, will know the justification for the spending of any tax dollars.

In all fairness those whose names and reputations have been brought into question must be given their day in court. There is a saying that those who steal my money steal nothing, but those who steal my good name steal all.

Do not let this happen. Put yourself in their position and ask if this is fair. As upset as we all were at the apparent deceit and abuse of the process in the original deal, two wrongs will not make it right. The minister said in introducing this bill that he wanted to be fair and reasonable to all concerned. Let us do that. Let us be fair and reasonable to the taxpayers as well as the accused.

It is ironic that all this debate and delay is holding up an infrastructure project that is a major part of Toronto and Ontario if indeed not Canada. Here we have this major piece of infrastructure continuing to deteriorate while this debate goes on.

This project alone was worth almost a billion dollars, representing about one–half of the total federal commitment to infrastructure with the potential for thousands of jobs immediately and yet to this day it is still not happening.

With so much support on the other side, who is speaking out for Toronto and Ontario? Not only are we talking about jobs now, we are talking about jobs that are indirectly tied to Pearson. The first impression created by a fast, efficient, safe airport plays a major role in decisions affecting where to locate and expand new industry.

Pearson operations generate some $2 billion in personal income, $4 billion in business revenues and $700 million dollars in tax revenues and we are allowing this gem to deteriorate daily. It makes no sense.

There is no reason why negotiations should not proceed as quickly as possible. Pearson Development Corporation has said in writing that it will do nothing to block expansion. Local airport authority discussion need not have been delayed.

We cannot delay any further. Far too much is at stake. If this government is serious about job creation now and in the future, there is no better way to demonstrate that commitment than immediate action on Pearson.

This government's lack of confidence in our courts to be fair and reasonable is as frightening as the cynicism I spoke of earlier between the voters and the politicians.

There will never be a better time for this government to show its commitment to more open and honest government as was promised in the red book than to turn this whole situation over to the courts.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

• (1025)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

Hon. Allan Rock (for Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) moved that Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to address the House on the subject of Bill C–52, the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act.

This bill is one of a growing list of initiatives aimed at renewing, restructuring and revitalizing our approach to government. Other legislation now before this House will reorganize and redirect many functions and organizations such as the Department of Natural Resources, industry, consumer affairs, communications, science, to name a few.

Bill C–52 also addresses the functions of what used to be several departments or agencies. These measures are part of a coherent plan to bring order, efficiency and effectiveness to government. By merging the functions of public works, supply and services, the government telecommunications agency and the translation bureau, Bill C–52 is another step in the direction of more streamlined, more responsive services to government operations at less cost.

We can take great satisfaction in the fact that this rationalization of resources will save the government in the order of $180 million by 1998.

In this era of fiscal constraint, effectiveness and efficiency are obviously of extreme importance to all Canadians. Canadians have a right to expect leadership and the example of the government to set that leadership and the direction for all economies.

This means getting our own house in order, getting our expenditures and deficits under control. Nevertheless, we should not think of Bill C–52 as mere housekeeping. To get Canada back on the prosperity path, to create jobs and well–being we need an innovative economic climate. Government must provide the leadership and the focus to create that environment.

In addition to its housekeeping functions Bill C–52 is part of a strategy to do just that. The strategy was first outlined in *Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada*, the so–called red book which continues to inspire the agenda of this government.

That document describes the innovative economy that we all strive to see to completion. It also describes the proper role of government to create the economic condition to permit entrepreneurs to succeed.

Specifically, the red book defines the crucial role of the government in such an innovative system as working with the private sector to identify strategic opportunities for the future, then redirecting its existing resources toward the fulfilment of those opportunities.

The potential impact of the resources we are talking about is nothing short of tremendous. The department created by this bill manages an annual cash flow of $1.4 trillion. It buys $10 billion worth of products and services a year. It lets out about 175,000 contracts for approximately 17,000 different categories of goods and services every year.

It is the largest property management agency in Canada, providing work space for 170,000 public servants involving ownership of $6.5 billion worth of real estate. In the business world that is called clout. It will be one of the roles of the Department of Public Works and Government Services to use that clout effectively. It will be used not only to effect savings for Canadian taxpayers but also to boost Canadian business. An organization that does business on the scale I just described necessarily deals with both big and small buyers and sellers. It deals with provinces, communities and other federal departments. It deals with foreign governments and foreign firms. Its purchasing power permits the public works and government services to strike alliances with Canadian governments and firms to achieve strategic objectives such as penetrating world markets by small Canadian firms that would otherwise never have this accessibility to them individually.

• (1030)

Bill C–52 in fact encourages strategic use of the vast purchasing power of the government. It encourages the department to adopt an innovative approach to providing goods and services to its clients. Equally it encourages a similar attitude on the part of its customers.

The wording of the legislation makes the bill clear. Where previous legislation stated that the department shall provide certain services, Bill C–52 says it may. There is no coercion here. In essence the bill says to both the department and its clients: "If it is efficient and effective let's make a deal".

Such an arrangement makes for sharp pencils on both sides of the bargain. If the Department of Public Works and Government Services wants to keep its customers it will have to be competitive. Government operations, Canadian businesses and Canadian taxpayers, everyone, will benefit.

Bill C–52 places in one organization all the tools necessary for efficient economical services to the federal government. We have one minister, one deputy minister and one departmental team dedicated to the task. At the same time the bill provides a single forum for expression of the interest of clients as well as suppliers, including businesses and other levels of government.

Flexibility rather than coercion is the spirit of the new department's mandate. Services provided to federal organizations would also be made available to provincial, territorial and local governments but only if they wish to use them.

Similarly the new legislation permits the department to provide service to community colleges, school boards and social service agencies. Federal and provincial governments combined spend some $50 billion annually on goods and services. A mere 1 per cent savings would add up to half a billion dollars a year. In addition to greater and more effective service to other governments and institutions, this flexibility has the potential to provide significant savings to all Canadians.

Yet a remarkable aspect of the legislation is the simplicity. It is based largely on existing legislation. No great new powers have been invented. In sum, it reduces the government machinery, eliminating overlap and duplication. It provides one–stop shopping for suppliers and contractors, making it easier to do business and easier to get information. It permits the Department of Public Works and Government Services to use its purchasing power strategically, not only to reduce costs to taxpayers but to enhance the effectiveness and competitiveness of all Canadian business.

The legislation is good for business in Canada. It is an instrument of responsive efficient government that will assist in creating the economic environment that all Canadian businesses need to get on with the task of creating jobs and economic well–being.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–52, which is at second reading today, is primarily an attempt to group four different services under the same authority.

• (1035)

These services either existed as distinct entities before, such as public works and government services which were formerly two separate departments, or were part of another department, as was the case for telecommunications and translation services. In any case, under the new legislation those four services will

now be part of a single department, the Department of Public Works and Government Services.

The primary objective of this bill is obviously to implement an organizational restructure. It is simply a musical chair exercise to reduce, in the months to come and according to what we were told, the number of civil servants from 18,000 down to 14,000. In other words, the government wants to eliminate some 4,000 jobs in the public service and offer essentially the same services.

From that perspective, the bill is not without merit. If the government can reduce the number of civil servants and still provide the same quality of service, particularly in the current context of excessive government spending, debt and deficit, then it must do it.

The problem is that this legislation does not go far enough. It could go a lot further toward improving the operations of the Department of Public Works and Government Services. It is very unfortunate to stop short of doing that, because the hon. member said the following.

[*English*]

"It is another initiative to revitalize. This is not mere housekeeping. This is job creation. This is an incentive approach. This is government in action, with clout, based on simplicity". It is a lot of mere words that we hear from the government. Basically it is housekeeping. These are a lot of empty words because there is no revitalization whatsoever.

As a matter of fact the law that is being proposed is discouraging to some extent because it does not address itself to the real problems that concern the Ministry of Public Works and Government Services. I am not surprised because the government really does not have the backbone to act where action is needed.

[*Translation*]

The fact is that except for a musical chair exercise, a grouping together of various services, this housekeeping bill does not include anything very exciting for anyone. Even though we are told that this is the first major change since that legislation was drafted in 1867, the bill still does not introduce anything new.

In fact, civil servants to whom we had an opportunity to talk have insisted that they did everything in their power to ensure that no new provisions were included. The various related acts were grouped together and great care was taken to make sure that nothing was changed. The exercise was conducted as though it was important not to affect existing structures.

This is precisely why Bill C–52 is such a disappointment. There is nothing new in this bill to improve the performance of that department, to reduce waste, or to eliminate abuse. Yet, changes or improvements to the Department of Public Works and Government Services are long overdue. We all know that this department is often accused of wasting public money.

Mr. Speaker, you and all the hon. members in this House, not to mention the public watching us on television, are aware of specific instances of waste in government, which can hurt because it is taxpayers' money being wasted. This waste and this abuse are often linked to the Department of Public Works and Government Services or directly or indirectly. The reason is obvious. As my hon. colleague said earlier, the department spends a lot of money in Canada, grants something like 175,000 contracts each year and has hundreds of thousands of civil servants and thousands of construction and service contracts to look after. In the past, the department has wasted a lot of money and significantly contributed to increasing the government debt.

• (1040)

The public also knows full well that this department is the major channel for government into patronage. Without going into too much detail, how else would the government manage to award construction or service contracts to its friends and supporters who poured funds into its war chest? In fact, we saw again this week to what length government members are ready to go to leave the door wide open for unlimited corporate contributions.

We on this side of the House have tried to limit contributions to campaign funds to a minimum and to enforce throughout Canada an act limiting contributions similar to the legislation in force in the province of Quebec, which is quite reasonable and much more democratic and helps to reduce abuses and patronage.

Again this week the government voted in favour of an act which does not limit donations from large corporations in Canada. Once the party these compagnies have financially supported is in office, the companies want their share of the contracts, hence the problem. Such undue influence can be seen particularly in the Department of Public Works and Government Services. What is disappointing unfortunately is that Bill C–52 in no way addresses these issues which are vitally important in Canada, since, as everyone knows, our country is faced with some serious debts.

Nor does the bill contain provisions to curb lobbying, another big concern for Canadians. We know how lobbyists have control over the contracting process when big government contracts are involved. But then, for God's sake, with Bill C–52, why does the government not take the opportunity to deal with some major public concerns, like waste, patronage and lobbying? Nothing in this bill addresses these issues. In fact, this legislation does nothing to improve openness in the allocation of contracts for the Department of Public Works and Government Services, for telecommunications or for translation. That is the main problem

with this legislation. It is also the main problem with the current government. It is the main problem facing Canadian politics.

Basically, the government has a serious credibility problem. Of course, it did not start with the current government. The Conservatives before them had the same problem. This is an image problem. Elected representatives and the government are accused of mismanaging public funds. Canadians accuse them of waste and patronage and they are right, since the national debt is reaching the $600 billion mark and the deficit exceeds $40 billion.

• (1045)

Besides, the government has a serious debt problem, so much so that the International Monetary Fund is about to intervene. From a debt and deficit point of view, Canada is in a critical situation. Bill C–52 gives us a great opportunity to reduce waste in the thousands of contracts that are granted in Canada and, in doing so, to reduce our debt and deficit. But we do not take advantage of it.

As everybody knows, we are faced with a very serious problem, which affects politics in general. Politicians themselves have lost most of their credibility with the public at large, precisely because of this loose management of the public funds, which conjures up stories of patronage, abuse and waste. It is not surprising that Canadians call us hypocrites, crooks and liars and accuse us of not doing our job as their elected representatives.

It is a serious problem because that loss of confidence by the people in their elected representatives challenges the very basis of our democracy. When the uncertainty and the lack of confidence felt by Canadians is such that it weakens our democratic institutions, then it becomes a serious problem.

The government could have seen Bill C–52 as an opportunity to address these concerns, to show Canadians that it is taking action to reduce waste and overspending, but it has not done so.

This bill could have been used to make the government more open, which is essential if we want members of Parliament to regain some credibility. I think that openness was one of the first concerns expressed by the government when it was elected last October. The Liberals promised Canadians that there would be a certain level of ethics within their government, and that is why the Prime Minister appointed a former Liberal minister to see to it that his ministers follow this code of ethics. Openness is mentioned in the red book, although not on the first page. I will read to you an excerpt from page 95 of the red book that most Liberal members are very familiar with. It says: "We will follow the basic principle that government decisions must be made on the merits of a case rather than according to the political influence of those making the case. We will take an approach of openness in decision–making. A Liberal government will not allow the public agenda to be dominated by lobbyists as it has been since the Conservatives took office".

The Conservatives are being accused of patronage and lack of openness, but we see no change. The present government is not doing anything to address the problem and does not even seem willing to do something about it. Bill C–52 is a perfect example of this unwillingness on the part of the government. The Liberals could have given some teeth to this bill to put an end to the waste and misuse of taxpayers' money, but it has not done so.

• (1050)

It is disappointing because today, as I said earlier, the general public has grave doubts about the effectiveness of its elected representatives and the federal system. In fact, that is one of the reasons why Quebec wants sovereignty, and will become sovereign, because it looks like the federal system is unable to adjust.

Government members show no indication that they want to improve the system. Consider lobbying, for instance, where there has been considerable abuse. This week, the government which, as I just mentioned, said in the red book that it wanted to restrict the influence of lobbyists, again gave in to the lobbyists, who scored at least two points on the restrictions the government wanted to impose on them. The lobbyists managed to avoid having to disclose their fees, and corporations may deduct lobbyists' fees from corporate income tax. This is one more example of a government that lacks the political will to deal with the real problems.

We had a whole series of events just this week which clearly reflected the government's lack of concern for the problems of Canadians. Yesterday we found, for instance, that the Prime Minister had purposely withheld information about federal compensation for the cost of the 1992 referendum in Quebec. The government has shown a preference for secrecy and an utter lack of transparency.

Consider the Pearson Airport controversy. Granted, the government cancelled this contract or attempt at privatization because it had to stop this kind of abuse, but it is trying to ensure that the parties concerned receive quite substantial compensation. The government is compensating lobbyists. It is compensating private interests. Even the Senate, in this particular case, suggested paying up to $45 million to the people involved in the privatization of Pearson airport, which is abuse of public funds. The Senate itself is another case of this kind of abuse, of wasting taxpayers money: we have 104 senators sitting around doing nothing, who are paid $70,000 a year, spend $500,000 each and as a result cost the public Treasury a total of $50 million. This is a horrific waste of money in a country that is already carrying an extremely heavy debt load. We know the senators are just

another kind of waste, another form of patronage, because they are all—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, on a point of order.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I submit to the Chair that it is contrary to the Standing Orders to speak disrespectfully of the members sitting in the other place or their institution. This is clearly stipulated in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons and I wish to remind my colleague opposite of this rule. I believe he should unequivocally withdraw his statement and limit his remarks to the bill before us instead of maligning the senators.

[*English*]

The Speaker: I am sorry, I just took the Chair and I did not hear everything. I would hope that we would always carry due respect for ourselves and this Chamber as well as members in the other place. I will of course review what was said. If such a thing was done I will get back to the House.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

We only have a couple of minutes left before Question Period. Therefore, I invite the member to resume his comments, keeping in mind what I said earlier regarding our colleagues in the other House.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, my remarks were aimed at government expenditures which many believe are out of control. I meant no disrespect to members of the other House.

Another example of government waste or lack of transparency is family trusts. We are having a very difficult time getting information regarding family trusts. The finance minister is keeping it a secret. This is yet another case of a blatant lack of transparency on the part of the government.

As I said earlier, this is a serious problem which affects the government in general and the Department of Public Works and Government Services in particular. It is even more obvious within the Canada Communication Group. This particular group, which is part of PWGSC, was illegally given money by other departments trying to preserve their budget for the following year.

At the end of the fiscal year instead of spending the money they had left they transferred it to Canada Communication Group as payment for services planned for the coming years but not yet rendered. This is totally illegal and we have been told that there are several millions of dollars in this fund. Several departments have been contributing to it. This is what has been going on within this government.

We doubt whether this will be rectified. Faced with such a fraudulent scheme, the President of the Treasury Board has yet to take action that would restore our confidence. As a matter of fact, there is nothing this government is doing to deal with waste, patronage and the lack of transparency that inspires our confidence. Some of the CSIS spirit seems to be floating over this government. It is trying to conceal rather than reveal what is going on within government, and I am convinced that the problem is worse in the Department of Public Works and Government Services. It is mainly in that department that we should have more openness, in order to prevent thousands and thousands of cases of abuse and waste of public funds.

I should say that the problem is compounded by the minister himself, who acts in a way that might not be appropriate. He said he intended to relocate a number of Public Works employees in the maritimes, in his riding.

The Speaker: Order. My dear colleague, you will be able to continue after Question Period. It being eleven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, September 11 in my riding of Fredericton—York—Sunbury 80 residents met for some four hours to discuss the country's current fiscal situation with the intent of advising the Minister of Finance as part of the prebudget consultation process.

I want to thank my colleague from Algoma who is on the finance committee as well as George McAllister, senior economist with the province, and forum co–chairs Len Hoyt and Gustavo Argaez for their support and participation.

A report of the forum is being prepared and will be forwarded to the finance committee and the Minister of Finance for consideration.

I also want to thank the residents of Fredericton—York—Sunbury for their continued support as this was the fifth public policy forum we have hosted in the riding. Finally, I want to thank the Government of Canada and in this instance particularly the Minister of Finance for the refreshing openness in encouraging such initiatives.

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mme Maud Debien (Laval–Est): Mr. Speaker, concerning the trade mission in Asia the Prime Minister will lead next November, we want to condemn the highhandedness, to say the least, of some Foreign Affairs officers and of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The federal ultimatum to the effect that the Quebec premier and nobody else should be part of that trade mission is an expression of contempt. It is not for the Canadian government to decide who should represent the Quebec government. Ottawa should not impose an agenda on the Quebec premier. Mr. Parizeau, who has responsibilities keeping him in Quebec City, is perfectly entitled to send a delegate of his own choice.

That is another example of the lack of flexibility of Canadian federalism and of the lack of respect of Foreign Affairs officers for the democratically elected representatives of Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding effort of Mr. Michael Szelag from Hamilton Ontario to promote Canadian unity.

Mike started out in St. John's, Newfoundland on August 9 this year for a 33 day, 7,000 kilometre bicycle ride to Victoria, B.C. During his travels Mike presented for signature a proclamation to Canada to the mayors of each city he passed through. He was enthusiastically received without exception. He commented that his reception in Quebec was outstanding.

The proclamation reads:

Our desire is strong
Our commitment is strong
Our understanding is the result of experience
Our contribution will continue
Our goodwill will lead us
Our faith will guide us
We will remain one people

I am sure members will join with me in a tribute to Mike for his tremendous contribution to Canadian unity.

* * *

CANADIAN FLAG

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, Canada is very diverse from east to west and from north to south and each and every area is significant and important.

Recently while promoting patriotism in my constituency of Carleton—Charlotte by encouraging the use of our national anthem and the display of our Canadian flag, I discovered one of Canada's best kept secrets. I refer to the pledge of allegiance to the Canadian flag. For all members of this House and indeed for all Canadians, I will recite this pledge today and encourage its use.

To my flag and to the country it represents, I pledge respect and loyalty.
Wave with pride from sea to sea and within your folds, keep us ever united.
Be for all a symbol of love, freedom and justice.
God keep our flag.
God protect our Canada.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, Rosedale is a complex urban riding with a diverse social structure. As in most parts of Canada today, the people who live in it know that the health and well–being of their community depend upon an open, tolerant and pluralistic society in which discrimination against fellow citizens is not permitted and everyone is treated with mutual respect.

It is for that reason among others that I support Bill C–41 and welcome the statements of the Minister of Justice and the Deputy Prime Minister that the government will introduce legislation amending Canada's human rights act to prohibit discrimination against persons based upon their sexual orientation.

This is not a question of creating special status for anyone; it is a matter of ensuring that all Canadians are treated equitably under the same circumstances. We must apply this principle of fairness to all members of the Canadian population if we are to guarantee their rights as individuals as well as our own development as a progressive and modern society.

* * *

• (1105)

NEIGHBOURING RIGHTS

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, since 1988 certain communications experts within what is now the Department of Canadian Heritage have talked about the concept of neighbouring rights. That is a form of copyright payment imposed on radio broadcasters to be paid to recording artists and producers.

Other experts admit that 68 per cent of blank cassettes sold are used for reproducing existing recordings which are legally sold in retail outlets. In this age of user pay let those who are bending existing copyright laws, that is the purchasers of blank cassettes, pay an artist's fee. Business, that is the big and small radio stations in this country, once again should not be required to pay. Without radio stations there is no recording industry or artist showplace. Without radio stations our sense of community surely diminishes.

S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

SOCIÉTÉ POUR VAINCRE LA POLLUTION

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the Minister of the Environment made some very uncalled for remarks with regard to an environmentalist group in Quebec, the "Société pour vaincre la pollution", which she referred to by its acronym, SVP.

SVP has been active in the environmental area for 15 years now. Like many other groups of its kind, it is on somewhat shaky financial ground. For the minister to declare that the restricted financial means of that group is a discrediting factor in the eyes of the public and of the scientific community is totally unspeakable.

Furthermore, the minister's data were inaccurate because, as one can see in the last issue of the prestigious magazine, *National Geographic*, the SVP group is still very much active. Such unfounded judgments on a Quebec environmentalist organization are unworthy of someone in a ministerial position.

* * *

[*English*]

THE DEBT

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, fall is in the air and the redness of the leaves is eclipsed only by this government's balance sheet. As of this morning Canada was in debt to the tune of $532,444,756,445.36. That is $18,718.40 for every person in Canada, or $37,879.22 for every taxpayer. By the time it takes me to read this statement the debt will have grown by $88,410.

This government says it is concerned about the debt, but I remind the House that it was the Liberal Party in the 1970s and 1980s that sold Canada's future to pay for whatever spending was needed to get it re–elected. The Conservatives finished the job because they did not have the guts to kick the deficit habit.

It is the Liberals who have sold us and our children to our creditors.

* * *

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago today Parliament officially proclaimed the creation of the Industrial Development Bank, the forerunner of today's Federal Business Development Bank. This was to assist in the smooth transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy with particular consideration to the financing problems of small business.

Throughout the years the FBDB has addressed the evolving needs of small business by introducing innovative financial and management services. Not only was the bank the first to introduce term loans to the Canadian small business sector but it was among the first to offer small business management assistance through counselling and training courses. In addition, it became the first national source of venture capital.

The bank has proven to be instrumental in building successful businesses while at the same time not being a drain on the government. In fact over the past five years it has received no funds from the government for its lending activities and has loaned out some $3.4 billion to small and medium size entrepreneurs.

With its unique array of services, the bank continues to be ideally positioned to help businesses grow and create jobs. In fact approximately one in every five businesses in Canada has at some point turned to the FBDB for assistance.

On behalf of the House and the small business sector, I would like to congratulate the FBDB as it celebrates its anniversary. I support the continuing efforts of the FBDB.

* * *

ED CARTER–EDWARDS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ed Carter–Edwards, a resident of Bala in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Carter–Edwards, a veteran of World War II, was the driving force behind the recent CBC special called the "Lucky Ones: Allied Airmen and Buchenwald".

Ed Carter–Edwards was one of the lucky ones because he survived a nightmare during the war. He was one of 168 allied flyers, including 26 Canadians, who were shot down over Nazi occupied Europe and sent to the brutal Buchenwald death camp.

• (1110)

Instead of being sent to a prisoner of war camp, Mr. Carter–Edwards and his fellow flyers spent three horrifying months in the concentration camp. They lived in fear and terror, witnessing many inhumane acts. Thanks to Mr. Carter–Edwards this untold story is now on the record to be shared by all Canadians.

Canadians owe the men and women who fought in World War II a large debt for their personal sacrifices and courage. I am proud to have Ed Carter–Edwards as a constituent in my riding.

PUNJAB

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, following a recent visit to India I wish to inform fellow Canadians of the troubled situation which still exists in the province of Punjab.

While efforts have been made to ease tensions and the death toll is down considerably, the situation unfortunately is still not normal. Police excesses continue. Equally worrisome is the lack of any commitment toward achieving a lasting peace and restoring law and order.

I hope that Canada will encourage the Indian government to accept independent international human rights groups to visit the Punjab.

I also hope that the Indian government will take concrete steps to engage in dialogue with representatives of various political groups to achieve a peaceful solution.

* * *

WORLD HABITAT DAY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the House that Monday, October 3 is World Habitat Day. In this International Year of the Family the celebration of World Habitat Day by the United Nations is even more significant.

It is important to recognize that more and more families around the world are living in substandard housing conditions. The need for adequate shelter is not only a basic human right but necessary for the well–being of all world citizens.

As members of this House, we can facilitate the promotion of public awareness about housing by celebrating World Habitat Day in our individual ridings.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, Bloc Quebecois members were relieved to learn last night that the federal government had finally agreed to compensate the Government of Quebec for its 1992 referendum expenses.

We have lost track of the number of questions the Official Opposition asked since January as to whether the present Prime Minister intended to keep the promise made by his predecessor. The sovereignist members have succeeded in shaking this government out of its malevolent torpor concerning Quebec issues.

We might add that there is a phantom looming behind the whole story. While the Bloc members had been pressuring the government for a week, the member for Sherbrooke waited until the very last minute to inform the House that, as far as he was aware, the former Prime Minister had made a solemn pledge a long time ago.

I dare ask the phantom of the House: "Where have you been for the past 18 months, since March 1993?"

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, several months ago our party submitted 20 very specific questions to the Prime Minister concerning what action his government planned to take on the issue of Canadian unity. To date the Prime Minister has failed to respond to any of these questions.

Obviously the Prime Minister is subtly continuing his do nothing policy, or more likely just does not have the answers. If the latter is indeed true, may we suggest that the Prime Minister do like other concerned Canadians and tune into his local cable channel on Monday, October 3 for Reform's national unity electronic town hall meeting.

During the show Canadians will have the opportunity to answer three direction questions on the future of Canada. This historic event will give Canadians an opportunity to express their views on this important issue. It will give the Prime Minister an opportunity to see that his do nothing policy is not acceptable to Canadians.

* * *

MERCHANT NAVY

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to bring attention to and salute the great veterans of our merchant navy, the merchant seamen.

This great country of ours, Canada, has always recognized the contribution of our citizens in time of war and has given just compensation for services rendered.

During the war, the merchant navy served under some of the most dangerous conditions and hostile weather. However they have not been fully recognized for their role in the war.

• (1115)

These veterans have not been provided with the status due to them and promised to them. While our country was generous enough to compensate Japanese Canadians who were interned during the war, we have turned our backs on these brave members of the merchant navy. They have even been denied their former part in placing a wreath in remembrance at the National War Memorial this year.

I say: Canada, it is time to provide just rewards to these brave Canadians who risked their lives so we could live ours in freedom.

* * *

BILL C–41

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Minister of Justice for including provisions in Bill C–41 which ensure that individuals convicted of an offence motivated by the sexual orientation of the victim automatically receive a sentence of aggravating circumstances in addition to their original sentence.

I go on record as supporting the inclusion of sexual orientation in the sentencing provisions contained in Bill C–41. Crimes motivated by the sexual orientation of the victim must not be tolerated. As Canadians we cannot claim to support the protection and promotion of individual human rights if we do not oppose hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation is as much a matter of individuality as any other freedom we enjoy in Canada. As such it should be protected under Canadian law.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, in an attempt to confirm Robert Bourassa's version of the facts regarding reimbursement to Quebec for the expenses incurred in the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, the Prime Minister had a telephone conversation with Mr. Mulroney. In the account of this conversation he gave this House on Wednesday, the Prime Minister stated, and I quote: "I called Mr. Mulroney, who did not give me an answer".

How can the Prime Minister reconcile the statement he made before this House on Wednesday with the now established fact that Mr. Mulroney fully briefed him on Tuesday on all that was said between himself and Mr. Bourassa?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, last weekend we contacted several persons to make sure we got all the facts. We had the privilege of speaking with Mr. Harcourt, calls were made to Mr. Bourassa, and I personally spoke with Premier Bob Rae. I also called Mr. Mulroney. Our brief conversation did not satisfy me and we agreed that the best thing would be for him to send me a written statement.

When one has a $34–million decision to make involving taxpayers' money in a matter one did not handle, which had been on the table for a long time and involving discussions to which one was not privy, as a Prime Minister one must make sure that all the facts are in the open and quite clear.

I reviewed the matter and on Tuesday consulted the cabinet and was authorized to act with the permission of Treasury Board. When the documentation was received I was not in the House myself, having been held up with the president of Tanzania. I was informed at 3.05 p.m. yesterday that the written communication had come in.

I authorized my minister to take the necessary steps to make headway with this matter, but I acted cautiously because it involved taxpayers' money and was a matter that was not really the responsibility of this government. It had been dragging on for some time and we did not have the proof required to authorize payment. Once proof was received, we authorized it. It is that simple.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I bring the Prime Minister back to the central issue. This Prime Minister said in this House that there was no answer from Mr. Mulroney, although yesterday Mr. Mulroney reported all the facts in a letter to the Prime Minister, saying that these facts were conveyed to the current Prime Minister during Tuesday's telephone conversation. There is a flagrant contradiction.

• (1120)

The least that can be said is that the Prime Minister's memory of his talk with Mr. Mulroney is as bad as his recollection of his recent telephone call to Mr. Parizeau.

Does the Prime Minister not agree that yesterday's letter from Mr. Mulroney formally contradicts what he said Wednesday in this House, namely that there had been no answer from Mr. Mulroney?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I said in this House that I had discussed the problem with Mr. Mulroney. I had not received a satisfactory answer from Mr. Mulroney at that time. I told him that I had sent him a letter and he told me that he would answer. We discussed the matter but I was waiting for his written reply. I never said that I had not talked about it with Mr. Mulroney. On the contrary, I informed the House that I had spoken with Mr. Mulroney.

Furthermore, he told me that he would send me an official reply. During our discussion, he told me certain things. Was I satisfied with his answer? Was it enough? I do not think so. But I had enough after I had spoken with and received information from Mr. Harcourt, who was involved in the discussions in Charlottetown, as were Mr. Rae and Mr. Bourassa, and after I had reviewed the whole matter.

The letter itself is not absolutely clear. It was only after reviewing the whole matter that I concluded that there was

indeed a commitment and that Mr. Bourassa had received a commitment from the then Prime Minister. I took precautions.

As I said earlier, on Tuesday, I discussed the matter hypothetically in Cabinet, saying in effect, if we receive some information confirming all of this, can I go ahead? The Cabinet did give me the go–ahead; as for the amount of money, it was set, as required by Cabinet, by Treasury Board, which sat yesterday afternoon. It always sits on Thursday afternoon.

I myself was notified of Mr. Mulroney's letter or of Mr. Shortliffe's telegram giving us Mr. Mulroney's version, and we accepted it. It is no more complicated than that.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, beyond the question which has now been settled, the payment of what is owed to Quebec, there is a serious question concerning the proper behaviour of a Prime Minister in telling this House the truth. Nothing should prevent this House from knowing the facts. This House was told by the Prime Minister that he had no answer from Mr. Mulroney, when we know today that he had a complete answer, the same answer which was the basis of his decision yesterday to pay.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his statement that he had received no answer from Mr. Mulroney was likely to mislead the opposition and prevent it from getting to the bottom of this issue as it should?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I myself answered all the questions I was asked on this subject in this House. I have just explained clearly that it involved $34 million of Canadian taxpayers' money, as a result of the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition claiming that the federal government had made a commitment.

I took the necessary action to find out if there was a commitment from the federal government. He would have been the first to criticize me if I had acted on mere hearsay. I did what was necessary to assure myself that we could act as soon as possible with all the information in hand. A prime minister must act in such a prudent fashion. I acted with caution, as a reasonable man would.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during Question Period, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs were obviously not aware that a written answer had been received from Mr. Mulroney. Yet, that answer had already arrived.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that he kept his Deputy Prime Minister and his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in the dark, since Mr. Mulroney's letter had already reached his office around 1.30 p.m., before Question Period?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I could not inform the Deputy Prime Minister, since I was only told about that letter at 3.05 p.m. I decided not to show up for Question Period because my meeting with the Prime Minister of Tanzania took longer than expected. The letter was sent to my office but I was not there; I was at home. I was informed about it by telephone at 3.05 p.m. Obviously I could not tell the Minister of the Environment at 2 p.m. about something I received at 3.05 p.m. My office received a letter at 1.55 p.m., but I was not there. I am being criticized for not reading a letter which arrived in my office across the street, and not at my office here. I was not in my office. I am therefore being criticized for not having read a letter I had not seen.

• (1125)

Mr. Bouchard: Do you not have a fax machine?

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): I did not send that letter. It is up to the sender to make sure the letter reaches its recipient. I did not receive that letter. Since when do we blame people for not having a letter they did not receive? I received that letter at 3.05 p.m. and the issue was settled two hours later. This shows how efficient our government is.

This morning I was expecting the Leader of the Opposition and other MPs to congratulate the government for taking swift action and making the right decision. I am surprised at how partisan they can be.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister is not here, it is customary for the Deputy Prime Minister to answer on his behalf.

Does the Prime Minister recognize that by acting as they did the senior officials in the PMO and the Privy Council kept the Deputy Prime Minister in the dark and prevented her from accurately answering the questions asked by the opposition? Does the Prime Minister of Canada think he acted as a prudent man should?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I explained that the letter arrived when the House was convening. It takes a few moments to go over a document, and I was not there. The Deputy Prime Minister sat in this House and answered based on what she knew. We received a letter at 1.55 p.m. and we are being blamed for not providing an appropriate answer until 2.55 p.m. when the first question was put to us. If the letter had been sent to us at noon, we would have been able to answer at 2 p.m, but, as it happens, we received the letter at precisely 1.55 p.m. So, it took us exactly 70 minutes. We are fast, but not that fast. If we have not seen something, we cannot have read it.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, last night Canadian taxpayers became aware that they had an additional financial obligation of $34.5 million, two years after a Conservative government supposedly committed to it and months after a Liberal government had been in the process of denying that commitment existed.

Governments have a moral obligation to fulfil their commitments, but governments have an obligation to undertake those commitments in a financially and legally responsible manner. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has repeatedly assured the House that no formal or written documentation existed on this agreement at the relevant time period.

What I want to know from the Prime Minister is what are the guidelines in this government and in the previous government for senior officials, for cabinet and for cabinet ministers to undertake these kinds of financial obligations on behalf of Canadian taxpayers and how precisely are those criteria fulfilled in this case?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is an obligation that was committed to by the previous government to the premier of Quebec. It was discussed among the premiers in Charlottetown or Halifax at a time when there were laws in Alberta, in B.C. and another in Quebec about provincial referenda. There was a discussion at that time on whether there should be one national referendum or a series of provincial referenda.

The conclusion was that the premier of Alberta decided to join in the federal referendum. The premier of B.C. did the same thing. But Quebec did not. Mr. Harcourt made a public statement that he understood that if he proceeded with his own legislation he expected to receive some compensation. I was not there but I tried to find out from the participants what had happened to get the best proof I could.

• (1130)

It is not a question of having a contract or not having a contract. I said in the House that there was no documentation on it. That is why I was prudent. I tried to have good witnesses and that is what I have done. However, it is an obligation that was contracted by a previous government.

In fact the taxpayers have paid for the referendum in all other provinces but not in Quebec. It was making an argument about fairness and so on. When I had all the files in front of me and the discussions that my staff had with the people concerned, I did my best. When I had the complete file in front of me I acted.

That is the difficulty. As I said before there were no documents. That was the problem. But there was a commitment by the Prime Minister of Canada to certain premiers that I am respecting.

It is just like when I get up in the House and I am asked a question and I say I will do something, sometimes I have to act after I said that. But if a Prime Minister cannot deliver on his word, who can?

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

I hope the Prime Minister will agree that verbal commitments or verbal agreements made at dinner meetings, cocktail parties or on golf courses are not the proper way to conduct the business of the Government of Canada. This is an extremely dangerous route to go.

When the Prime Minister spoke to former Prime Minister Mulroney did he ask him whether there were any verbal agreements with various other parties, for example, with the Pearson consortium or the EH–101 contract? When he does do that, how much does he feel the taxpayers of Canada will be dinged for on those verbal commitments?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I explained to the House clearly what happened. I have nothing to add. There was an agreement between the Prime Minister of the day and the premier of Quebec that he would recommend a payment. He never proceeded with it, perhaps due to circumstances. I do not want to get involved with what happened in those days.

I said I was confronted with a problem and I tried to find the proof that was needed to justify the payment. The payment was made. If the hon. member says we should not have paid, that would be another argument. That is not what he is saying.

Rather than to pass judgment on the substance, he is trying to play on the process. I am saying that there was a commitment by the previous government and we respected that commitment.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I am asking precisely about the process. When these various subject matters go to the courts these things will be under examination.

I would like to know if the Prime Minister will table for the benefit of the House the guidelines that he will be using on past and future matters to ascertain whether cabinet and cabinet members have undertaken financial commitments on behalf of the Government of Canada?

For example, would the government be open to undertaking a request from the current Quebec government to pay for the next referendum? How would he handle such a request? What is the basis for a financial obligation on that matter?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if it is a provincial referendum that is one thing. In this case, however, there was a national referendum where the same question was asked of all Canadians.

What we did was very easy. We divided the per capita costs of having a referendum in the rest of Canada and that is what we paid. If there is a provincial referendum in Alberta or B.C. or Nova Scotia or Quebec, they pay the bill. This is a democracy.

This was a national referendum and there was a commitment I have respected.

I wanted to have good documentation. I am happy to recognize by his silence that he accepts that we made the right decision.

* * *

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Still on the subject of the Charlottetown referendum, the Prime Minister said in the House that he did not want to act unlawfully like Mr. Mulroney.

My question is this: Would the Prime Minister indicate whether he still considers it unlawful for the Prime Minister of Canada to give his word to a colleague, without first obtaining the agreement of his cabinet?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): The Prime Minister can make commitments but has a duty to go to cabinet with his commitment, which I did this week. I talked to cabinet about this and they said: fine. The document then went to Treasury Board, to determine the amount. This is entirely legal. Payment is authorized by the government in accordance with certain government mechanisms. The commitment made previously was not a clear commitment to pay, and, in fact, Mr. Mulroney said so himself in the document you received. There was never any reference to specific procedures. As far as I am concerned, this payment is entirely legal.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says he discussed it with cabinet, and earlier, he told us he mentioned it to cabinet Tuesday. He confirmed that this is what happened. Are we to understand the Prime Minister called a cabinet meeting, while the next day, he told us there had been no satisfactory answer from former Prime Minister Mulroney? He said again today that there was sufficient and satisfactory reason to call a cabinet meeting to discuss the matter although the next day he said in the House he did not have an answer. Is that correct?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the Press Gallery, everyone in this Parliament except the hon. member, knows that cabinet meets Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. All the reporters are there for the Tuesday morning scrum. I raised the problem. I did not call a special meeting of cabinet. The problem had been making the headlines for several days. I talked about it. I said: This is what we could do if we receive confirmation from Mr. Mulroney, which, in fact, came two days later. We acted on that confirmation, but we also made sure we had the versions of Premier Harcourt, former Premier Bourassa, and the Premier of Ontario. You cannot be too careful when you are about to spend $34 million. I did what I was supposed to do. I got the support of cabinet and the approval of Treasury Board for making this payment.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, recent dialogue in the House between the government and the official opposition over the issue of Quebec separation has taken the form of metaphors.

Leaders of the separatist forces have been called maestros leading a symphony. I would like to extend the metaphor to include the Prime Minister and ask him how long he intends to fiddle while the unity issue burns.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is not very complicated. We said the people of Quebec will stay in Canada if they have a good government in Ottawa that is preoccupied with the real issue of Canadians and Quebecers. I am talking about the creation of jobs and security of income for those who need it. That is the program of this party and this government.

Of course the PQ and the Bloc Quebecois just talk Constitution and separation even though the people of Quebec would like them to talk about job creation.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, it looks like we not only have fiddling, we have waffling.

Despite the Prime Minister's other dialogue, Canadians are concerned about the government's lack of action and dialogue on this thing.

• (1140)

By contrast, Reform will host a national unity town hall meeting on October 3, Monday next. Tune in.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what specific action the government has taken or plans to take to engage in this type of nationwide discussion with the people of Canada on this important subject?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in our party one thing is very clear and not very complicated. I told the Canadian people during the campaign that if they wanted to have Parliament discussing the Constitution all of the time not to vote for me. Now it is the Reform Party members who want to talk about the Constitution because when they try to talk about something else they are a complete failure.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The more I hear his explanations, the more I see that it is nebulous. Given the troubling facts concerning the Prime Minister's statements in this House and

referendum, how can the Prime Minister explain his attitude and that of the Deputy Prime Minister and of the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs except as a cheap manoeuvre to avoid giving Quebec its due?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Bloc Quebecois is totally—

An hon. member: Bankrupt.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): Someone said "bankrupt", but I was going to say "totally confused". They are so disappointed that we paid.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, can you believe it? Does the Prime Minister admit that by hiding the contents of his conversation with Mr. Mulroney, he lied to this House?

[*English*]

The Speaker: My colleagues, we know that in the course of debate sometimes some words are used that are not always acceptable.

I would ask the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe if he would not withdraw the statement that the Prime Minister lied in this House. It takes away from the debate when we engage in this type of language. I would ask the hon. member to please rephrase that question and withdraw the words that the Prime Minister lied to the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, in view of all that was said and done in this House, I believe that I would be lying to myself as a member of Parliament and to thousands of Quebecers if I withdrew my words.

[*English*]

The Speaker: We are going to be faced many times in this House in dealing with facts or the interpretation of facts which are contradictory, and we are going to engage in very vigorous debate. All of us were sent to Parliament to represent very strong opinions.

However, in the nature of Parliament itself, we must take the word of hon. members at face value.

• (1145)

We all have done this as a tradition. If there is an interpretation of facts that are contrary one to the other it does not serve the purpose of Parliament if we use words that are unparliamentary.

I would appeal once again to the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe, who holds as is evident very strong opinions, to withdraw the words "que le premier ministre a menti" and use other words that would be acceptable to Parliament.

I am sure it would help a great deal not only in the course of question period but in the course of debate if we did not resort to this type of word. I would appeal to the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe to reconsider what has been said. If he could do this, we could get on with question period.

Would the hon. member please withdraw the words "que le prime ministre a menti" and replace them perhaps with some other words?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, as a parliamentarian, I am deeply convinced in my conscience that, in view of all the facts observed and reported in this House, the Prime Minister deliberately misled the House. He lied to this House, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, the conduct of a member may only be discussed in the House of Commons by way of a substantive or distinct motion, that is in a self–contained proposal submitted for the approval of the House and drafted in such a way as to be capable of expressing a decision of the House.

Such a motion may contain the abusive accusation that would otherwise be unparliamentary language, but the member cannot do this by using unparliamentary language in this House. The member does have an avenue if he wishes to pursue this avenue, which is a very serious matter.

In the course of debates that we have had and will be having, we always hope we can put forth our very strong views without using language that is unparliamentary. The choice of our words is our weapon. In this sense this is where we are in the arena. We all understand.

I would strongly ask once again if the hon. member would reconsider and withdraw the words "que le prime ministre a menti".

• (1150)

If the hon. member would do this we could of course proceed as we will with Question Period.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I just said aloud what millions of Quebecers are quietly thinking.

[*English*]

The Speaker: My dear colleagues, I must express profound regret as your Speaker that I will have to resort to naming one of our colleagues in the House of Commons. It is a very strong sanction that you have put into the hands of your Speaker. In so doing, I would hope that all hon. members would take into grave consideration the great stakes and the great responsibilities which are entrusted to this House.

I am tempted, as a matter of fact I will once more appeal to the sense of fair play of the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe to respect the authority of the Chair and respect the authority indeed of Parliament and everything that has come to rest in this position. I would ask the hon. member in the sense of fair play if he would withdraw his accusation "que le premier ministre a menti".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I recognize the effort that you are making and the difficult situation you are in. I also recognize that my colleagues in the Bloc see that one of their fellow members must remain firm in his decision because I deeply believe that the facts taken together do indeed show that he lied to the House.

The Speaker: Mr. Leroux, I must name you for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

Pursuant to the authority vested in me under Standing Order 11, I order you to withdraw from the House for the remainder of today's sitting.

[*Editor's Note: And Mr. Leroux having withdrawn:*]

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

The Speaker: Order. To continue with question period, the hon. member for Simcoe Centre.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, our research indicates that as of September 19 the three levels of government have committed almost $1 billion of borrowed taxpayers' dollars to projects which are outside the red ink book definition of infrastructure. How can the minister justify this breaking of red ink book promises?

• (1155)

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, the red book promise has been fulfilled and the infrastructure program is a great success.

This program which started only a few months ago has had terrific support from every municipality and every province across this country to the point where 70 per cent of the $6 billion allocated has now in fact been approved in projects, putting 100,000 Canadians back to work.

We said that we would get our $2 billion of the $6 billion from reallocation. We outlined in great detail in the red book exactly how that is being done. I have seen municipalities and provinces right across this country pick up on that spirit, reallocate funds, find ways of providing funds to get Canadians back to work without further burdening the taxpayers of this country and that is what we have done with this program.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, what we are doing here at all levels is reallocating borrowed funds.

How in the name of infrastructure can you spend borrowed tax dollars on bocce courts in Toronto, the World Canoe Championship in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia or the removal of overhead electrical wires for a movie in Shelburne, Nova Scotia? The list goes on.

Will the minister take immediate action to ensure that no more borrowed tax dollars fund projects of questionable value to Canada's infrastructures?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, I notice the member did not mention the arena or the library in his own riding which he did not get any—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Eggleton: Of course what he does know or should know is that this is based on municipal priorities. This has to do with attracting additional investment dollars to the community by the upgrading of infrastructure and it has to do with the quality of life in our community. That is what attracts additional investment dollars. That is what attracts people to live and work in our communities. These projects are based on the priorities of local government and our local communities across this country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, the role of the federal Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in the referendum issue is at the very least disturbing. Is the minister prepared to state in this House that until yesterday, as he suggested, he did not know anything about the content of the telephone conversation Mr. Mulroney had with the Prime Minister on Tuesday?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, my answer is yes.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I therefore have to conclude that the federal Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs was absent from the cabinet meeting on Tuesday. In that case, does he not feel that he was much too quick to take position against Quebec when he stated, without having all the facts, that the federal government owed nothing to Quebec?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, the Opposition should know that the conversation between

the Prime Minister and Mr. Mulroney took place on September 27 at around 1.30 p.m., thus after the Tuesday morning cabinet meeting. The question is therefore pointless.

That being said, what is important is that the matter has been dealt with in a way that is fair to all Canadians, including Quebecers. That was this government's aim. We did exactly what we said we would, that is if there was written evidence of an agreement, we would reimburse Quebec, and that is what we did.

* * *

• (1200)

[*English*]

WATERWAYS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The people of eastern Ontario are greatly concerned with the suggestion that the hours of operation for the Trent–Severn and Rideau waterways are going to be reduced. Such a reduction would greatly affect tourism and all associated businesses.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage assure us that the hours of operation of the Trent–Severn and Rideau waterways will not be reduced?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to give our colleague a position report on this important issue.

As he knows, there is an operational review concerning the Trent–Severn waterway and the Rideau Canal. Some recommendations have been made in that operational review concerning hours of operation.

Extensive consultations were carried out during the summer by stakeholders and users. An independent working group has been set up to examine the results of these consultations and I expect a report to be in my hands on October 15.

I can assure my colleague that we will take very much into consideration the representations that have been made by users and stakeholders.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of the Right Honourable Douglas Hurd, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS BY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, on September 28, in this House, the Prime Minister, answering a question from the Leader of the Official Opposition, said and I quote: "If conversations took place between Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Bourassa, I would be delighted to know what they were about. I called Mr. Mulroney, who did not give me an answer".

This statement by the Prime Minister, which caught our attention, is the subject of our question of privilege since it was categorically contradicted by the member for Sherbrooke who said yesterday: "I made inquiries, and I later found that before Question Period yesterday, the Prime Minister knew that his predecessor had promised the Government of Quebec he would submit to his government a request to compensate Quebec for referendum expenses".

Moreover, a press release from the office of the President of the Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs clarifies the whole issue, contradicting the statement made by the Prime Minister.

By his behaviour the Prime Minister impeded the Leader of the Official Opposition and members of the House in the discharge of their duties since the nature of the answer he gave during Question Period changed our line of questioning. The Leader of the Opposition and members of the House were asking questions pursuant to Standing Order 37 and as such were entitled to a valid answer enabling them to carry on their duties as parliamentarians.

In our view the Prime Minister's behaviour clearly constitutes contempt as defined by May, page 136, nineteenth edition:

> Any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of its duty, or which has a tendency to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.

• (1205)

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, given the facts I mentioned, I respectfully ask that you rule that the behaviour of the Prime Minister on September 28 constitutes an obstruction to the discharge of the duties of the House and of the Leader of the Opposition and declare votable a motion to refer the issue to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with a view to getting to the bottom of this whole thing, and reviewing the Prime Minister's answers and behaviour by calling wit-

nesses, especially the former Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to your ruling in this matter and I trust that you will come to the right conclusion.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): I have nothing to add, Mr. Speaker. I clearly related everything that happened during Question Period. There can be differences of opinion between one side of the House and the other. It is a matter for debate and not a substantive issue.

I admitted earlier that I talked about this with Mr. Mulroney. I said it clearly, and he confirmed to me that he would send a letter to make things as clear as possible. Read the letter and you will see. He explained to me what had happened and I said that I would wait for his written reply before stating that I was happy with all the answers. I took every precaution to protect the public interest by ensuring that there were other witnesses.

I am being criticized for being overly cautious. It is a matter for debate. Perhaps I should have been careless. Perhaps in the future I should follow the hon. member's advice of not thinking things through before acting, as the Bloc Quebecois would like me to do. I did everything not to embarrass anyone and give half–answers because in a conversation like this we talk about many things. As I see it, I said that I had not received Mr. Mulroney's answer because he told me he would send a written reply. I preferred to rely on his written answer rather than on a verbal discussion. That is what I clearly said here in this House. I was waiting for his final answer, which arrived within 48 hours as promised.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, a motion has been moved by the hon. member and I believe it is my duty to speak to the motion that the member has indicated he is willing to introduce.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you—

The Speaker: The Chair has not heard a motion. One moment, please.

If the hon. member wishes to enter into this exchange it should be on the point of privilege because there is no motion before the House.

Mr. Boudria: That is exactly the point. I was indicating the fact there is no point of privilege in my estimation based on citation 31(1) of Beauchesne's which states:

> A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

Therefore, the member indicates that he wishes to put a motion, if you deem that there is a prima facie case of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I submit that there is not such a prima facie case of privilege because of 31(1) of Beauchesne's 6th edition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I leave this to you to decide, having pointed out what I see as a breach of my colleague, the opposition leader's privilege. It is from that angle that the Prime Minister's answer should be considered and absolutely not within the context outlined by the government whip.

With all due respect, I would like to rise again on a question of privilege and repeat my argument that the Official Opposition's work has been undermined by an answer which was clearly inaccurate.

• (1210)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The seriousness of this point of privilege cannot be lost on anyone in the House. I want to be absolutely sure in my own mind and I want to take some time. I want to review everything that has been said and I want to reflect on it. I take it all of the submissions have been made.

I would ask the indulgence of the House. I will consider all matters that were brought forward and I will return to the House, if necessary or when necessary, and give my judgment on this request.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 35th and 36th reports of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Both are regarding membership of committees.

The 35th report is a comprehensive report dealing with membership in the committees. The 36th report is one that deals with the appointment of associate members to the committees.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in both these reports.

I move that the 35th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House this day, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I move, with the unanimous consent of the House, that the 36th Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs tabled today be adopted.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*English*]

Mr. Milliken moved:

That the following changes be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: Mr. Silye for Mrs. Ablonczy; Mrs. Catterall for Mr. Gagliano; Mr. Plamondon for Mr. Gauthier (Roberval); Mrs. Parrish for Mr. Patry; Mr. Harper (Calgary West) for Mr. White (Fraser Valley West), and that the list of associate members be as follows: Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing; Mr. Bellehumeur; Mr. Gauthier (Roberval); Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre); Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe); Mr. Patry; and Mr. White (Fraser Valley West).

This may sound odd but the procedure and House affairs committee cannot, by reporting changes, change its own membership. It is being done by motion since it was established by motion for the duration of the Parliament. I just want to explain that.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1215)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal) moved:

That a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories during the month of October 1994 to undertake a study of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and that the necessary staff accompany the subcommittee.

The Deputy Speaker: Would all those members who are opposed to the motion please rise.

And more than 25 members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 56.1(3), the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

(Motion deemed withdrawn.)

PETITIONS

MPS PENSIONS

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West): Mr. Speaker, I have today the honour of presenting a petition from a very hard working constituent of mine who over the summer gathered 6,120 signatures.

The subject of this petition is the matter of MPs pensions. It calls upon Parliament to amend the pension plan as it stands right now. While I am not in full agreement with every phrase of this petition I feel it is the right of my constituent to give me this petition and I will present it. I feel confident that during the term of this Parliament the pension plan will be reviewed and changed.

VETERANS PENSIONS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition from 400 of my constituents dealing with the rights of those individuals in this country who were willing to give it all for Canada, our veterans.

This petition calls for the establishment of a basic service pension for all of our veterans who fought in World War II and in other conflicts and for their surviving spouses.

EUTHANASIA

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present six petitions to the House this morning.

In two of the petitions the petitioners pray that Parliament will ensure the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no change in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, in two petitions the petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the charter of rights and freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination that undefined phrase sexual orientation.

ABORTION

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, in the last two petitions the petitioners pray that Parliament will act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

• (1220)

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present two petitions today. The first one is a petition on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe Centre on the issue of euthanasia.

The petitioners request that current laws regarding active euthanasia be enforced.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is requesting that the Government of Canada not amend the Human Rights Act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners are concerned about the undefined phrase sexual orientation. There is a legitimate concern that such a broad term could include all kinds of sexual behaviour.

CHILD SEX OFFENDERS

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition submitted by one of my constituents, Miss Carole Horan, which calls for the government to enact legislation which will enforce the long term incarceration of child sex offenders.

In the short span of six months Miss Horan collected 6,176 signatures from concerned individuals across this country. These Canadians are concerned with the safety and well–being of their children. I join them in expressing their desire to ensure that all children in Canada are protected from sex offenders.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present this morning.

The first petition calls on Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia. That petition is signed by 215 constituents.

LAP DANCING

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by 649 constituents. It urges the Government of Canada to ban lap dancing as understood and thereby stop offensive and repugnant entertainment, control the spread of sexism and check and/or help prevent the spread of the deadly HIV–AIDS pandemic.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present a petition from constituents in and around the area of Bowden, Alberta in my riding.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code or change the Canadian Human Rights Act or the charter of rights and freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Québec–Est now has the floor. I believe he still has about 30 minutes left. I am not sure. If the member would begin, I will find out.

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, we are now debating Bill C–52, the purpose of which is to set up a new department, the Department of Public Works and Government Services.

I will resume the comments I was making before Question Period. To begin with, I would like to say that for several months, especially during the summer, all the Bloc Quebecois members have been sending letters to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services asking him to inform them of all the contracts awarded by the federal government in their ridings, which is a perfectly normal request one would think given that we are elected and want to keep an eye on the government to make sure that it runs smoothly. Surprise, surprise. The answers were negative in all cases. Across the board, the Department of Public Works refused to give out any information, saying that it was too costly.

• (1225)

We were surprised by that action, but of course on second thought we realize that the department is acting right from the start with a lot of secrecy about government contracts. It is becoming extremely difficult for us to get information on federal contracts in public works.

That is worrisome because, as I mentioned at the beginning, before Question Period, that somewhat reflects the government mind–set, first of all, not to act firmly about waste, not to reduce waste in government expenditures. That also reflects a lack of transparency by the government, despite its intention, its desire, as stated in the red book, to encourage transparency in government.

It is as if they wanted to hide information, as if there were something fishy, things that could not be disclosed, things that the minister and his department are trying to hide. Is it because it is too complicated? Why is it that elected government people cannot obtain information on contracts given by the government in public works and government services? Certainly, it is because of a lack of concern for transparency. And that is the least of our concerns.

I know, for example, that in the case of contracts awarded by the federal government, Quebec has always been short–changed. If you consider Quebec's contribution to the federal level and the share of public works and service contracts that Quebec should receive, the figure should be approximately 25 per cent and at least 23 per cent of all contracts. For a long time now—10, 15, perhaps 20 years—Quebec has been getting much less.

Last year for example, in 1993, the province was awarded 16 per cent of all contracts. It was 15 per cent in 1992 and 13 per cent in 1991. When you think that contracts awarded by the federal government are worth a total of $30 billion or more, this is a considerable loss for Quebec. It amounts to approximately $200 million a year. They may be trying to hide the extent of these losses.

In any case, there are hidden facts, there is a lack of openness on the part of the government. We would like to suggest at least some improvements. Unfortunately, Bill C–52 deals only with minor matters and moves things around and does not improve the operation of the Department of Public Works. With this in mind, the Bloc would like to make constructive, positive and concrete suggestions.

For example, the legislation should require that regular notices, say for example monthly notices, be given of all contracts awarded by Public Works and Government Services.

• (1230)

Normally, this should be included in Bill C–52. These notices should be public and easily available and provide data by federal riding, region and province. Such a measure would keep the members of this House informed on what is going on in the Department of Public Works so they would be in a position to exercise their discretion and disclose cases of misuse or waste.

We also want to make a second recommendation. The responsibility for public tenders should be decentralized in order that offices of federal members of all parties be more involved in the process, that members be consulted, or at least informed of the awarding process in the case of government contracts regarding their riding. This is not complicated. It is normal for the members to be informed of the federal government contracts in their ridings, so that they can shed some light on some of these contracts, play a positive role and do something about cases of waste or abuse.

We would even have another recommendation which would be to adopt a precise code or agreement on subcontracting in Bill C–52 in order for the government and the public servants to know the government's intentions regarding this practice which has been a policy for some time now. The very complex subcontracting infrastructure costs more than $5 billion at the federal level.

Over the last three to five years, subcontracting has increased at an alarming rate because the government never established a policy in this regard and has no guidelines indicating whether subcontracting would or would not be profitable for the government. We opened the door to subcontracting with all the problems we are experiencing now and there are no guidelines. We would have liked to seen some guidelines in Bill C–52 or a code for the government to deal with subcontracting.

We have another suggestion for the government. It might be time to give the federal civil servants the right to blow the whistle on the waste of money in the public service, because they know what is going on, but they cannot make anything public. Obviously, if public servants had that right, as is apparently the case in some American states right now, they would not only be more accountable for their job, but I am sure there would be less waste in government contracts.

Even if that suggestion goes through, some steps would have to be taken to ensure that public servants with that right would be protected and would not use it against their supervisors. We must provide some measures to make sure that exposure of abuse and waste by public servants works satisfactorily, and would be useful to the government.

• (1235)

In conclusion, following what I said this morning about the lack of openness of this government in awarding contracts at the Department of Public Works, and there are many of them, the lack of will of this government to give teeth to Bill C–52, while it is such an important department, because of all the contracts that are awarded every year— 150,000, 175,000—because of the amounts involved and mostly because of the doubts that we have about waste within the government, in order to allow that department to become more open and more accountable toward elected representatives we would like to propose an amendment

to Bill C–52. Therefor, I move, seconded by the member for Charlevoix:

> That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:
>
> "this House declines to give second reading to Bill C–52, An Act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, because it does not provide for the development of a code of ethics aimed at ensuring the transparency of contracting activities and the acquisition of all goods and services by the Department of Public Works and Government Services".

The Deputy Speaker: Having held consultations, I find the motion in order.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege of being able to respond to the proposal by the government to put into legislation something which it has already done, that is to amalgamate the Department of Supply and Services, the Department of Public Works, the Government Telecommunications Agency and the Translation Bureau into one new department, the Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Before I comment on the actual legislation before us, I cannot help but note that things are being done in backward order. The thing is already done. The decision has been made and implemented and it will not be reversed. We are now discussing it and soon we will be voting to formalize a decision already made.

I wonder if I am the only one who notices illogical things like this. The same thing was done on the question of the military. With much fanfare the government cancelled the helicopter contracts. With great flair it announced the closure of a number of military bases and moving them around. Then a military review was announced and the work started on thinking about what should be done. After some time the committee will announce its findings and we will probably discuss the report, but the actions have already been taken at huge expense. There will be even greater expense if it becomes apparent that some of these decisions need to be reversed.

• (1240)

We have had exactly the same thing in the last few days in the post office. We knew in June that the post office applied for an increase in first class postal rates to 45 cents. Ironically the government proceeded to do the work. The stamps were printed and distributed. Now we see cabinet deciding whether or not to actually do it. Meanwhile the taxpayers have spent the money.

No real business that has any hope of surviving can operate in this way. We need to do our analysis first and include in that analysis the most cost effective way of making changes. Why is it that government can waste billions of dollars simply by terribly poor planning and by taking hasty actions that are not well thought through? Billions of dollars are forcibly removed from citizens by the bully of taxation.

I need to get on with the main topic of my speech but I cannot forget the Pearson airport deal. Is it not another example? If the former government had not been in such a big hurry to sign contracts without having covered all the facts of the situation first, we would not be in the mess we are in now with that deal. I find it appalling that the government is now ramming through a bill respecting that deal which will hide payments made at the discretion of the minister from parliamentary or public scrutiny.

I need to turn the corner and talk about Bill C–52. After what I have just said members may be surprised to note that in general I am in favour of the legislation. In general I support the move toward downsizing, but the plan needs to be well thought out. A number of issues need to be tackled. They must be done in the right order.

In analysing the situation one should really ask the following questions: First, what public service, what actual work, what functions do we want the department to perform? Second, in order to achieve what we want the department to do, how can we best organize it so that it can perform those functions with the greatest efficiency?

The amalgamation proposed in Bill C–52 is positive in the sense that it will result in the reduction of overlapping duties and functions. It should reduce overall costs, though that remains to be seen. There will be a reduction of overhead costs. Hopefully the new department will be able to deliver the services specified in a timely and efficient manner.

Another efficiency will be achieved by combining the annual report and the estimates. It will make it possible for managers, and indeed members of the House, to make decisions more effectively and more quickly on whether or not an expenditure is being controlled by looking at the consolidated statements.

There are two broad principles governments should use. The principles have been given to us by the people. The Reform Party is articulating the principles on behalf of citizens who have not been heard by governments of the past 20 to 40 years. The first principle is that governments, civil servants, politicians and political parties exist to serve the people. They should demonstrate this service at all times.

I cannot help but interrupt my speech again to draw the attention of the House to a great misunderstanding concerning the Reform Party. Several days ago the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt gave a rather cute member's statement in which she echoed the misinformation broadcast by our sometimes untrustworthy CBC. She implied that members of the Reform Party were somehow herded along by the leadership of the party. The facts are that the leadership of the party and

Reform MPs are driven by the grassroots. Ordinary citizens are finding that their voices are being heard by us. Party policies in our party are initiated by the members and the party leadership acts as a clearing house to expedite debate and decisions at our assembly.

• (1245)

Yes, we believe in service. That is the first principle that should pervade all levels of government. It is government of the people, for the people, by the people. If we could do a 180 degree turn in how governments operate compared to the past and the present, perhaps that would be the single most important move in restoring the faith of the people in the governments they elect.

The second principle is that public money should be regarded by governments as funds in trust and governments should practise fiscal responsibility. In particular, they should exercise the responsibility of balancing expenditures and revenues. There are not many issues that upset my constituents more than the issue of the burgeoning debt.

If we were a board of directors of a public company the shareholders would fire us. We are spending 20 per cent more every year than we take in. We are headed for financial disaster and for bankruptcy. Yes, the shareholders of a company would fire the board of directors if that was how they carried on.

Indeed, this is what the Canadian people have begun to do. They are totally fed up with the flagrant waste of their money by governments of the last 20 or 30 years. Beginning in the west there is a massive sweep of support for Reform because we are promising to balance the budget. We just cannot go on the way we are. In some form or another, if not now then in the very near future we will have to pay the bills that we have run up.

The most unfair transfer of responsibility in this country is the intergenerational transfer of debt. We are spending our children's inheritance. From our graves we will have to apologize to them for giving them the inheritance of such huge financial indebtedness that they will not be able to enjoy anything near the standard of living that we have stolen from them. I am embarrassed to be a member of this generation, leaving my children a legacy of profligate overspending, exercising no discipline in how we handle our affairs.

In speaking to Bill C–52 I believe that we are beginning to move in the right direction on these principles. I want to show my support and commitment to the principles by helping to hold this government accountable for the steps it is taking. I want to assume that the motives of the government are honourable. I want to assume that it really means it when it says it wants to do better.

I suppose it is almost impossible to do worse than the government that was defeated last fall. But there is always the danger that the frail ship can be blown off course. We will be there to help and to remind the government to abide by these principles.

The principle of service to the public should be demonstrated by the way that business processes are developed and implemented. It should be evident in the way that public property is managed, particularly office and warehouse space. It should be evident in the way bidding and procurement procedures are developed and implemented. It should be evident in the way technology will be utilized to increase effectiveness and efficiency. Most of all, it should be evident in the way we and all civil servants meet the people, the way we talk to them and the way we serve them. There should never be an attitude of condescension but always an attitude of helpfulness and service.

I would add that we should also always have an attitude of total honesty and openness, whether it is procurement or whether it is talking about the way government influences public policy. There should be total openness. It is the people's business. The people have the right to know everything.

With respect to the second principle I mentioned, the one of sound fiscal management and wise use of the limited financial resources available, I need to emphasize it is my opinion that we are not doing enough here in this bill.

• (1250)

It is insufficient to merely shuffle the deck to bring together two or three departments here and two or three there. It is not sufficient to merely reorganize the management tree. We need to look very seriously at the functions of government. We need to re–examine many things government is doing that is not supported by the people. There need to be some cuts. Some departments need to be eliminated because there is no longer a need or a demand for the functions they provide.

Can this be done? Would it be possible for us to discuss this in a meaningful, non–emotional way so that we could brainstorm our way to some positive solutions?

I can think of a number of examples in which we are not serving the people well with regard to monetary stewardship. I think of the $60 million taken out of the accountability loop by the antics of the CCG. I think of the ongoing construction of a national GST processing centre in Prince Edward Island at the same time as this government is promising to eliminate the GST.

I am thinking of some extravagant offices and some unacceptable vacancy rates. I am thinking of moneys to crown corporations and special operating agencies and the way some of them are operating without full accountability. I am thinking even of the fact that the collection of hundreds and hundreds of smaller

savings could save millions of dollars for the Canadian taxpayer.

Departmental contracting value for last year was in the order of $7.8 billion. The handling of this large amount of tax dollars must be treated with great respect. We need to assure the public that everything is done out in the open with full disclosure of who is getting what and how much they are getting.

I wish to conclude by saying that I am personally committed to doing my share in influencing the way the government does its business. I want the people of Canada to know that in the Reform Party and hopefully among the other members of this House there are individuals who are deeply committed to doing this thing right. We want to treat the people with the respect they deserve. We want to stop overtaxing them. We want to serve them and we want to be good stewards of the money that they entrust to us.

I believe that the Canadian public is becoming more and more disillusioned with the concept that the government has to do everything for everyone. There are more and more people who simply want the government to back off and give them some freedom to make their own choices and manage their own affairs. They want government to do just the minimal things that it is not possible for them to do by themselves.

The days of thinking that nothing will get done unless the government controls and subsidizes or pays for it are over. The days are ending when everyone can use the government as a means of confiscating the dwindling available earnings of the average person to spend at will on whatever project seems to meet their fancy.

Henry Samtrooke said it well when he referred to the rapturous, wild and ineffable pleasure of drinking at somebody else's expense. In giving support in principle to Bill C–52, I hope that we are beginning to move in the right direction. We will be waiting with great interest to observe that this government takes it all the way. We want to see that the deficits are stopped before its too late.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to follow the two lead critics of the Bloc and the Reform Party with respect to this legislation because it gives me an opportunity to make a few comments, not in an unkind way but to make sure that we understand each other and that we are talking from the same base.

My colleague from the Reform is supporting this bill and I appreciate that. I think it is for many of the right reasons. I want to make sure it is understood that the decision to amalgamate government had been initiated by the previous government with the order in council process. We are undertaking today this legislation to affirm that we do have the powers that we thought we had.

• (1255)

It would not be fair to say that we had not done our job. We are in fact doing our job. I am not sure that is what he was suggesting.

I also want to point out that we are open to suggestions. My colleague mentioned that he wanted to make some suggestions. That is not a problem.

A comment was made regarding Canada Post and increased postal rates. My colleague will know that Canada Post had anticipated that. There was a request made of government and that request is being reviewed right now. My minister, the minister responsible for Canada Post, is particularly sensitive to what the impact might be on small and medium size businesses. He will analyse that with his colleagues and look at it very carefully before proceeding.

The third point that was made was with respect to the deficit and the debt. I want to remind my colleague that by the year 1998, if my memory serves me correctly, the anticipated savings with this legislation because of what will be done are in the neighbourhood of $180 million and by the year 2000 up to $1 billion. That is a lot of money and it is going in the direction I think he would like, perhaps not as quickly but certainly in the right direction on that particular issue.

[*Translation*]

The Bloc Quebecois member commented about government waste and abuse. He mentioned contracts for Quebec. In a calm and generous manner I simply ask him to prove what he is saying. Where is the proof? It is so easy to make accusations.

The member knows very well that we are now in the process of eliminating overlapping and duplication with this bill. If I remember correctly this is exactly what some of my colleagues from the Bloc are asking. I hope it is not only talk, that they really mean it because this bill is tackling the problem of overlapping and duplication.

I think the member also forgot to mention the large savings this will bring about: $205 million by 1998, and one billion by the year 2000. I hope he will still be here, as well as myself, to see these savings come about.

A last comment, to be completely sure there is no misunderstanding. Unfortunately, the member gave the impression—he is not a bad man, maybe he was influenced by somebody else—that the government had been far from generous in the allocation of contracts to Quebec. As regards the whole question of access to government, openness and transparency for the government, the hon. member knows well that our open invitations to bid are very transparent and that we also have other systems. For the first time in a long while we have opened up the process. For the first time in a long while any Canadian throughout this vast country can obtain information on what the

government needs in terms of goods and services. Therefore improvements have been made that I wish to mention.

I understand the opposition because I myself was a member of the opposition for some time. I may have sometimes exaggerated but I think there was gross exaggeration today.

[*English*]

I want to get into my formal remarks. At the conclusion of his recent address to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of concentrating on providing good government.

[*Translation*]

This is what the legislation before the House today seeks to achieve. By giving its formal approval to the creation of the Department of Public Works and Government Services, Parliament goes one step further in offering Canadians everywhere good governmental services.

The bill brings together in a single department all the service agencies of the government in order to streamline government, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services and to better meet the needs of Canadians everywhere in Canada.

● (1300)

[*English*]

The new department means improved service to other government departments and agencies as well as improved service to Canadians. Taxpayers save money. Government departments have one–stop shopping for all their service needs and there is a single window to the government for suppliers and contractors across the country.

The creation of a new department simplifies the business of doing business with the government. It simplifies the process of receiving information from the government. Parliament is asked to give approval to rolling government service agencies into one department and thereby reducing overlap and duplication, which is a tremendous way to save money.

The Department of Public Works and Government Services was formed last year to provide from one source a range of essential services in support of all other government programs. The amalgamation was achieved by orders in council but this bill was required to create the new department in statute. The department brings together four common service organizations. One major component of the new department is the former department of supply and services which was the government's internal service organization. The other major component is the former public works department which administers a wide range of federal buildings and properties. The new department also incorporates the former government telecommunications agency and the translation bureau.

I know that most Canadians have heard the phrase public works and government services but I think it is fair to say many of them wonder what those phrases mean and exactly what the new department does.

I would like to take a few moments to outline the responsibilities of the new department and to explain how it affects the way government operates and how it affects Canadians.

The Department of Public Works and Government Services is the Government of Canada's chief purchasing agent, publisher, banker, accountant and paymaster. It provides office accommodation, real estate, design and construction, telecommunications and translation services for the Government of Canada and for other agencies as well.

We issue about $200 million payments a year on behalf of the Canada Pension Plan, old age security, GST, child tax benefit, public service payroll, as well as to our suppliers. We manage the government's annual cash flow of $1.4 trillion with an average daily balance of $2.7 billion. Certainly one of the most popular services is issuing tax refund cheques to Canadians.

As the principal purchasing agency for the government the department buys some $10 billion worth of products and services each year and works on major acquisition projects worth another $23 billion. We issue on average 150,000 contracts to the private sector annually.

The department handles the purchase of 17,000 categories of goods and services. Our procurement ranges from frigates and satellites to medical supplies and food aid, to weather balloons and information technology. The department buys for more than 150 federal departments and agencies.

Our new government telecommunications and infomatic service is the lead agency in moving the government toward the better service and lower costs which can be achieved through automation and electronic interaction.

Translation is provided in the official languages of Canada and some 150 other languages and dialects. Our experts also provide interpretation services for some 40 languages including sign language. The department fields over 150,000 inquiries every year regarding precise terminology.

[*Translation*]

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that I made a statement in the House yesterday. On behalf of all my colleagues I spoke in praise of the services that interpreters, translators and terminol-

ogists provide us. Their services are very important to us and today I wish to stress even more the excellent job they do.

[*English*]

The department is the largest real estate agency in Canada, providing work spaces for some 150,000 government employees across the country. We also run all federal properties under the jurisdiction of any other department. We provide a wide variety of management, maintenance and improvement services for federal properties and facilities. The department holds an estimated $6.5 billion of real estate on behalf of the people of Canada. The primary holdings are office buildings and common use facilities. We are also the custodians of national landmarks including the Parliament Buildings where we meet today, laboratories, warehouses, residences, bridges, highways, locks, dams and dry docks.

• (1305)

Three agencies provide services to public sector organizations on an optional fee for service basis. The Canada Communication Group offers communication services to government departments and agencies. Consulting and Auditing Canada's services include the full range of management consulting disciplines and specialities. The Canadian General Standards Board supports governments and the private sector through the development and distribution of standards for government and consumer products.

As members can see, a tremendous number of services are provided by the integrated department. By integrating all of these activities into one department we are making it easier for Canadians to deal with the government and we are making it cheaper for the government to function.

In fact the common sense rationalization of activities will result in annual savings, as I have indicated before, of some $180 million by 1998. We are proving the government can reduce costs and improve services to Canadians at the same time. This is surely a goal all members of Parliament and all Canadians see.

The reality is that we are only able to achieve these worthwhile objectives through the extremely dedicated work of the public servants who have been brought together from other departments and agencies into one. Those public servants have shown extraordinary commitment to making this new department a success and I applaud their efforts.

By the time the department is fully integrated, the workforce will be reduced from 18,00 full time employees to 14,000. It takes a great deal of integrity for people to organize themselves out of a job in order to provide better government.

As the minister for public service renewal has stated, we can and will achieve changes with the absolute minimum of dislocation and involuntary lay–offs.

I respect the excellent work of the people in this department and I understand, as my minister does, that they are real human beings with real families, real bills to pay and a real commitment to serving the public with integrity. The minister and I are determined to treat them with the decency and fairness they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission I wonder if I could make a request. This morning because of medical problem I have, I got to my chair a few seconds late and I missed my place, which is fair.

I wonder if could have the unanimous consent of the House to continue?

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to allow the member to extend his statement by a few minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I want to add that in creating a modern department to serve Canadians better in the years ahead, we have also used the opportunity to bring forward legislation that is modern and up to date. The bill before the House of Commons reflects existing legislation and operational practices of the government. To put this in context, the DSS act dates back to 1967 and the Department of Public Works Act to 1867. That is even older than I am. This legislation must be modernized and brought into the 1990s.

The problem with making jokes about age is that some people agree it is probably true.

What we have done in preparing this bill is to eliminate unnecessary or antiquated sections of previous legislation which no longer make any sense in 1994. For example, in the Department of Public Works Act there is a long and detailed description of public works. It has been eliminated. We have modernized the legislative responsibilities of the department to reflect technological changes which have occurred in our society.

For example, the DSS act referred to data processing services. We have changed it to information management and information technology systems and services.

• (1310)

We have also eliminated old rules which added meaningless red tape to our efforts to provide responsive and affordable service to Canadians. For example, we have deleted the section requiring the tabling of an annual report as we are now producing a detailed report on the department's operations as part of our main estimates.

I want to assure members of Parliament that the legislation before them is based on powers contained in the existing legislation and that any changes are straightforward, common sense changes to which I am confident every Canadian would agree.

Without getting into cumbersome detail, I would like to point out some highlights of the legislation to members. This bill gives legislative approval to the department to create, oversee or transfer information electronically or by other new technologies. That is the kind of common sense change I was talking about. The point is to reflect today's world. When the government started centralized procurement policies in the 1960s nobody had heard of the information highway or personal computers.

Bill C–52 also creates a real property disposition revolving fund. The new fund will simply permit expenditures made in selling off property to be paid from the proceeds of the sale. Right now Parliament provides a specific amount each year for these expenditures. The problem is that it is extremely difficult to know what sales opportunities may come along in any given year. Any annual appropriation by Parliament in the past was based on a guess. The new revolving fund corrects this situation and makes sure that the department's hands are not tied if the chance arises to dispose of excess property at a fair price.

There are other sections of the bill which I think will not be matters of great debate but which do represent key modifications and improvements to the way the department can operate. The new legislation improves upon the legislation it replaces by providing greater flexibility and the removal of administrative impediments to better service for Canadians.

As we stated in the red book, the government will work closely with provincial governments to reduce duplication and improve service delivery in all areas where governments are involved. Under current law, officials on the supply and services side are only permitted to share our purchasing power with other levels of government after first seeking governor in council approval. The public works side does not have this explicit authority.

The current law does not allow the Department of Public Works and Government Services to use its size, expertise and contacts in assisting Canadian businesses to move them to new world markets. The bill before Parliament will allow the department to change all of those practices and to continue to move forward in ensuring that taxpayers get the best bang for their buck by ensuring that we can provide more help to Canadians. This is totally in line with what we laid out in the red book. We have done what we said we would do.

I do not want to take advantage of my colleague's generosity this afternoon so I want to make a few more comments and bring this to an end. I point out to my colleagues that this change is needed in order to make absolutely certain that we have the legislative authority to operate as a department should.

I want to stress that this legislative change is as a result of an action undertaken by a previous government so we are doing what the previous government might have done. I want to stress that this particular change will remove obstacles to good government.

[*Translation*]

As I said earlier, duplication and overlap will gradually be eliminated, which will allow us to save $140 million by 1998 and $1 billion by the year 2000.

I am almost finished. I do not want to prolong this unduly. I hope that I will not only get the support of Reform Party members, who indicated in a clear and honest way that they were ready to look at the bill with an open heart and an open mind, but that the hon. members from the Bloc will agree to reconsider what they said this morning and perhaps propose amendments that could improve the bill instead of simply making unsupported attacks against it. This is not the way one should react.

• (1315)

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, we have just heard an absolutely wonderful speech. You would think this is the best department in Ottawa. The problem is, I had the opportunity to work in this committee of public works and government services and I was also the official critic.

I can tell you that there is no openness in that department. The hon. member for St. Boniface made a big show of it, but the truth is we never got what we wanted. Every day we asked for information, but this department was never forthcoming. This is the patronage department. Let us be clear on that, there is no hiding it, this is a fact.

The hon. member for St. Boniface is nodding in approval, how very interesting. I know you want to answer my question, so I will give you the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Speaker, we introduced a motion to amend this bill. I hope the hon. member for St. Boniface will take it into account and not launch into another one of those dramatic speeches he makes every time he takes the floor in the House. I hope he will also try to improve this department where there is no openness whatsoever, but a great deal of patronage.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comment a great deal. I realize that the hon. member is the official critic and that she was not always satisfied with the answers she received.

I realize also that she is not entirely right. We received a lot of information. It was sometimes difficult to understand it all, since there was so much of it.

It is Friday afternoon, so I will be kind. This is nevertheless an unsupported attack. The hon. member was the official critic. She could have provided us with concrete examples showing where she saw a lack of openness. But she did not do it, she just attacked the department without backing up her allegations.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, the day Public Works and Government Services Canada becomes really open, really very clear and transparent will be a day of celebration for me.

I am very pleased to take part in this debate on Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public works and Government Services. As I said earlier, until just recently I had the privilege of being the Official Opposition critic for this department and as such I had the opportunity to discuss matters with its hon. minister.

I would like to share with you today what I know about this department and what changes should be made to make it more transparent, more open and more accessible to all taxpayers who wish either to receive information on its activities or do business with it.

I understand, when one is in opposition one tends to exaggerate—I was there, and maybe I did exaggerate a few times. I will try not to do it now. I will give my total, sincere and deep commitment to do my best to improve the openness of this department. I understand that there is room for improvement, but I intend to do everything I can to increase the degree of openness and try to answer honestly the question of my colleagues, including the hon. member who just spoke.

All of us in this House will agree that, either way, these are legitimate demands on the part of the taxpayers and they should not be ignored in a cavalier fashion. This bill should ensure that the various demands of the taxpayers can be met, but this is not the case. The only thing the enactment does is to merge two former departments—a process which incidentally was initiated by the Conservatives—as well as various government agencies.

• (1320)

Section 5 of the bill states that this new department shall operate as a common service agency for the Government of Canada, and its activities as a common service agency shall be directed mainly toward providing the departments, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada with services in support of their programs.

Basically, this department is responsible for the acquisition and provision of goods and services for all departments of the Government of Canada. It negotiates, buys and rents an impressive number of goods and services for other departments. Last year it negotiated 170,000 public contracts. That is rather impressive.

As the member of Parliament for Laurentides and parliamentarian responsible for taxpayers' money as well as a taxpayer myself, I want to know everything there is to know—and I mean everything—about the tens of thousands of government contracts negotiated by this department every year. It is the taxpayers' money that the government spends; it is therefore accountable to them for its use.

Unfortunately, there is nothing in this bill about how these contracts should be accounted for in all the relevant information made available to the public. The government sticks to its old ways and continues to be secretive. This government refuses to make information readily available. That is very clear, but also quite sad. It shows mainly that the government is scared to death, scared of getting caught spending the taxpayers' money improperly.

By leaving out of this bill a provision to divulge automatically all information in contracts, the government perpetuates the widespread opinion that the department still indulges in patronage, and awards thousands of contracts under the pressure of lobbyists, friends of the government, or people who contribute to the funding of the old parties. Failure to take action to change this general opinion could prove in part that it is well founded.

To leave the minister and bureaucrats free to conceal or to divulge information clearly indicates that the system does not meet the basic expectations of a democratic society. Letting the minister decide whether Canadians should know how their tax dollars are spent seems contrary to the transparent and open government that Liberals have been promising since they crossed the floor.

The Liberal government is no better than its Conservative predecessor, that it once denounced so vehemently. Members opposite are backing down. They have lost the backbone that made them so brave when they formed the official opposition and during the election. The members opposite are going back on the commitments they made in their red bible. Transparency and openness no longer figure in their vocabulary. First it was the red bible, now they dress in red and follow their great leader, the Minister of Public Works, Santa Claus personified, the main purveyor of government contracts who keeps his secrets to himself and silences his little elves gathered round him, across the aisle.

This bill is nothing but a formality, an insipid document which again hands taxpayers over to the minister and those in high places under his control. With this bill, the government is saying to taxpayers: "The minister spends your money but this is none of your business". To use an expression made famous by our illustrious Minister of Transport: "If you taxpayers want to know to whom, and how, contracts are awarded, use the Access to Information Act".

Why make it so difficult to have access to that information? In recent months, I have tried to pressure the minister into setting up a rational system to disclose contracts awarded. I even tabled a motion asking the minister to disclose, on a monthly basis, all government contracts awarded. Such a system could even be established for all departments awarding numerous contracts. The minister replied that this monthly disclosure was unnecessary, since all the information is already available and ordinary citizens can find out anything they want about government contracts. How insulting from the minister! This answer shows that the minister has no respect for us. It is wrong to claim that

the information is available and accessible. As evidence of that, I have specific requests for information on contracts awarded to entrepreneurs in my riding which have remained unanswered for more than two months now.

• (1325)

What is even worse is the fact that recently all Bloc Quebecois members were refused access to a list of government contracts awarded in their respective ridings during the last year. This refusal from the minister and the Liberal government to provide that information to members is, in my opinion, a very serious violation of their right to information.

Indeed, how can an elected member, even if he is a minister, deny other elected members the right to know what is going on in their respective ridings? This behaviour is totally unacceptable and is exactly why people continue to believe that politicians and civil servants award contracts only to friends of the government and to contractors offering the biggest bribes.

The minister must explain why he refused to provide the Bloc members with the information they asked for. For the time being, he argues that it would cost $160,000 and that he is not equipped to provide the list of contracts required. Come on, with everyone talking about the electronic highway, no one can seriously claim that it is impossible to collect, code and release this information according to some specifications.

With all the computer equipment the government buys, I think it is a bit far–fetched to try to make us believe that all that work is still done by hand in the department.

I also think that this amount of $160,000 is part and parcel of the administration and operating costs of the department. I do not see how these costs can be considered as additional expenses.

Given the minister's refusal, we believe he is trying to hide something. He knows full well that his department is not known for its integrity and transparency. He also knows that the department does not distribute federal funds fairly among the various regions and provinces. The federal government must play fair and distribute Canada's wealth so as to support development in each and every region of the country.

However, statistics clearly indicate that the federal government supports some regions more than others. For example, the city of Ottawa alone received almost 99 per cent of all contracts awarded by the government in 1993 for the Ottawa region, while its twin city, Hull, across the river, made do with a meagre 1 per cent.

That is a harsh reality for those who believe blindly in this supposedly fair federal system. Federalists and centralists will surely find reasons, legitimate or not, to explain these statistics indicating such an extraordinary concentration of contracts.

In the view of the Bloc Quebecois, this imbalance could be corrected if all contracts were made public. Thus, small and large contractors would know which goods and services the government needs. And knowing this, they might want to do business with the government. Moreover, all this information would force the government to show greater fairness in the contracting process. Furthermore, the government should even support and help potential suppliers in neglected areas, thus creating growth and jobs where they are urgently needed. Is job creation the main goal of the federal government or not?

It is about time that the government show some openness in the allocation of contracts, not only in the department we are talking about today but in all departments. There are means to achieve this and the Bloc is proposing some.

Ministers across the aisle always beg us to suggest new ideas and new ways of doing things. Well, here they are.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will still have nine minutes next time this motion is debated.

It being 1.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CHILD SEX OFFENDERS

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should enact legislation which will protect children from pedophiles by allowing members of the National Parole Board to enforce the long term incarceration of offenders whom they feel may reoffend.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak on Motion No. 305 which calls upon the government to introduce legislation which will allow for the post–sentence detention of child sex offenders who are likely to reoffend upon release from prison.

Motion No. 305 reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should enact legislation which will protect children from pedophiles by allowing members of the National Parole Board to enforce the long term incarceration of offenders whom they feel may reoffend.

I begin by sharing the story behind the motion with my hon. colleagues. In June 1988, 11–year old Christopher Stephenson was abducted from a Brampton shopping mall by 45–year old Joseph Fredericks, a repeat child sex offender who was known by criminal justice officials to be in a dangerous state of mind. Fredericks murdered Christopher.

The details of this need not be recounted here. Rather we must focus on action which we as legislators can take to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring. The loss of Christopher's life was both needless and preventable. This is apparent to anyone who takes a moment to review the recommendations made by the inquest that looked into Christopher's death.

Those recommendations, collectively called the Stephenson report, tell us that corrections officials knew that Mr. Fredericks was dangerous when he was released. They knew that he was certain to reoffend. They just could not do anything about it. The legislative authority required to keep Mr. Fredericks in prison simply did not exist despite the fact that he was a certified psychopath.

It is within the authority of the House to enact such legislation. It is within the authority of the House to empower corrections officials to act to keep people like Mr. Fredericks off the streets as long as they pose a threat to our children. That is what the motion seeks to do.

Motion No. 305 calls on the government to enact legislation which will empower the National Parole Board to keep child sex offenders who are likely to reoffend upon release incarcerated beyond the term of their sentence. This was a key recommendation of the Stephenson inquest and it came at a high price.

When we look at the statistics surrounding child sex offenders it is clear that many Canadians are affected by this horrible crime. Fifty–three per cent of all females and thirty–one per cent of all males are victims of unwanted sexual acts. Eighty per cent of these incidents occurred when they were children or youth. A full sixty–three per cent of victims in all sexual assaults reported to the police are young people under the age of 18. Canadian children are prime targets for sex offenders and it is time that we took action to ensure their safety.

The magnitude of the task is apparent when we look at the profile of child sex offenders. In eight out of ten cases the offenders are either related or known to the victims. They occupy positions of trust in the lives of their victims. It is therefore no surprise that a sexual assault against a child often goes unreported.

One study estimates that for every incident of reported child sex abuse two and a half go unreported. Abusers will often threaten the children, thus making them too afraid to report the offence. Other times the offender will persuade the child that the sexual acts are part of any loving relationship and are perfectly acceptable.

Because of the power offenders often enjoy over their victims, their abuse often goes unreported. That is why it is crucial that we act in an effective manner toward child sex offenders when a child has the courage to speak out about abuse.

Current legislation does not allow for truly effective action against child sex offenders. Existing provisions of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act allow for the release of offenders upon completion of two–thirds of their sentence.

Amendments proposed by Bill C–45, which was before the House for first reading last week, would allow the National Parole Board to deny the release of offenders if it feels that they will reoffend within the term of their sentence. Bill C–45 is a giant leap forward in the fight against child sex offenders, but more needs to be done.

• (1335)

I do not wish to understate the importance of the amendments contained in Bill C–45. By removing the requirement to prove serious harm in order to deny parole to a child sex offender, we are giving the National Parole Board a very important instrument in the battle to protect our children.

The serious harm provision was removed out of a recognition that the effects of abuse on children are often not apparent for some time and that a unique sentencing procedure would have to be enacted to deal with child sex offenders.

It is precisely because Bill C–45 employs a non–traditional sentencing procedure that it is so progressive. Traditional sentencing procedures are simply not effective with respect to child sex offenders who have one of the highest reoffence rates in any criminal group. Studies show that 40 per cent of sex offenders reoffend within five years of being released from incarceration.

I believe it is time we took an even bigger step toward effectively addressing this horrible crime. I believe post–sentence detentions are the means to take this step. By keeping these offenders incarcerated as long as they are likely to reoffend we are acting in a constructive, progressive manner. It allows us to link punishment with rehabilitation.

The change in sentencing philosophy is long overdue. We need to send a message loud and clear that punishment is not just serving time. It is more than that. In order for punishment to have been completed convicted offenders must not be in the

same state of mind as they were when they entered prison. They cannot simply leave after serving time. If they are likely to reoffend upon release, they must remain in prison and receive further treatment. Through the change in philosophy we are saying that what offenders do in prison is as important as the length of time they stay there.

Because the model of post–sentence detention is constructive and progressive and looks after the well–being of the offender in the interest of protecting society, it poses a particular challenge for the criminal justice system.

There is no cure for whatever causes an individual to sexually assault a child. However treatment is available with limited success. One study conducted in Europe identified the reoffence rate of child sex offenders as being in the range of 25 per cent. The same study found that with treatment the reoffence rate dropped by 10 to 15 per cent. This reoffence rate is still too high, but any improvement is encouraging.

The reality is that sometimes any amount of treatment does not help. According to the Stephenson report the treatment which Joseph Fredericks received was counterproductive. Post–sentence detention would not have helped to improve Mr. Fredericks' condition, but it would have empowered the National Parole Board to save a very precious life by keeping him off the streets.

There is nationwide support for legislation introducing post–sentencing detention procedures for child sex offenders. Earlier today I presented a petition that Mrs. Carole Horan began. The wording of my motion is actually very similar to that of Mrs. Horan's petition. The petition began as a local initiative and soon began circulating across the country. The petition was only in circulation for six months. I was pleased to table it in the House. It contains 6,100 signatures of Canadians from across the country, and no doubt across the political spectrum, who feel it is time that an effective post–sentence detention mechanism was introduced.

Recent initiatives to enact the post–sentence detention of child sex offenders have not adequately addressed the problems which child sex offenders pose to society. I am referring to a draft bill circulated by the previous government and reintroduced in Parliament by the member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley as Bill C–240.

That legislation would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and remove the provisions that restrict the application of a dangerous offender finding to the sentencing court only. That means offenders would be declared dangerous offenders after having completed their sentence and incarcerated indefinitely, subject to periodic reviews to determine whether they still fit the dangerous offender category.

• (1340)

While I sincerely appreciate and share the concerns of the hon. member, I respectfully submit that Bill C–240 is too narrow in its application to child sex offenders to be a truly effective piece of legislation.

Bill C–240 would not have the wide ranging power to enforce post–sentence detention which most of us would like to see. This is due to provisions found in clauses 16 and 26 of the legislation that have the effect of restricting the number of applications for post–sentence detention that would be approved.

Clause 16 empowers Correctional Service Canada to identify offenders who it feels may reoffend and refer them to the National Parole Board. If the board concurs with Correctional Service Canada, clause 26 allows it to refer the case to the appropriate provincial attorney general who may proceed with the case before a court. This procedure would apply to a very small number of individuals because in order for Correctional Service Canada and the National Parole Board to take steps to apply a dangerous offender finding, evidence must be presented that could not reasonably have been presented to the court that sentenced the offender.

This is a problem for detaining child sex offenders who we know will reoffend. Often the only evidence that can be presented, and the only evidence that should have to be presented, is that they are of a state of mind to commit the same crime again. However it is the same state of mind with which they entered prison so it does not qualify as new evidence. We need to be clear in saying that part of the original punishment for child sex offenders is that they cannot be of the same state of mind when they leave prison as when they entered.

Some would argue that this philosophy of sentencing runs counter to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Specifically they would argue that section 11(h) of the charter, which prevents an individual from being punished twice for the same crime, prohibits the enactment of any post–sentence detention scheme.

The courts have been clear in declaring that post–sentence detention is not a violation of individual rights under the charter. They have ruled that the dangerous offender designation of the Criminal Code which allows for the indefinite incarceration of an offender is primarily in the public interest and is not a violation of an individual's charter rights.

I refer to the 1987 decision of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench in Regina *v.* Lithium. The court ruled that in dangerous offender applications under the Criminal Code the public interest is a primary concern and that the specific object of the provision is to protect society from an offender who had been convicted of a serious personal injury offence and who had shown a propensity for violent crimes.

In its precedent setting decision the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench clearly stated that post–sentence detention in the case of dangerous offender provisions is in the public interest because it serves a protective function. The court recognized that the charter exists to protect the freedoms of all Canadians. Post–sentence detention should be viewed as an instrument for promoting the safety of Canadians.

The model of post–sentence detention for which I have argued today goes beyond existing dangerous offender provisions and is not only in the best interest of society but of the offender through the provision of rehabilitative treatment.

Many of these offences occur when people are on parole. We look for someone to blame and we often blame the parole board. I was on the provincial parole board. Many times we had to make a decision on releasing an offender whom we were not too sure about. If we have two–thirds of the sentence, or even if it is a three–year sentence, when we have people in front of the parole board who may reoffend do we let them out or not? Many times they are let out because the parole board feels they are going to be let out anyway and it is better they be let out under supervision. This gives the parole board more authority to hold these people.

• (1345)

In closing, I would like to emphasize that the legislation which this motion directs the government to introduce is long overdue. The post–sentence detention of child sex offenders who are likely to reoffend upon release is sound, responsible policy. When dealing with legislation or directives to introduce legislation we must always ask ourselves what kind of statement the proposed legislation makes about society. We must always be sure that this action is focused on the problem it is meant to address, effective in dealing with this problem and in the interests of all Canadians.

I believe that Motion No. 305 fulfils all of these criteria. It says that we as a society care about the safety and well–being of our children and that we want to protect them from sex offenders. It proposes that the government enact legislation which will protect our children by imposing the post–sentence detention of offenders who are likely to reoffend.

It says that this action is in the best interests of all Canadians because it moves to assist not only those individuals who need rehabilitative help but those Canadians who need protection from these offenders.

Given the importance which passage of this motion has for the safety and well–being of all children in Canada, I request leave of the House to give unanimous consent for this motion to be deemed votable.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion does not have the unanimous consent of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Brampton who presented this motion in the House for giving us this opportunity to discuss a very important topic, and as far as I am concerned, I felt that the motion as drafted was entirely acceptable and could have been referred to a committee for consideration.

The hon. member gave us an excellent and carefully crafted speech on the threat that child sex offenders represent to society. There are of course certain aspects I would like to discuss with the hon. member. I said this week, and it is my conviction, that there are various ways of expressing one's sexuality. When I say various ways, I do not include pedophilia, because I believe a sexual relationship should involve consenting partners, those partners being adults. Clearly, when pedophilia is involved, one partner is in a position of power and dominates the other, and there is also the exploitation aspect.

As Quebecers and Canadians we are right to be concerned about pedophiles being at large. We could, of course, talk about why some people in our society are pedophiles. A number of theories, including psychoanalytic assumptions, the frustration concept and the behaviourist approach are used to explain this phenomenon. The fact remains that as legislators we have a responsibility, as the hon. member for Brampton said, to take the corrective action that is necessary. That is why I am glad she has drawn the attention of the House to one of the aspects of this problem.

However, I thought that the hon. member, being on the government side, would have shown more support for the contents of Bill C–45. I may have misread the bill, however, and that is why I would like to discuss it with her, because I understood that Bill C–45—I know we have some people with us this afternoon who are familiar with the mechanics of the bill—I thought that Bill C–45 gave the National Parole Board the option of extending sentences.

• (1350)

I thought that Bill C–45, in two specific cases that I will refer to precisely, allowed for a criminal to be found to be dangerous and not eligible for a reduced sentence or parole. As I understood it, criminals convicted of sexual crimes are almost automatically determined to be dangerous and it is extremely difficult for them to obtain a reduced sentence or a conditional discharge.

The opposition parties support Bill C–45 on the whole, but, as my colleague, the member for Saint–Hubert explained, we do have some reservations about the mechanics of its application. I thought that Bill C–45 authorized the National Parole Board to refuse parole provided two conditions were met.

First, the convict would have committed a criminal act causing serious harm to the victim, and second, that harm would be related to a crime of a sexual nature. Naturally, I am not a lawyer, and with all due respect for lawyers I certainly do not think I am a lesser person for that, but I was under the impression that Bill C–45 was a proper answer to the motion. It would have been interesting to have the member for Brampton explain why Bill C–45 does not deal entirely with her motion.

Some of the people who talked to me about this motion, put by the member for Brampton, were concerned that it might turn a quasi–administrative body into a tribunal. I repeat that we support the basic principle of the motion. It is truly the duty of the Canadian society, and of all other societies, to protect children from possible contacts with pedophiles.

According to our present legal system, a judge may impose life–long sentences to offenders guilty of criminal acts. Judges already have that authority. Naturally, I believe we should exert pressures and stir public opinion on this issue so that the judges themselves impose sanctions like the one suggested by the member for Brampton.

Some people worry about the possibility that this authority could be assumed by a quasi–administrative body which was not a count. We all recognize that we must believe in rehabilitation. Otherwise, it would mean that some individuals are born bad.

I had the opportunity to air my views on the topic when we reviewed the Young Offenders Act. Personally, I do not believe that individuals are born bad, mean, devious, criminal or obsessed. I believe that they become that way due to a combination of factors, especially social, environmental and family factors.

The motion presented by the member for Brampton caused concern because historically, in our justice system, parole has been considered as the best road to rehabilitation. I understand the member for Brampton and I respect her point of view. I do not claim to have the answer. It may be that pedophiles, contrary to other criminals, cannot be rehabilitated, and I would have liked her to expand a bit on this point.

As legislators we must be aware that in our justice system parole has always been considered as the very best road to rehabilitation.

• (1355)

This is the reason why the Canadian Police Association, whose objectives are the same as the member for Brampton and most legislators, namely to make Canadian society more secure, would have felt more comfortable with some kind of life parole. This way, we would recognize that pedophilia is a threat to be taken seriously, that it has nothing to do with homosexuality, that it is not a way to express one's sexuality but an offence, a criminal act which should absolutely not be encouraged.

Of course, as legislators, we can try to understand what turns someone into a pedophile, but our first duty—and again I want to thank the hon. member for Brampton for drawing our attention to this issue—is to protect the public. Would it have not been possible, as suggested by the Canadian Police Association, where pedophiles are concerned, to combine jail sentences with more severe controls and what we called parole for life, which requires offenders to report to their parole officers, live in designated areas and refrain from any contact with children?

Anyway, I support the initiative of the hon. member for Brampton as well as her motion and I thank the Chair for letting me complete my speech.

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to and in support of this motion. I believe that my hon. colleague from Brampton is introducing an issue of great concern to all Canadians.

I know that when I raised my children I did not have to worry or I never gave any thought as to whether they were outside in my yard playing by themselves, whether they were at the corner park or whether they were at the hospital grounds playing. I did not feel a need to be watching over them every minute. I find this attitude has certainly changed over the last number of years. Parents are terrified to let their children out of their sight. They walk them to school and they sit and watch them play at a playground.

My hon. colleague from Brampton has indicated that Canadians want something to happen to those people who prey on children. I believe that what she wants is to get them and to keep them off the streets so that our children are free again to wander without parents watching over every move.

The government missed a golden opportunity with Bill C–45. It could have incorporated this in that bill. I feel that it did lose an opportunity there. I would hope when the committee is reviewing it gives consideration to the concern that has been raised in the House this afternoon.

I feel Bill C–45 does eliminate the need to prove that sex offenders who victimize children have to commit serious harm to be considered dangerous offenders. I feel that is a good thing.

When it comes to the issue of post–sentence detention this government decided to avoid the issue by making it a subject for provincial health authorities to deal with. I know from an incident that happened in our province of B.C. not too long ago that the provincial health authorities do not have the ability to keep dangerous offenders off the street.

We saw a dangerous offender walk away from a provincial hospital because the two guards did not have the authority to stop him. I do not think that is what Canadians are looking for.

I think there is a better way and that is to enable the National Parole Board to apply to the courts for a dangerous offender designation. That is what my private member's bill, C–240, tried to do. I disagree with my hon. colleague. I feel that Bill C–240 does allow some flexibility and would address the problem of pedophiles.

It allows the correction and parole board members to apply to the appropriate provincial attorney general and to initiate a dangerous offender application for those inmates who they believe will reoffend, not necessarily just pedophiles but also adult sexual offenders, but it does include pedophiles who they feel will reoffend.

Like Bill C–45 it also removes the need to prove the likelihood of causing serious harm in the case of pedophiles. This is exactly the type of legislation the member for Brampton is looking for in her motion.

• (1400)

Unfortunately, the two members of the Liberal caucus who spoke to Bill C–240 during its first hour of debate did not speak in favour of it. I know the member is sincere in her efforts to motivate the government to take action on this matter. Perhaps she can speak to her colleagues and reconsider her own belief that by passing C–240 it would allow these changes to be made possible. I believe that Bill C–240 would accomplish that which she is seeking.

Over the summer months I had the opportunity to tour a number of penitentiaries in British Columbia. One of them, Mountain Institution in Agassiz, has an inmate population that is largely sex offenders. I had an opportunity to discuss one of the ongoing treatment plans. The five month program is extensive but only works on the outside if the released inmate is under community supervision.

The therapist advised me there was one situation where the parole officer observed that one of the parolees was falling back into his crime cycle. It was only because he was a parolee and under community supervision that they were able to revoke his parole and reincarcerate him. This action probably prevented another sexual assault from occurring.

On the other hand we have a case like Larry Fisher who ironically was released from the same prison earlier this year. He was convicted of raping seven women. He was deemed to be so dangerous that he spent his entire sentence behind bars. He served 23 years before he walked out free because he had fulfilled his full sentence.

Larry Fisher is currently out there with absolutely no community supervision. One day he is an inmate whom the experts consider too dangerous to be released and the next day he is a completely free man. There is something wrong with a system that prevents society from protecting itself from the worst type of sexual behaviour.

I agree completely with the member for Brampton that the National Parole Board has to have the ability to keep dangerous pedophiles off the streets of Canada. Experts on pedophilia agree that the chances of ever completely curing a pedophile are remote. Convicted pedophiles and other dangerous offenders should be kept incarcerated as long as they pose a threat to reoffend. If this turns out to be an indefinite sentence, so be it. We should feel no obligation to release any dangerous offender who is likely to reoffend.

Even when we reach the point at which the experts believe that the chances to reoffend are low, there must be community supervision. This way if a parole officer believes there is a likelihood of an offender committing another sex crime his parole can be revoked. For those offenders who have shown that they have adapted well and are of little risk, the reporting conditions of their parole could be minimal.

What we need is a bill that would keep pedophiles and other dangerous offenders incarcerated as long as they are likely to reoffend and a bill that would provide for lengthy post–incarceration community supervision to ensure that once these individuals are released their activities on the outside are closely monitored. This combination will provide society with the greatest amount of protection.

I repeat that this legislation can be found in Bill C–240, my private member's bill. I respectfully ask the member for Brampton and all those who support her motion to likewise support my private member's bill which could bring this motion to fruition.

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 305 proposed by the member for Brampton.

There is no doubt our criminal justice system is flawed when it comes to dealing with high risk offenders, in particular sex offenders who prey on young children.

There have been several tragic cases in the past few years which have exposed terrible problems of how the justice system deals with sexual predators, but perhaps the most tragic is the case of Christopher Stephenson.

• (1405)

The criminal justice system failed 11–year old Christopher Stephenson of Brampton in 1988 when it released Joseph

Fredericks onto the streets. Christopher Stephenson was abducted at knifepoint from the Shoppers World mall in Brampton on June 17, 1988 by Joseph Fredericks, a known pedophile and psychopath.

Fredericks had spent his childhood in foster homes, his teens in an institution for the severely retarded, although he was not actually retarded, 24 years of his adulthood in a hospital for the criminally insane, and his middle age in Ontario prisons. This man who repeatedly raped, tortured and then murdered Christopher Stephenson on June 17, 1988 had been given early release from Warkworth Institution after the National Parole Board and Corrections Canada ignored an Ottawa judge's warning not to release him without psychiatric reassessment and extensive monitoring.

To make matters even worse, it was revealed during the inquest into Christopher's death that the prison psychologist believed there was a high probability that Fredericks would reoffend, but he crossed his fingers when he dropped Fredericks off in Brampton. A criminal justice system that simply crosses its fingers and hopes that a psychopath will not reoffend does not serve the interests of Canadians. In particular it does not serve the interests of young, innocent children like Christopher Stephenson.

We must make the necessary changes to ensure that such tragedies are not repeated.

Several years following Christopher's murder an inquest into his death was held by the ministry of the solicitor general in the province of Ontario. The inquest jury made 71 recommendations, the first of which was that legislation be enacted to "provide for the protection of the community by permitting the continued detention of sexually violent predators beyond the expiry of their sentence and to provide treatment during their confinement".

The jury also recommended that legislation be modelled on the Washington state protection act of 1990, a law that allows the attorney general to launch court proceedings against an individual even if that individual has been released from jail, to commit him to a special facility, possibly for life. While the Washington state act was considered to be somewhat extreme by Canadian standards, members may recall that in the dying days of its administration the Conservative government introduced legislation to deal with high risk offenders.

That particular bill proposed to allow the National Parole Board to detain any inmate believed likely to commit a sexual offence involving a child before the expiry of their original sentence. The bill in question was of course lost when the federal election was called.

The time has come to introduce new legislation to deal with this serious problem. My colleague's motion echoes the recommendation of the inquest jury that legislation is needed.

There have been many proposals for reform which have come not only from the Stephenson inquest, but from a working group on high risk offenders constituted by the previous Solicitor General. The time has come to act on those recommendations.

• (1410)

I believe that legislation to keep high risk offenders in prison much longer would go a long way to improving public safety. I am also of the opinion that any legislation brought forward by the government should include a provision which would allow sentencing courts to impose a post–detention term of supervision for high risk offenders.

A supervision provision would allow for the monitoring of an offender's behaviour and actions for an extended period of time following sentence expiry. In addition to placing a high risk offender under supervision for a period of 10 years residency for example, treatment and reporting conditions would also be imposed.

Any breach of those conditions would land the offender back in jail and remove any chance of future early release. That is the only way we will be able to monitor the serious sex offenders who we have no choice but to release after sentence expiry.

Perhaps if such provisions had existed in June 1988 Christopher Stephenson would be alive today. Perhaps if the parole officer responsible for Joseph Fredericks had known where Fredericks was living Christopher could have been found in time. But there were no residency restrictions placed on Fredericks and he had not bothered to report to his parole officer. This cannot be allowed to happen again.

At a recent criminal justice conference in Hamilton, victims rights organizations including CAVEAT, Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating its Termination, stressed the need for high risk offender legislation.

Criminal justice reform advocates and even the new chairman of the National Parole Board have stated that supervision and residency restrictions are necessary if we are to protect innocent children from sexual predators and other high risk offenders.

As terrible as the murder of Christopher Stephenson was, we must learn from it as we must learn from all other cases in which high risk offenders have preyed on innocent victims. We cannot stand by and let such tragedies recur. We must act now by supporting this motion and supporting any forthcoming legislation that will keep sick people like Joseph Fredericks off our streets.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, there are times when being a member of Parliament is very difficult. It is particularly difficult when having to deal with this type of issue especially when one does some research in order to make some

half intelligent comments. I have had a feeling of putting my head into a toilet.

Members of Parliament must make the protection of children a first priority. I mention the frustrations of being a member of Parliament. From time to time I get the impression that we move at glacial speed in this House. No matter how urgent the issue, it is highly unusual for this House to move with dispatch. Even as we sit here speaking again and again about awful issues like this one, we move at glacial speed.

In doing some research I came across an article from the *Globe and Mail* of June 1, 1994. The headline is "Ottawa ponders nationwide registry of child abusers".

The article reads in part: "A national registry of people convicted of sexually abusing children could help prevent schools and child care centres from unwittingly hiring offenders, says a government discussion paper released yesterday. Children could be better protected from sexual abuse by preventing known sex offenders from having positions of trust or responsibility with children, says the 19–page document. But it draws no conclusions about how to set up such a registry or what it might cost taxpayers. However, the report says research suggests society pays roughly $200,000 each time sex offenders repeat their crime, on investigations, prosecutions, imprisonment and judgment". In other words, clearly on the basis of this report it is basically saying that we are already spending the money so why do we not spend the money more wisely, particularly in the area of prevention?

• (1415)

By way of this speech I remind the justice minister that it says here "the justice minister, Allan Rock, has promised the registry will be operating by fall once the government has reviewed comments from the public".

I can appreciate that this is a sensitive issue, particularly as it relates to charter issues. I can appreciate that this has to go forward responsibly and well by the justice minister. At the conclusion of the article it says: "A similar provincial registry in British Columbia was shut down in 1984 after a court challenge. A Manitoba registry survived a challenge last year when three teachers suspected of child abuse lost a legal effort to keep their names off the list".

I raise that because it was clearly evident on the basis of the motion put forward by the member when she asked that this House give unanimous consent that this go forward that unanimous consent was denied. We have to ask the question then in the light of that what is it that we can do?

I have three suggestions. The first suggestion I have already made, that the justice minister as quickly as possible fulfil what I took to be a commitment that there will be a registry so that repeat offenders will not have access to the young children of Canada or at least as easy access as they presently have.

Also, from *The Toronto Star* of March 23 of this year: "Pedophile gets three years for assault on boy 12 years of age". It reads in part: "It was a matter of trust, a trust bought by camping trips and outings to amusement parks like Canada's Wonderland. But as Kevin Starnaman himself admitted yesterday after pleading guilty to sexually assaulting a 12–year old boy and filming the deviant acts", and this is the quote of a convicted pedophile, "society must be protected from persons like myself".

I say again that a convicted pedophile says to us in this Parliament as legislators: "society must be protected from persons like myself".

One of the difficulties, again as a legislator coming to this august assembly, is that very frequently there are measures taken, whether we are talking about justice issues or whatever the legislation before us that are half measures, quarter measures, mincy steps, sometimes in the judgment of individual members steps in the wrong direction. Clearly there must be unanimous consent on the part of all members of this House that our first priority must be the protection of Canada's children.

What is another thing we can do? In light of the fact that we are having difficulty in terms of coming forward and there are charter concerns and so on and so forth, and we have already uncovered one which is a registry, let us take a look at what might happen if we were to take tougher corrective action and actually bring a grid to sentencing.

I will give just a few examples. A 41–year old male was charged with several counts of sexual assault and gross indecency on five children between the ages of five and nine. Pictures of the sexual act were taken and retained. These pictures were seized along with sex aids and other pornographic movies. Do you know what he got? He was convicted and sentenced to an amazing 23 months.

Some hon. members: Shame.

Mr. Abbott: A 43–year old male was charged with gross indecency on several young females aged from 4 to 13 years. He took pictures of the girls during the acts. These pictures were seized, plus other pornographic tapes. That is several young females.

• (1420)

He is presently before the courts.

A male was charged with gross indecency involving two 13–year old boys. A search warrant located photographs of young males in a very compromising position that I do not choose to read to this House. He was sentenced to all of two years.

A 51–year old male sexually assaulted two boys aged seven and eight years, taking various photographs of them. The accused distributed these photographs to pedophile magazines in the United States. A search warrant located the photos of

numerous young males. Guess what he got? Nine months. That is a tough one.

A 30–year old father attempted to get his nine–year old daughter to touch his penis and he in turn attempted to have intercourse with her. Investigation revealed he had taken photographs of other young girls in his basement. A quantity of pornographic material was seized. He received a real toughy, a suspended sentence and probation.

A 16–year old male sexually assaulted an 11–year old female neighbour. He took photographs of her in various sexual poses including sexual intercourse. When arrested he had several *Penthouse* magazines—I did not say hard core, blue pornography, I said *Penthouse* magazines—in his possession. He got two years probation.

It seems to me that we have something on our hands right at this moment in terms of the penal system where we could start to get serious, where we could take people who are giving lifetime sentences to these children. These pedophiles are fouling up the lives of their victims for their lifetimes.

Surely our court can do better than giving the pedophile all of two years, or suspended, or probation or whatever the case may be. It is already in our hands. We can go ahead and do something. That is a second issue.

The first issue is the registry. The second issue is the sentencing grid. As the revenue critic, I support the efforts of Canada Customs in its interdiction of pornographic material. In the research I did there is a very clear connection between pornography and particularly the way pornography is used.

I mentioned *Penthouse* magazine that you will find in your friendly neighbourhood Mac's Milk or 7–Eleven store. There is a very clear connection between these things. I suggest to civil libertarians who are always talking about freedom of speech and expression that there must be a first priority and that is the protection of children in this society.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker for the opportunity to intervene on this. I feel very strongly about this. We can look at pornography, keep it under control, look at the registry and finally the sentencing grid to show that we can be serious with the tool that we have in hand right now.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have listened very carefully to the speeches that have been made here today concerning this very important question. I think that they have been very good. I commend the member for Brampton for bringing this subject matter forward today.

The intention behind the motion of the hon. member is very helpful. In proposing action by the government to exert greater control over sex offenders, particularly pedophiles, she is reflecting a concern shared by most Canadians.

A few days before introducing this motion the hon. member held a press conference in Brampton jointly with one of her constituents and announced that a public petition in support of her motion was being circulated. I also commend the member for Brampton for attempting to go beyond generalities by imposing a mechanism that might increase our power to incarcerate dangerous pedophiles.

In this case she proposes giving the National Parole Board the authority to enforce the long term incarceration of offenders whom it feels may reoffend. In my view that is where the practical problem lies. I do not believe that the National Parole Board is the proper body to determine what should be done with an offender after he or she completes their sentence. Nor do I believe that it is a simple matter, legally, to prolong the detention of an individual when he or she has served the entire sentence imposed by the court. The problem is with our Constitution.

• (1425)

Many say that the charter is a problem in a lot of areas. Maybe in some things it is very binding. However in this case there is a very good reason for this charter protection, and necessary if we are to maintain a proper judicial system in this country.

When someone goes to court they are innocent until proven guilty. They are heard. Both sides of the case are presented. Then the person is determined innocent or guilty and, if guilty, a sentence is imposed. Once that sentence is imposed that is the punishment for that individual for that crime. That sentence has been imposed by a court that has heard all aspects of the case.

If we are to say before the person is released at the end of that sentence imposed by the court that this sentence should be extended then we are extending the sentence arbitrarily without due process of law in violation of overturning what the courts have set down.

That is very important. That is not to minimize what is attempted in this motion. There are better ways of doing it.

The parole board is not to be the vehicle for determining law and order in Canada. It has a specific function. That function is well defined. The parole board knows it and is perfectly competent to do it.

We can do two very important things. This is what is being examined by the Department of Justice at the present time. The first is instead of extending the sentence and imposing a further legal period of incarceration that we should instead have the person toward the end of their sentence examined by medical experts, particularly psychiatrists, to determine whether this person is medically fit to go out into society.

If this person is not fit to go out into society, then refer this person at the end of his or her sentence to a provincial medical facility, thereby giving the person much better treatment than they would receive in incarceration. This is then a medical problem.

Second, there are in the Criminal Code right now provisions for dealing with dangerous offenders. Sometimes however we do not know and do not designate people as dangerous offenders until they have committed a horrendous crime after a series of lesser horrendous crimes. They are not targeted early enough.

What can be done? We are attempting in the Department of Justice, with the minister, with the people in the department and with the co–operation of the ministers of justice and attorneys general provincially, to designate these people earlier, to flag them so to speak.

When they are released and show the potential for causing further crimes in this ever escalating spiral that some of these dangerous offenders follow, and when they reoffend, we will take them to court and when they are found guilty to then make a motion through the crown prosecutor to have them designated as dangerous offenders under part IV of the Criminal Code. They can then be kept for an extended and indefinite period of time.

The law is there. There are ways of doing it. This has to be done. I cannot disagree that in a lot of ways the time that has been taken seems long and extensive to a lot of people.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The period provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

It being 2.30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2.30 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 3, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of introducing amendments to the Income Tax Act so that taxpayers whose income may fluctuate from one year to the next would be able to average their income over five years.

• (1105)

He said: Madam Speaker, I introduced this motion some time ago and it was drawn within the last year. The reasons for the motion are fairly clear–cut. It is based on the assumption that the Canadian economy is much more diverse than what some of our policy makers perceive it to be over the last number of years.

We still have literally hundreds of thousands of individuals who are basically self–employed, who work to fulfil a dream of producing what they want to produce on the hope and the assumption that the price or the value of that production will go up or on the hope that they will eventually be able to produce enough of the product to make it an economically viable entity.

While the Canadian economy may have become more industrial and more global, there are still many people who work on this basis. They are farmers, fishermen, real estate brokers, builders, prospectors, architects, artists, musicians and a host of others who sometimes work years without any real remuneration. Eventually the big income year comes and they have in the past been encouraged in their activities which are useful to the whole of Canadian society with the concept of income averaging.

There is a great deal of income fluctuation in some of the sectors of our economy simply because of changes in production due to cyclical weather patterns whether it is in fishing, farming, forestry or a whole host of other businesses attached to those. There is also fluctuation as world prices go up and down. No matter how efficient a producer one is of wood products or agricultural products or fish products, when the world price is down one is going to show a loss.

However those people do not give up and quit simply because they have a loss in one year. They know that it will turn around. They hope that it will turn around. They realize that their activities are of use to society in general. People have to eat. People need wood for their houses and for their shelter and so they continue.

I brought the motion to the House because we once had three methods of averaging income for the diverse group of people who have up and down incomes. We had general averaging which was available to all taxpayers. At one point it was actually worked out by the department itself when incomes exceeded 120 per cent of the previous year. It was almost automatic.

We had for a while income averaging using annuity contracts which was introduced for a few years. We had five–year block averaging for farmers and fisherpeople.

I want to do a bit of past history of these with a brief explanation because in 20 minutes one cannot do justice to the issue. Prior to June 1992 general averaging, as I said, was available to all. We could go back five years and pay not only income but losses in those five years. This was finally replaced in 1982 with something called forward averaging.

However even tax experts admit this is only helpful when incomes decrease significantly so that a person can be put into a lower tax bracket. It is used by retirees, by athletes who are on their way out, by people who are pulling back rather than to encourage production which is what the original averaging plans did.

Tax experts like Beam and Laiken conclude that the forward averaging has not been a suitable replacement and has not done the job it was hoped it would do.

• (1110)

The income averaging annuity contracts which I mentioned were available as well were of very limited use. They were used for the collapsing of RRSPs when people reached the age of 70 or 71 years.

It was used for the utilization of capital gains provisions which were changed in 1982. It is probably not used very much

any more. It was basically a way of permitting people to adjust to the capital gains provisions in 1982 and some later budgets.

The five–year block averaging which had been available to farmers and fishermen lasted a bit longer. Although it was announced in the budget of 1982 it officially ended in 1987, which means that the last year most people could use it was 1991.

There are some exceptions to that such as in cases in which taxpayers had such low incomes they did not bother filing a return. That is not considered to be one of the years. If they did not file a return in 1988, for instance, they could go until 1992. If they happened to miss three or four years they might still be eligible to pick up on those last remnants of five–year block averaging simply because they have to use five years when they file on time. These could have high incomes or losses and they could all be averaged out.

We need to look at what the replacements for five–year block averaging were. The block averaging has been replaced with a form of forward averaging. There have been a couple of inventory rule changes that were supposed to pick up the slack for farmers and fishermen. While they are helpful in the short term they do not meet all of the advantages that were there for the five–year block averaging.

There is a mandatory inventory adjustment for people with off farm incomes. This is almost all farmers now. Last year we are told that the average family farm incomes were in the neighbourhood of $43,000, of which just over $30,000 came from off farm sources. Therefore on average on farm income was about $13,000 and roughly $30,000 came from off farm sources.

It is interesting to note that a lot of economists and government policy makers seem to think that the answer is to move to larger farms so that incomes can be generated from those larger farms. At least that is the theory. The reality is that when we look at the data the larger the farm, the larger the off farm income. It is virtually impossible to generate a family income from farms regardless of the size under the economic conditions that have existed for the last several years in Canada.

The second inventory adjustment program allows bringing in livestock, which seems to be defined by the courts as anything that is a living, sensate being, from rabbits to fish to ostriches and llamas as well as the usual horses, cows, pigs, sheep, et cetera.

Some difficulties with the program have been discovered, since a cash accounting method has been permitted. This is a good thing for most farm operators, especially individual operators who are not incorporated. That method of computing income is still available. It allows some transferring of income from one year to the next by selling in one year but collecting the money the following year for livestock sales and grains and oilseeds.

This is a possibility in most regions of the country. These provisions do not recognize the fact of wide income variations that were handled under the old five–year block averaging system. It might mitigate a sudden income surge at the end of a year and allow some of that income to be shoved into the following year. It does not take into account the large cyclical changes in prices which are then reflected in huge cyclical changes to income for farmers and fishermen which usually ride for three to five years.

• (1115)

The five–year averaging provision permitted people to hang in there. Perhaps they would lose money for five years, hoping they would recover in a subsequent five years. This allowed for a shifting of income over the five years and paying the tax accordingly.

The new provision does not permit that kind of flexibility and has provided some real horror stories where the lives of farmers or ranchers are interrupted. They leave an estate which can find itself paying unwarranted amounts of taxes because of the legal work that may not have been done in the proper sequence according to the department of revenue. If step *a* is taken before step *b* the department will double tax.

Paying taxes should not depend on a chance happening initiated unwittingly by so–called professionals acting on behalf of taxpayers or their estates. Rules should be as simple and as clear as is possible. The block averaging is relatively simple in its concept, in that it applies to the total income of the taxpayer and not just the part that exceeded a certain threshold amount. It permits a complete levelling of net incomes over the averaging period, including the offsetting of losses within the period against profits.

Prior to its demise in 1982 block averaging had existed since 1946. It had accomplished a fairly progressive and widespread growth in the economy. It should be used again in the 1990s in recognition of the continued need in our country for the recognition that there is a wide and diverse choice of economic activities that Canadians choose to be engaged in, or are sometimes forced into, which recognizes that some necessary and crucial economic activities have periods of poor returns but that society must permit some recognition through the tax system we continue to need that we need these people for the smooth and efficient working of our society in general.

Most of the groups I have mentioned in regard to tax averaging are not eligible for most of the so–called safety nets that our society takes pride in providing. Most of them are self–employed individuals ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. Most do not quality for welfare even though their

incomes are definitely poverty level from parts of their income cycle, sometimes for three to five years.

I argue that the government should consider the advisability of reintroducing income averaging provisions once again to recognize that fluctuating incomes are a reality for a great many productive individuals in our Canadian system. Fair treatment demands that it be given a higher priority if Canada is once again to flourish.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on private member's Motion No. M–256. I question the advisability of moving in this direction at this time.

I am extremely concerned about further complicating the tax system and setting up a situation whereby those with money and in the higher income brackets have the ability to manipulate the tax system to their advantage.

When I talked to Revenue Canada about the issue I was informed its previous experiences with income averaging has shown that such averaging may result in unfair tax advantages to those taxpayers who are able to arrange their affairs so as to control the amount and timing of their income and in turn their tax liabilities.

• (1120)

By checking the retirement savings system we will find that in extremely good years some individuals may make significant tax deductible registered retirement savings plan contributions based on income. Where an allowable contribution is not made for a year, it may be carried forward for seven years. RRSP contributions may be made in a year or within 60 days after the year ends.

This system can help individuals to lessen any increased tax burden that might arise as a result of an increase in income, while at the same time fulfil its primary goal of encouraging Canadians to save for retirement. It is a very important point that we have within our tax system the ability for people in their years of good income, when they do not have to draw down on their funds for cost of living and so on, to contribute dollars into retirement savings. It helps them and society as a whole.

Averaging provisions generally introduce a great degree of complexity into the tax system. If the government and Revenue Canada have time to look at the various issues, rather than spending a lot of time looking at block averaging over the years I would certainly favour spending time looking at ways to make those with larger incomes pay their fair share.

I am surprised that greater emphasis is not placed in the motion on those who are somehow dodging the tax system in some way. We should be making those individuals pay their fair share. In fact I am worried about the motion opening up the possibility for wealthy individuals to manipulate the tax system again to their advantage.

Talking about the complexity in the tax system, any income averaging formula entails detailed and often complex calculations in addition to very specific rules designed among other things to prevent its use for an unintended objective. That is what I am speaking about. Will the motion and its possibilities allow greater manipulation of the tax system? I am very worried about that.

A formula would have to take into account and recalculate benefits and means tested tax credits in low income years, such as child tax benefits, goods and services tax credits and various provincial tax credits, and additional taxes and credit reductions, for example, minimum tax, reduction in age tax credits, and old age security clawbacks in high income years included in the averaging period.

As well, where other supporting individuals have claimed tax benefits based on the income of a particular taxpayer, for example, spousal tax credits, their tax liability would also be adjusted based on the averaged income of the taxpayer.

Those kinds of problems really open up the possibility of manipulating the tax system further to an individual taxpayer's advantage and cause a considerable number of administrative problems in terms of the government department's ability to administer these taxes to see that they are paid fairly and administered by the rules of the act.

Averaging provisions would interact adversely with the alternative minimum tax. The purpose of that tax is to ensure all Canadians with significant incomes in a given year pay at least some level of income tax. Providing income averaging could increase the number of higher income Canadians who pay no income tax for a particular year. This is generally perceived to be manifestly unfair.

• (1125)

I do not have anything more than that to say on the issue. However I want to underline one point. I do not believe we should now be opening up the tax system to the possibility of further manipulations by individuals who have extreme amounts of income. We should be looking at other ways of improving the tax system by ensuring that the very wealthy in society pay their fair share. I do not believe the motion deals with that problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Madam Speaker, before I start my speech on Motion No. 256, allow me to congratulate the people of my riding, especially those of Rouyn–Noranda, for making it into the *Guinness Book of Records* with the longest banner in the world. This 425–metre banner was made by several families to draw attention on the International Year of the Family. It was stretched in the streets of Rouyn–Noranda, yesterday. It was quite a sight, I congratulate them.

Now, let us move to the motion of the hon. member for Mackenzie which I will read before commenting on it:

> That, in the opinion of the House, the government should consider the advisability of introducing amendments to the Income Tax Act so that taxpayers whose income may fluctuate from one year to the next would be able to average their income over five years.

The hon. member explained the objectives of this motion. At first glance, it would seem that it would benefit a number of people in very special job categories. For example artists can make a lot of money one year and very little the next. There are also those who are into production of some kind, like farmers or fishermen. Think of all the self-employed persons who, from one year to the next, do not know how much their income will be. This is the most positive aspect, which does not mean there are not others.

We tried, through various schemes—be it unemployment insurance, crop insurance or others—to stabilize income as much as possible, with relative success, depending on the area of activity. These insurance programs are precisely income stabilization schemes which guarantee a certain income stability.

The problem is that the motion is not restrictive in any way, and would apply to people with very high incomes in a given year, even though they do not belong to any of the categories I just mentioned. Does it mean that anyone with a sudden high income would be able to defer it at will? This might be a way of ensuring that individuals go on a sabbatical every four years. It just might be. But then again is that really the objective?

I believe that the real objective is more to help people whose income fluctuates due to the type of economic activity they are involved in. On several occasions, the member referred to the fact that nowadays our economy is very diverse and that it should be taken into account. However, I doubt very much that it is appropriate to do so for everybody since, obviously, the more time you have to plan how to manage your taxes, the easier it becomes to evade them. Balancing revenues and expenses is one of the fundamental principles in accounting but this goes slightly in the opposite direction and the more you separate the two the more complicated it becomes.

Of course, as the Liberal member mentioned later on, we must wonder whether the whole tax credit system and the entire tax structure would have to get adjusted to take the deductions into account? Should we allow the same income averaging? It would become extremely complex. This does not mean that we should not permit a certain level of income averaging in some specific economic sectors or for individuals involved in these sectors, but it should be done as simply as possible and only in a very limited and strictly controlled way. Obviously, this kind of measure cannot be very simple.

The Income Tax Act allows companies to carry forward profits and losses, at times with some degree of success, but at other times, the government is depriving itself of significant revenues. Companies are allowed to do some tax planning and they certainly take advantage of it. You could say that they reinvest this money in the economy, except that, in some cases, they minimize the taxes they will have to pay.

• (1130)

I have some concerns about extending this system to include all Canadians. I think that we should identify our target more clearly and even take a hard second look at the provision in our tax system that allows businesses to carry forward profits and losses over a certain number of years.

Family trusts are another means used to defer taxes. We have been looking at this issue since our arrival in the House of Commons and this morning is an ideal time to speak about it.

As you know, in the case of trusts taxes can now be deferred until the last beneficiary has died. In some cases, this represents 80 years of tax deferral. With tax planning horizons as distant as this, you can be sure that the government will be seeing very little revenue indeed. There are limits—taxes cannot always be avoided—but the longer they can be deferred, the more possibilities there are and the greater the amount due will vary.

I therefore have some reservations about the motion, and rightly so, in my opinion. Not that we need linger too long over the motive for the motion. I can recall people, particularly artists, calling for income averaging. Given that only people in certain sectors are affected by it, I think it should be looked at more closely.

The hon. member seems to have examined the question very carefully because there was a similar system in the past. He should now focus his attention on specific groups in certain areas of economic activity rather than on all taxpayers. When this is done, it will be possible to comment with more assurance. At this stage, there are arguments for and against.

We understand the reasons for the motion, but cannot give our support to something this broad. The goal is very obviously to allow all high-income earners to average their income, but it could lead to some odd situations. Would not those with high salaries or income from company profits—in other words, dividends from businesses they own—have an opportunity to average even more of their income than is already the case? They will have two ways of allocating their dividends or corporate revenues. This will produce rather surprising results at the fiscal level.

Public finances being what they are at present, I doubt very much that such an idea could be put forward. Since allowing this would reduce the tax impact on certain clients—artists, self–employed and seasonal workers were mentioned—such a measure would deprive us of revenues.

I think that we should secure revenues from other sources. Of course, a motion cannot pursue several goals at the same time, but we should keep in mind the need to look for revenues elsewhere. If we stay with the same approach, we may have to look at corporate or trust tax deferrals, particularly the extraordinary revenue losses from family trusts whose renewal had been allowed by the previous government. The current government, for its part, does not appear committed to correcting the situation as it does not seem to believe that there are large revenues to be collected from this sector.

In conclusion, although the goal is commendable, the motion is much too broad and troubling because everyone would be allowed to average their income. It would be difficult to support the motion but, given its goals, the hon. member could explain it further and ensure that specific sectors are targeted, in particular the arts community. From there we could move on to a private member's bill or something more concrete in order to get good results.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, the entrepreneurial spirit is a driving force to the Canadian economy. I say again that there is a particular group of Canadians who are a driving force in the Canadian economy. They are the entrepreneurs. They are the people who get up in the morning with a blank page in their diary and go to bed at night having filled that page by exhibiting personal initiative. They have filled that page with creative, productive activity.

• (1135)

The entrepreneurial spirit moves forward with no boss pushing. These are the self–starters. Truly, if they do not do it, it will not get done. They are the farmers, ranchers, fruit growers, independent small business people, artists, writers, people in real estate sales or sales in general, freelancers and consultants.

Let us define what we are talking about here. We are talking about taxation and the way it relates to the entrepreneur. Tax is an arbitrary confiscation of wealth by government so that it may provide services and under political direction redistribute that wealth. The wealth is in the form of dollars and cents. It is capital. We are talking about the confiscation of capital for altruistic purposes. What we are really talking about is fairness in the taxation system.

I support the thrust of the motion because I believe the current tax system discriminates against entrepreneurs who are, I state again, a major driving force in the Canadian economy.

Assuming that the government historically has not intentionally discriminated against the entrepreneur, this question still must be asked: Now that it has been drawn to the government's attention, why would it want to continue to discriminate against people who have the handicap of never seeing a steady month to month paycheque? Why should these people have to suffer the disadvantage of irregular income along with the other insecurities of trying to provide for their families' welfare, their children's education and their own futures?

In debate in the House on September 20, 1991, Lee Richardson, member of Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, said in part:

> When income of individuals fluctuates significantly from year to year, the total of the income taxes they pay over several years may be greater than if their income stream has been more constant over that period. This is because in those years, when incomes were high, they are subject to higher marginal tax rates and thus pay a greater portion of their income in tax. In such circumstances, averaging the income over a number of years would result in lower taxes each year, thus lowering the total tax burden over that period.

Using farmers as an example, in the same debate at page 2500 of *Hansard* the member for Edmonton Southeast said:

> I would like to pick up a thread that was made, I think, yesterday by a member. Right now the average farmer in Canada produces food for about 95 to 100 Canadians. At the same time, since most farmers are men, his spouse has to go off the farm to earn money to feed the family on the farm. That is a catastrophe.

I believe and support the point the member for Edmonton Southeast was making that currently the tax system discriminates against the family farm. In many cases it forces an undesirable situation within families.

Staying with the same example of the farmer, in a letter from Mr. Ken Gadicke of Folkman and Gadicke, chartered accountants in my riding of Creston, British Columbia, he says:

> The taxpayer in question reports his income on a cash basis, meaning revenues are reported only when received and expenses reported only when paid. For the first time, the farmer has sold almost his entire crop prior to the end of his current fiscal year. Furthermore, in almost every sale case he would be able to collect the cash also prior to his year end. However, this would put him in the position of receiving two crop years of revenue in one fiscal period, the 1993 and 1994 crop revenue. As this would mean a large absolute increase in the amount of income tax he would be paying, he has made the nonsensical business decision to ask his customers to not make their payments to him until after his year end. In turn, he has had to ask his bank to extend his line of credit, incurring unnecessary financing costs.
>
> In a case such as this some form of averaging of income may have benefited the taxpayer by allowing him to collect the cash, reducing his need for financing from the bank and no increase in his overall tax burden.

• (1140)

As shown in Mr. Gadicke's letter about farmers, the impediments are common with impediments to all small business people and individuals who are concerned about cash flow or

having to become involved with interest payments which result specifically from the action of the current burdensome taxation system that confiscates wealth or the working capital they so desperately need. This can lead to a situation where the business person or individual has to make some nonsensical business decisions.

Other examples of individuals would fall into the area of real estate sales people and especially sales people who are on 100 per cent commission. They frequently cannot control when their next commission cheque is going to arrive. This group includes writers who want to work on books, reporters who sell their columns by the word or staff people with professional skills or extensive background work and experience who, when they encounter layoffs, become consultants and work on contract.

There is a growing pool of experienced contract workers who are serving the business community well. Additionally there are artists who have work in progress who may be forced to push forward a finished product.

At the risk of overusing the agriculture example, in my constituency with the downturn of demand for Delicious red apples many orchardists in Creston pulled up their apple trees and replanted a specific form of Japanese cherry. This was a very prudent decision to build revenue for the future. However it has serious taxation implications because of the inability to average income.

A parallel example would be that the inability to average income could hamper entrepreneurs as they try to improve or change their current situation. Business people need flexibility in the taxation system in order to retool or invest in response to market pressures. If they cannot rationally make changes it is an impediment to productivity.

Let me restate that I support the motion because I fully acknowledge there is a particular group of Canadians who are a major driving force in the Canadian economy. I support the entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial spirit.

[*Translation*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): As no other member wishes to speak and since the motion was not selected as a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

The sitting of the House is hereby suspended until 12 p.m.

(At 11.43 a.m. the sitting of the House was suspended.)

[*English*]

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ACT

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage) moved that Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am delighted to move second reading of the bill to grant official legal status to the Department of Canadian Heritage created one year ago. Passage of this bill will enable the department to pursue its mandate with confidence and enthusiasm.

At first, we had some reservations about the name of the Department of Canadian Heritage. What did Canadian heritage mean, and what reason could be given to justify consolidating in a single department such diverse elements as communications, cultural industries, official and heritage languages, national parks and historic sites, voluntary action, multiculturalism, state ceremonial and amateur sport? But if we think of the word "heritage" in its broadest sense, that is to say the set of signs that enable us to recognize ourselves as individuals who belong to a group or even a country, then the department's name is fitting.

Heritage is closely linked to questions of individual and national identity, which is why it can have such far–reaching and important influence. In today's world of changing geopolitical borders where the map of the world is being redrawn and nationalist groups around the globe are making constant demands, the Department of Canadian Heritage is in a sense the flagship of Canadian identity.

Each and every unit of the department is connected in some way to the soul of Canada. Combined, these units form a striking picture of what we were in the past, what we are today and what we want to be in the future. It is therefore impossible today to limit the meaning of heritage to the legacy of years gone by. Heritage is far more than a collection of remnants of the past; it is the manifestation of a link between the members of a community and a means of defining the relationship between the community and the world around it. From this perspective, although the scope of the activities undertaken by the Department of Canadian Heritage may seem huge, it is entirely justified.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is active in three main areas that have a common objective namely, promoting Canadian identity. First, the department is the chief custodian of the natural and physical heritage comprising our national parks, our historic monuments and canals; these sites highlight the uniqueness of our country and contribute to Canada's reputation as a tourist destination. Our rich natural and historic heritage includes 36 national parks, 750 historic sites, nine historic canals and four marine areas located throughout Canada. Stretching from Ellesmere Island National Park in the Artic Circle to Point Pelee National Park on the shores of the Great Lakes, from the Cape Spear lighthouse on the Atlantic coast to Pacific Rim National Park, they are among the most beautiful gems of world heritage.

• (1205)

Parks Canada will continue to protect, preserve and promote these sites which Canadians hold dear. The traditions of the Parks Canada program, now embraced by the Department of Canadian Heritage, have very deep roots. They date back to 1885, when Canada's first national park was created in Banff. Our network of historic sites was established more than 75 years ago. In a short while, we will be celebrating with joy and pride the 75th anniversary of Parks Canada.

Canada's parks and historic sites are important to the national economy, generating annual revenue in excess of one billion dollars, including some $275 million from foreign tourists, and providing jobs for roughly 30,000 Canadian men and women. They are the lifeblood of the Canadian tourism industry; in 1992, almost 27 million people visited our national parks and historic sites.

Second, the Department of Canadian Heritage devotes much of its attention to promotion of the official languages, amateur sport, community support and participation and other cultural elements that enrich our own culture and set us apart in today's world economy.

The history of this country has to a large extent been shaped by successive waves of immigration and the interaction between the newcomers and the society in their new country. The way immigrants adapt their way of life to Canadian society will continue to be a determining factor in the Canadian identity, and the Department of Canadian Heritage plans to take an active role in making their integration as sucessful as possible.

We have to realize that the co–existence of cultures is one of the biggest challenges facing countries around the world as the century draws to a close. Canada has always been in step with the many cultures that can be found here. This diversity includes vast human resources that are part of Canada today and that could be, in a world with an increasingly globalized economy and culture, a definite asset in maintaining our place on the world stage. It is also a virtually limitless cultural resource that we can use to our advantage and that sets us apart from other countries.

The Department of Canadian Heritage plans to tap these resources and encourage all cultural communities to contribute to the growth and development of Canadian society. We hope to rally the mighty forces of multiculturalism behind a cultural identity that is uniquely Canadian.

Amateur sport and related events, like the Canada Games and the XVth Commonwealth Games held this summer in Victoria, are a fundamental vehicle for fostering and illustrating important Canadian values such as the pursuit of excellence and cultural diversity. In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to say again how happy we are to be hosting the 1999 Pan–American Games in Winnipeg. We also hope that Quebec city will be given the honour of playing host to the Winter Olympics in 2002 and are working to make that a reality.

• (1210)

We have inherited a country whose strenght comes not only from its cultural diversity, but also its linguistic duality. Preserving and promoting our official languages do not make Canada a real Tower of Babel. It is important not only to protect the right of individuals to speak whichever language they prefer, but also to realize that the English and French languages open the doors to two of the greatest sources of universal culture.

Canada's official languages are inextricably linked to Canadian identity and culture. For this reason, it is vital for a department like ours and for society as a whole to promote them and broaden their sphere of influence.

[*English*]

Moreover, in these days of market globalization, knowing two of the most widely spoken languages in the world is a definite plus. English is an official language in no fewer than 33 countries around the world, French in 25 countries. From a purely economic standpoint our two official languages already give us an edge in our efforts to conquer new markets.

Of course we must not forget the incredible number of international languages spoken by new Canadians. Their language skills are critical in expanding our trade and cultural relations to new countries.

The fact remains however that the linguistic landscape in Canada is dominated by two official languages as English or French is spoken by 98.6 per cent of the population. To ensure that both languages continue to thrive in all regions of the country the Department of Canadian Heritage is committed to supporting the development and enhancing the vitality of linguistic minority communities in all sectors and encouraging Canadians to learn their second official language.

Specifically the department's aim is to give these communities the means to ensure their own economic development which is the key to a better future. With this objective in mind it has taken measures to encourage all federal institutions to promote

the full development of minority official language communities, measures which I announced this summer during the Acadian World Congress.

Third, the department is focusing its efforts on the management of cultural development in Canada and on means of communication which are crucial not only in ensuring our uniqueness but also as a powerful instrument of economic development. Culture is not an abstract concept separate from the real world, nor is it mere decoration. It is first and foremost a way of looking at the world and a manifestation of our civilization. This unique view of the world is one of the features that allows one group to distinguish itself from others. In short, without culture, there is no identity.

In this age of trade globalization and amid the proliferation of information technologies, our cultural resources have become not only a means for Canada to carve out a place for itself on the world stage but also a powerful economic lever. The numbers speak for themselves.

In 1991–92 the cultural sector accounted in total for 3.7 per cent of the gross domestic product or approximately $22 billion. In addition, the sector employed almost half a million people, which represents a rate of employment growth of approximately 21 per cent between 1986–87 and 1991–92. The economic impact of culture is far too great to be left entirely to chance.

• (1215)

The rate of growth may be impressive but it must not overshadow the problems our industries have to address. I need not point out that cultural industries do not have the capital or the market to compete in Canada with the big producers of mass culture, namely our neighbour to the south, the United States, the richest cultural market in the world and one which is increasingly visible in Canada because of the new distribution technologies.

Bringing all cultural functions together in a single department will enable the Government of Canada to take more concrete action, making it possible to defend the interests of the cultural community, our cultural community, on many fronts. From this standpoint the department's responsibilities are primarily national in scope. The department has a duty to contribute to the emergence of Canadian culture, foster a sense of belonging and instil national pride. It is responsible for providing funding for and encouraging the development of cultural agencies that have a national mandate such as the CBC, the National Arts Centre, the Canada Council, the National Theatre School, Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board. It is also responsible for museums, archives and the National Library.

The department also has to spearhead legislation aimed at fostering the full development of creative activity in Canada. The aim of copyright legislation, for example, is to enable our authors, producers and performers to earn a decent living from their crafts and be fairly compensated for their work.

Let us get one thing clear. After a very long period under the former government during which culture suffered from marginalization and was considered merely as a distraction, not to mention a luxury, we must bring back culture to the forefront of society's concerns, for it is essential to our identity, to our pride, to our unity and to our independence in international society.

Culture contributes to our quality of life. It is part of the ever richer heritage that is our legacy to future generations. The Department of Canadian Heritage has international responsibilities relating to the promotion, distribution and marketing of Canadian culture. For example, the department is expected to negotiate agreements on cultural exchanges with other countries and identify foreign outlets for Canadian cultural products.

In keeping with this mandate the department was actively involved in the development of TV–5, the international French language television network that serves as a cultural and commercial window for French language programs and francophone artists from Canada and other French speaking countries.

The Department of Canadian Heritage also has a mandate to ensure Canadian participation in international exhibitions. The most recent Canadian initiatives of this type took place last year in Taejon, South Korea, one of Canada's largest export markets. It produced excellent results as Canada banked on economic partnership for the first time. Exhibitions of this kind are outstanding international fora that combine both culture and communications. They are also an important part of the mission of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

For example, the government's commitment to implementing a Canadian strategy for the information superhighway augurs well for the cultural industries. The super highway is far more than a technological infrastructure. It will be a powerful vehicle for Canadian content and will ensure wider distribution of our cultural products, making them more accessible to all Canadians.

• (1220)

The department is particularly sensitive to broadcasting issues, as broadcasting is without question the most popular and the most powerful of all cultural media. More than 99 per cent of Canadians own a radio; 99 per cent also own a television set; and more than 75 per cent own a video cassette recorder.

Because broadcasters are among the companies most vulnerable to competition from their American rivals, the Department of Canadian Heritage has to be very vigilante and adopt policies and programs that make Canadian culture as accessible to Canadians as possible.

Clearly the mission of the Department of Canadian Heritage is closely linked to the major issues facing Canada today. Our agenda is very full and our mission extends into many sectors of Canadian society.

It is more important now than ever before to start thinking of Canada's cultural complexity as an asset in an age when openness to rest of the world is as important as the preservation of our identities. That is where the Department of Canadian Heritage comes in. The Department of Canadian Heritage does not deal exclusively with the past, but it is focused on the future. It is at the nerve centre of the major challenges facing contemporary society.

The department I have the honour of overseeing must have official legal status if it is to continue its work of fostering the emergence of a strong cultural identity in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Madam Speaker, the Canadian government is coming to the House of Commons today for second reading of Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts.

First of all, the surprising thing is that the government took nearly a year to draft Bill C–53, which for all practical purposes confirms what Prime Minister Kim Campbell announced when her cabinet was sworn in in the summer of 1993. In so doing, the present Prime Minister and his government are confirming the same mistakes in decisions made by the previous government when for economic reasons Ms. Campbell decided to reduce the size of cabinet and merge several departments; among those decisions was the creation of the Department of Canadian Heritage. This is totally unacceptable, both for Canadians and for Quebecers.

At first glance, this bill seems to be a purely technical measure that should pass quickly without lengthy debate, since its primary purpose is to establish a department, Canadian Heritage, and amend all related laws accordingly. After thoroughly examining this bill, we unfortunately must come to the conclusion that such is not the case.

This bill is more than a purely technical measure. It would create a department where the minister would have the following powers, duties and functions, under clause 5:

> —initiate, recommend, coordinate, implement (and promote) national policies, projects and programs with respect to Canadian identity and values, cultural development, heritage—

Madam Speaker, through you, I draw the attention of members of this House to the fact that the adjective "Canadian" refers to the following four items in the list I just read, so it should be taken to read as follows: "In exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions (assigned to the minister by section 4), the minister shall initiate, recommend, coordinate, implement (and promote) national policies, projects and programs with respect to Canadian identity, Canadian values, Canadian cultural development and Canadian heritage".

• (1225)

Accordingly, you will not be at all surprised to learn that the Bloc Quebecois cannot support such a bill, for many reasons, but mainly these.

First, this bill shamelessly infringes on what so far has been considered provincial jurisdiction: culture.

Second, the steadfast obstinacy of the Canadian government in refusing to recognize the distinctiveness of Quebec society is totally unacceptable.

Third, based on our reading of this bill and on the old saying that the past is a guide to the future, it is far from obvious that the Department of Canadian Heritage provides the guarantees required to defend the French language and culture, especially those needed for the francophone and Acadian communities in Canada to continue to develop, flourish and even exist.

Mr. Milliken: It is in the Constitution.

Mrs. Tremblay: Let me speak, please, sir.

Fourth, Canadian culture is in danger, given the government's inability and lack of political will to correct its predecessor's mistakes.

As regards cultural rights, telecommunications and the electronic highway, the government maintains the existing division of jurisdictional responsibilities between the ministers of Canadian Heritage and Industry.

Put simply, this means that the Minister of Canadian Heritage will be responsible for the content, while his colleague from Industry will be in charge of the means required, such as wires, optical fibres, microwaves, etc. In other words, the former will be responsible for culture, while the latter will look after the business side of things. However, the recent experience with Ginn Publishing makes us wonder about this arrangement. The minister responsible for culture had only one thing to protect, culture, but he had no weight. Consequently, the influence of the Minister of Industry, who pledged allegiance to the U.S., prevailed. We think that maintaining the artificial dichotomy created by the previous government is to recognize the supremacy of the dollar over cultural and social values which apparently—but only apparently—do not always seem to be the most profitable ones. Consequently, the bill before us makes us fear the worse as regards the future of Canadian culture.

Let us see what is meant by the provinces' jurisdiction. The Canadian Constitution, that of 1867, gives provinces certain powers regarding culture and communications. These powers are included in subsection 92(16) of the Constitution Act, 1867,

which provides that all strictly local and private matters fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Moreover, subsection 13 of the same section recognizes that Quebec has jurisdiction over civil law, which is a fundamental feature of our distinct society. Also, section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867, confirms that provinces have jurisdiction over education, which is undoubtedly an essential element of the cultural sector.

Finally, section 40 of the Constitution Act, 1982, provides that where an amendment is made under subsection 38(1) regarding education or other cultural matters, Canada shall provide, and I quote: "reasonable compensation to any province to which the amendment does not apply".

So, in reality, provincial legislatures have exclusive jurisdiction over most cultural matters.

• (1230)

The federal government has interfered in the cultural jurisdiction only because of its spending power, and we know to what extremes its uncontrolled spending power led it. The federal government must withdraw from that field, because it is using its power in a way that goes against the will Quebecers—and at times other Canadians—have expressed for the last 30 years.

Let us look at the historical demands of Quebec in the cultural area. The federal government's refusal to recognize in this bill the distinct nature of Quebec society is unacceptable. In February 1994, in his address in reply to the throne speech, the hon. leader of the Official Opposition said, and I quote: "Our cultural objectives are closely linked to our collective objectives. Culture is what unites the men and women who want to live together. It represents the essence and the basis of any society. Measures and policies must be undertaken to protect and reinforce Quebec's unique and specific culture".

The mandate of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, as defined in clause 4(1) of this bill being considered at second stage, is as follows: "The powers, duties and functions of the minister extend to and include all matters —relating to Canadian identity and values, cultural development, heritage and areas of natural or historical significance to the nation".

This bill does not refer to Quebec as a distinct society nor mention its cultural specificity. Again, Ottawa deliberately and knowingly ignores Quebec's cultural reality by mixing it in an hypothetical pan–Canadian cultural identity based on bilingualism and multiculturalism, whose risks for Quebec's language and culture have often been denounced.

In doing so, the federal government ignores the historical demands Quebec has made these last 30 years. In 1966, Mr. Daniel Johnson stated that Quebec must make its own decisions concerning its cultural development, in the arts, literature and linguistic areas. In 1969, Mr. Jean–Jacques Bertrand maintained that cultural affairs were a provincial jurisdiction.

In 1971, under Bourassa, when Quebec went through its cultural sovereignty period, Quebec asked for some changes to the jurisdiction pertaining to culture, under the Constitution. In 1973, Quebec demanded total control over all cultural policy, including the budgets.

In 1975–76, Quebec proposed that every province be able to legislate exclusively in art, literature and heritage matters. In 1978, based on its primary responsibility in cultural and natural heritage matters, Quebec asked the Canadian government to negotiate the return to Quebec of the management of cultural property and historical sites and property located in Quebec.

In 1985, Quebec requested that all grants and contributions given by Ottawa, pursuant to its spending power, to individuals and institutions involved in culture and education be approved by the Quebec government according to its spending power.

In March 1991, the Bélanger–Campeau report said that Quebec should have the exclusive jurisdiction and responsibility over its social, economic and cultural development as well as language matters. In 1991, the Allaire report recommended that culture be Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction.

In 1992, following extended consultations and discussions with major stakeholders, Quebec adopted its own cultural policy statement. On this point, in 1992, Ms. Liza Frulla, Minister of Cultural Affairs in Quebec's previous Liberal government, speaking before the Standing Committee on Culture, said: "As for programs, the federal government does little or no consulting". And also: "When, as often happens, it is faced with a *fait accompli*, Quebec has to state its real needs after the fact".

• (1235)

As you can see with this brief historical background, Madam Speaker, successive Quebec governments all agreed in their demands concerning culture and communications. Unfortunately, the federal government almost always turned a deaf ear to these claims, giving way naturally to many a confrontation and overlapping. This kind of overlapping was criticized many times.

Here is what can be found in the Arpin report on the Cultural and Arts Policy, which was submitted to Mrs. Liza Frulla–Hébert in June 1991. "We can conclude that there is obvious duplication between the two levels of government in terms of program structure, in terms of clients and even in terms of legislative and tax measures. We can even say that this duplication is driving up the costs. There are differences in directions and priorities depending on the clients. Some measures taken by the federal government go completely against Quebec's options. The harmonization of interventions by both levels of government has always been difficult. The federal government has

never been willing to recognize Quebec's supremacy with regard to culture".

It is not surprising that this government would introduce such a bill. The Prime Minister's whole career has been centred on one important thing: to counter the recognition of Quebec's unique character.

Remember that during the 1980 referendum campaign, he made a lot of promises regarding the Constitution. Since then, he has refused any type of constitutional negotiations with Quebec and is doing everything possible to try and grab powers that have traditionally belonged to Quebec.

Remember also that in 1982, without warning Quebec, the then negotiator who is Prime Minister today secretly concluded, in the middle of the night, a constitutional accord with the English–speaking provinces. The main purpose of this accord was to strip Quebec of an important cultural power, namely the power to legislate on language matters. That is why the National Assembly of Quebec voted unanimously against this federalist attack.

The Meech Lake accord recognized Quebec's unique character. But an ambitious lawyer named Jean Chrétien, who already saw himself as leader of the Liberal Party and future Prime Minister of this country, joined forces with the known enemies of Quebec's unique character, worked hard in secret to kill in the womb any type of affirmation of Quebec's cultural identity and fought ferociously against the distinct society clause. The Prime Minister showed us then who he really is. It is very difficult to believe today that he is and still feels like a true Quebecer.

The refusal by Jean Chrétien's federal government to recognize Quebec's unique character does not surprise me. It is obvious that his government has no desire to see to it that Quebec's culture and language can blossom within the Canadian confederation, but that it would rather see that province's unique character die a slow but sure death.

All Canadians witnessed recently the situation where the Prime Minister tried to have Quebecers pay a double price because their government had wanted to hold a referendum according to their own specificity. That is totally unacceptable. The referendum legislation and election rules are part of the distinctness of Quebec. Its respect for democracy has led Quebec to adopt, in the area of electoral equity, a legislation which is comparable to no other in Canada or elsewhere in the world.

This refusal by the federal government to admit the distinct character of Quebec has serious consequences and generates all kinds of duplication and overlapping.

• (1240)

We must remember that duplication caused by the intrusion of the federal government in the cultural area, which normally is under provincial jurisdiction, cost Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Acknowledgement of the distinctness of Quebec by the federal government would mean a repatriation of the cultural sector and of all the related budgetary envelopes. It would result in some important savings and would be more attuned to the logic which has been fundamental to Canadian cultural policy for many years.

How can the Governor General explain the dual principle in terms of culture? Clause 4.(2) of the proposed legislation states that the Minister's jurisdiction encompasses jurisdiction over, and I quote:

(j) the formulation of cultural policy as it relates to foreign investment;

In other words, for the last thirty years, Canadian cultural policies have been aimed at limiting foreign investments in the cultural area in order to ensure the survival of the Canadian culture. At the same time, and according to the same fundamental principle, that is the safeguard of the Canadian culture, Canadian governments have tried to impose to the various media a minimum Canadian content and ownership.

According to these principles, the Canadian government is saying that governments must defend their culture, that it must not be left in foreign hands or allowed to be submerged by a foreign culture. Canada should therefore recognize the fact that Quebec is in the best position to defend its culture, which is different from Canada's.

When the subject is Quebec culture, all those high–sounding principles supported, for instance, by the Canadian intellectual elite, fall by the wayside. Then they call it isolationism, tribalism and narrow–mindedness. When one hears such vehement statements, one wonders why Canada, as a sign of protest and to deny any hint of narrow–mindedness and isolationism, does not simply put its culture into the hands of the Americans. If managing their culture is good for Canadians, why would it be so bad for Quebecers? Again, a double standard.

Under Canadian federalism, English Canada has the right to defend its culture against the American invader, but Quebec should drop its own culture, according to the bill before the House today. They want to make us all one nation and deny there are two. There are two nations in this country, and the act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage should reflect an awareness of the situation in Quebec and the flexibility that Quebec needs to develop and prosper.

This bill contains no guarantees for the French language and culture in Canada. Instead of defending French language and culture, the Department of Canadian Heritage is being used by

the Canadian government to undermine French language and culture in Canada.

The Department of Canadian Heritage administers all programs connected with clause 4(2)*(g)* of the Act, and I quote:

> (g) the advancement of the equality of status and use of English and French and the enhancement and development of English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada;

First of all, it is strange the legislation does not refer to the equality of French and English. According to the department, however, this kind of wording would be far too coercive, although the present minister is French speaking. The legislation therefore refers to advancement, to moving towards a hypothetical equality.

Since for the past 125 years or more, we have been moving nowhere at all, francophones can hardly be expected to believe they will get there some day.

Similarly, the Canadian government is careful to avoid any reference in this bill to recognizing and promoting the position of Canada's two founding nations, since such recognition would have involved genuinely defending the French language and culture in Canada. Inequality between francophones and anglophones in Canada is systematic. There are many examples, and I will mention a few that struck me after I got to Ottawa.

Example No. 1: I suggest that members who receive their weekly green list of government publications compare the number of documents available to anglophones and francophones. On the list, it usually says that the French version will be available later on.

• (1245)

Example No. 2: It is a fiction that a francophone can make himself understood and obtain services in his own language across Canada. Even some of our so–called bilingual public servants are unable to provide services in French. Even here in the federal government, in the national capital, once you get past the token francophone, there is a complete vacuum: almost everything is in English. So much so that even the Assistant Deputy Minister for Cultural Affairs of the Minister of Canadian Heritage is losing his francophone roots and testifies in English before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Thousands are being assimilated every day within the very precincts of the federal government, because they know that English means more status, more advancement and, as a result, better pay.

I challenge the government to order a private company that is serious and strictly impartial—which automatically excludes the Commissioner of Official Languages—to find out to what extent a francophone can expect to receive the same level of service from the federal government in his own language. If the government refuses to take up this challenge, I am prepared to prove my point by revealing a number of bilingual positions held by people who do not know a word of French. When people find out what positions are involved and which citizens are affected by these positions, they will be flabbergasted.

Example No. 3: Contrary to their anglophone colleagues, francophones working for the federal government must, for the most part, work in what is for them a second language. It is a whole class of citizens who are being assimilated. In this respect, the federal government behaves exactly the same way—especially in the national capital region—that private companies did in the late 1960s in Quebec, when francophones were not allowed to speak French even while smoking in the cafeteria. As soon as they entered the plant, they had to speak English. I demand an independent and earnest inquiry into this matter. This of course excludes the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Moreover, I am asking all French speaking civil servants, especially those in the national capital region, who are required to work exclusively in English, to systematically complain to the Commissioner of Official Languages so that he can no longer hide behind the lack or small number of complaints to avoid taking action and severely reprimanding a government which claims to promote French language and culture but which forbids a significant number of its French–speaking employees to work in their own language. I will add that it would be useful to send me a copy of the complaints so that I can act upon them, while preserving the complainants' anonymity, and defend in the House of Commons French speaking civil servants who have been deprived of their fundamental rights.

Similarly, how can it be explained that the federal public service in Quebec, excluding the Outaouais region, is made up of 54 per cent bilingual positions, which are truly bilingual, whereas in Ontario, excluding the national capital region, only 8 per cent of positions are bilingual? Given the respective minority, English in Quebec and French in Ontario, to be fair, 25 per cent of positions in the Ontario federal civil service should be bilingual.

This shows how little the federal government cares about its French minority and how great his concerns for its English minority in Quebec are. As a matter of fact, the federal government is using its civil service to impose bilingualism on Quebec. After all, when every francophone can speak English, who will need French?

I will remind my hon. colleagues that the promotion and development of French and English minorities in Canada is one of the responsibilities of the Department of Canadian Heritage. The only minority in Canada which does not have its own schools—and when it does they do not have toilets or running water—, which hardly has any cultural instruments, which does not have health services or social services in its own language, is the French–speaking minority. The maximum of services should

go to this minority. If cuts are necessary, they should not be made at the expense of the neediest.

• (1250)

I am surprised that this principle, considered so sound in other areas, should not be acceptable when it comes to francophones. The minister wants to cut $25 million from cultural minorities in Canada, on top of the other 5 to 8 per cent cut that the Minister of Finance is considering and which will not spare the minorities.

The minister confirmed these cuts in a document he called "Confidence in the future". When I see such a title and when I consider the content of this document, I wonder how the French–speaking minority will make out.

Indeed, like the English–speaking minority, it must decide itself where the axe will fall and it must cut to the same extent as the English–speaking minority in Quebec. Yet, the minister, who has discretionary powers, should make his savings at the expense of those who can afford it, that is the English minority in Quebec.

The minister must cut where the need is least, and not across the board. The English minority has its own school system, its health system and social services, its cultural network. So the minister, ever respectful of social and cultural justice, should put the burden of the cuts on those who can support them, irrespective of the language they speak.

Moreover, all input of public money intended to promote bilingualism: immersion classes, scholarships and so on, should be cancelled. On the issue of cuts the minister is acting like a doctor who can choose between giving a cardiac massage to a patient in danger or teaching a person in very good health how to give a cardiac massage.

The lack of logic in the distribution of jurisdictions between the departments is a threat to Canadian culture. As I said earlier in my statement, Bill C–53 aims at establishing legally the Department of Canadian Heritage. Canadians could rightly expect the government to put some order in its house. One would have expected the government to take this opportunity to organize a bit more strictly the various jurisdictions dealing with heritage. But it seems to be asking too much of the Liberal government. For instance copyright, which is directly linked to culture, will come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Industry as provided in Bill C–46.

Remember that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Canadian Heritage stated officially and unequivocally that the adoption of phase II of the copyright legislation was a priority. Apparently this was only baked wind since by favouring the Department of Industry over the Department of Canadian Heritage, the government is forcing Canadian Heritage officials, who are defending the copyright, to submit to the dictates of their colleagues at Industry who think first of all in terms of dollar bills.

As a matter of fact, the latter will always be able to argue, during the numerous interdepartmental quarrels that will ensue, that it is their right and that they have the last word since copyright comes under their jurisdiction. The most tragic aspect of that story is what it underlies. The government has already told us in the Ginn case that the cost effectiveness of culture, be it American or another, must come before the need to protect the Canadian culture. In other words, the Department of Industry is willing to sell large segments of the Canadian cultural industry to Americans.

This is why the Department of Canadian Heritage has approved the sale of the important Canadian publishing house Ginn Publishing to an American company. Once more, having to choose between Canadian cultural integrity and its wish to not displease the Americans, this government has chosen to grovel before the Americans.

I remind members that the Minister of Canadian Heritage tried to justify his actions by saying that there had been a verbal agreement between a junior official and Paramount.

For obvious reasons copyright reform that the cultural industry is waiting for so impatiently because it is crucial to its survival will probably be shelved. The same lack of logic which seems to be the trademark of the governing party has prevailed in the case of telecommunications which were cut up into so many pieces. The government could have taken the opportunity to answer the industry's long standing request and regroup the whole of telecommunications in the Department of Canadian Heritage and, in so doing, make up for the mistakes of the Campbell administration.

• (1255)

Even when I arrived in Ottawa, the deputy minister told me that this was a monumental mistake, that he intended to recommend to the present minister that it be corrected when the department was created. Once again, the Department of Industry, no doubt a heavier player in the cabinet, inherited the lion's share of jurisdiction in the field of telecommunications.

Chances are that the Liberal government, who so staunchly defends federalism, and by extension, the duplication of services, continued overlap, and the waste of money, will see this division of the field of telecommunications as an opportunity to form joint committees of civil servants seconded from here and there. It will be an opportunity to increase the numbers of civil servants, committees, meetings, all those things that are a waste of taxpayers' money, but that for the Canadian government, and its deficit in the hundreds of billions of dollars, is the federalist thing to do.

For why simplify when it is so easy to complicate matters? In this bill, the government, true to form, is merely ratifying

reform put forward by others. What did we expect? It has done nothing new since it came to power one year ago.

Fortunately, in the near future—and I will not mention dates, that would only stir things up—the people of Quebec will be asked to choose between an unlikely cultural existence as part of Canada and a cultural existence as a sovereign state. The federalists will point to venerable institutions like Radio–Canada as proof of the cultural viability of the Canadian federation.

When we know that the endangered culture in Canada is the French culture, we cannot believe that this very federal and very federalist imbalance will ensure its survival in the Canadian context. No wonder that in a 1980 survey conducted by the Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français, the reply of young French–speaking Canadians when asked in which language they listened to television, radio, video games and videocassettes was "mostly in English". Perhaps it would not be so, had the federal government not treated them as second–rate citizens culturally.

If Quebec is to survive culturally, it must repatriate all culture–related powers and monies. I should point out in that regard that all the governments in Quebec have been asking for just that for 30 years and that for the past 30 years, this has been denied to everyone of them by the federal government.

Basically, at the next referendum, Quebec will have a choice between two alternatives: cultural death within the Canadian federation and development as a French speaking sovereign state in North America.

That is why I would like to introduce a motion at this time. Seconded by the hon. member for Québec, I move:

> That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "Bill C–53, An Act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other Acts, be not now read a second time but that the Order be discharged, the Bill withdrawn and the subject–matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage."

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I will take your proposal under advisement and advise you in a moment as to its admissibility. I would suggest that you continue with your remarks in the meantime.

• (1300)

Mrs. Tremblay: Madam Speaker, the main thing about our motion to defer second reading, to not read this bill a second time but to refer it instead to the committee, is that it is absolutely essential in our view that all the overlapping in the cultural area be reviewed and really reported on to this House. This bill, which had probably been drafted by the previous government, meets Ms. Campbell's wishes. It must be amended to avoid all sources of conflict, all overlapping, all unnecessary expenditure of Canadian taxpayers' money, and particularly to ensure that the Quebec community can see its uniqueness reflected in this bill.

Understandably, Madam Speaker, it is impossible for a Quebecer to feel at ease as part of the Canadian Heritage.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Your motion is admissible, hon. member.

Before giving the floor to someone else, I would like to remind the House that sometimes, with motions, we forget that it is not our practice to name individual members of this House. We can refer to them by their titles or ridings but not by name. I did not rise but that was done several times and I would ask all hon. members to be more careful.

Mrs. Tremblay: When I named the Prime Minister, I was referring to him when he was a lawyer. I could not say "Prime Minister" as he was just a lawyer at the time—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I will check the "blues" but I think you are mistaken. If I am wrong, I will get back to you, but I would first like to see the blues for that part of the debate.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Before I begin my speech I would like to state for the record that in order for a reasonable and conscientious debate to take place, as we are hoping to do with this bill, it would be greatly appreciated rather than receiving an amendment 20 minutes before rising to speak in the House that we be given an adequate response time. This has happened continuously throughout this session of Parliament and I do object most strenuously.

The bill is intended to establish legislatively some of the changes to government that the member for Sherbrooke and his Conservatives bequeathed to us in Parliament. In reality it is nothing more than moving the tables and chairs of a bloated bureaucracy. There is no downsizing, no cost savings. It is the status quo once more, the consistent refrain of a Liberal government that has become one of review, study, consult, discuss. Quite frankly it is do nothing mumbo–jumbo.

I am going to address a number of issues today explaining why my colleagues and I will oppose the bill. Further I will address those changes that should be made to the bill which would allow my Reform colleagues and I to support it. Having just heard the Bloc amendment, in principle I can say we will support it because it will move the bill to committee for further extensive examination.

With respect to the bill itself we oppose it for a number of reasons. First, it will legislatively entrench multiculturalism spending, national enforced bilingualism and the funding of

special interest groups, all of which the Reform Party is ideologically opposed to. Second, the establishment of the department will not streamline, will not result in downsizing and will not result in any financial savings. In fact the bill will end up costing Canadian taxpayers.

In June 1993 shortly after taking office then Prime Minister Kim Campbell announced what were supposed to be sweeping changes to government. The changes were intended to streamline the bureaucracy to make it more efficient and more cost effective. As the bill demonstrates, none of these objectives were accomplished by the changes which the Progressive Conservatives proposed.

• (1305)

The Tories had put forward a concept which was simply window dressing in an attempt to satisfy voters who were looking for leadership in a government that had continually demonstrated its arrogance by showing it did not care about the size of government, the accountability of government, the responsibility of government, or the cost of government. Canadians continued to believe as I do that they remain overgoverned.

Attempting to change that impression the Tories decided to reconstruct a smaller cabinet, to downsize government. We all know what a good job they did to change public perception. They did such a good job that they suffered the largest electoral defeat in the history of the country.

Now we have the Liberals who inherited these proposed changes to government. It is astonishing but they actually appear satisfied with these leftover, stale Tory ideas, satisfied enough to implement the changes left to them. It epitomizes a government which has resigned itself to the status quo. There are no new ideas, no creative solutions to the problems we face and there is continued disdain for the best interests of Canadians.

I find it difficult to understand why the Liberals have introduced Bill C–53 at this time. The president of the Queen's Privy Council is undertaking his program review which is purported to be laying the groundwork for the government's restructuring and downsizing. This review is not expected to be completed, so it is reported, until sometime this fall. Why is the Liberal government establishing departments prior to the release of the results of the program review? A number of possible answers come to mind.

Perhaps the government is not planning to make any restructuring changes at all, but this would contradict the Minister of Finance who has already promised there will be cuts made in next year's budget. Perhaps there are some interim results of the review which the government is acting upon but has not yet made public. This action is quite conceivable given the events in the House of the past two weeks. Perhaps the Minister of Canadian Heritage has heard from the President of the Privy Council about the restructuring of the Department of Canadian Heritage but remains very content at this time to symbolically move the tables and chairs.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is a mishmash of responsibility, a helter–skelter of activities, programs, departments and bureaucrats. The department is responsible for: the Canada Council; the CBC; Telefilm Canada; the Museum of Civilization; the Museum of Nature; the CRTC; the National Archives; the National Arts Centre; the National Battlefields Commission; the National Capital Commission; the National Film Board; the National Gallery; the National Library; the Museum of Science and Technology; the Public Service Commission; the Advisory Council on the Status of Women; Status of Women Canada; amateur sport and official games; official languages; Parks Canada, historic sites and monuments; Canadian Race Relations Foundation; Canadian Heritage Languages Institute; multiculturalism; and copyright.

There is no strategy, no evident plan for the management of this department. It simply serves as a grab–bag for anything that smacks of heritage. The Liberals have spent no time planning an effective and downsized ministry but have rushed headlong to put Bill C–53 in place giving the minister broad and sweeping powers.

Copyright is a good example of this poor planning. Presently copyright is split between the Departments of Industry and Canadian Heritage. Industry is responsible for the technical side of copyright; heritage is responsible for copyright in so much as it relates to heritage issues. This duplication of responsibility is extremely inefficient.

In fact phase two of the copyright legislation was due last spring, but it was postponed until this fall. Now we hear that phase two of copyright will not be tabled in the House until next spring. The duplication of the responsibility for copyright has resulted in administrative and territorial hassles which have so far put the legislation more than one year behind schedule. It is this kind of inefficiency that Canadians want to see eliminated.

• (1310)

Copyright is not a heritage issue. Copyright is commercially based. It is the exclusive legal right granted for a specified period to an author, designer, producer, or another appointed person to print, publish, perform, film, or record original literary, artistic or musical material. All these artistic activities relating to copyright do fall under the auspices of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

However, when creators apply for copyright protection they are essentially protecting a business enterprise. Publishing and distribution rights as well as protection under copyright laws

create a commercially based business enterprise. This is a view that I support, encouraging more artists to take a business approach to their work. When copyright protection is acquired or sought an artist becomes a businessman or businesswoman.

Currently our copyright laws are antiquated and completely out of sync with other areas of the globe. There is a need for worldwide harmonization. This becomes far removed from the focus of Canadian heritage. In fact it moves copyright beyond the mandate of this ministry.

Support for copyright changes will be driven by financial considerations, irrespective of anything the Bloc Quebecois has put forward. It will come from the business community, both domestic and international. This scope is externally driven as our copyright laws must interface with those that exist both within and without the country of Canada. It first must be appreciated that it is essential that copyright responsibilities be delegated to only one ministry.

As I have said, copyright is a business issue which is commercially based and externally driven. As such it should remain within the portfolio of a ministry that deals primarily with the performance and regulation of business and that is the Department of Industry. This same conclusion is drawn from the following example.

Consider a computerized accounting package that is developed in New York, patented there and distributed internationally, including to Canada. Whoever and wherever are the business considerations given to the marketing of that product.

The pirating of such computer programs is reported to cost the computer industry some $7 billion a year in lost revenue in North America. Whose responsibility should it be to protect the copyright laws in this instance? Surely not the Department of Canadian Heritage. Copyright is part of the international information highway. It should be in the ministry that deals with the organizations that are most affected financially by the legislation. That department is the Department of Industry.

I repeat that I cannot support Bill C–53 at all. As I stated at the outset the intent behind all of this departmental shuffling is to downsize government and to save money. At the briefing for this bill the question was put categorically: Will this bill cause any downsizing of personnel or decreases in spending? The response was equally categorical. It was no.

This fact alone should be sufficient to merit the bill a unanimous rejection by all members of the House. The original intent is now muddied because there will be no downsizing and no reduction in expenditures. The bill failed dismally on its original intent. How can we support a bill which is so fundamentally flawed?

The taxpayers of Canada told the last government in no uncertain terms what they thought of a government that does not keep its promises, that fails to balance its books and that fails to pay its debt.

• (1315)

We have in the bill another example of the Liberal government failing to learn from past mistakes. The government does not care about balancing the budget or addressing the national debt. If it did it would begin by restructuring and downsizing government departments.

The state of Canada's finances is shocking. The Liberal government spends over $110 million more every day than it generates in revenues. Instead of doing something about it, it continues to introduce bills which do not save any money. Nor does it cut spending. Instead it introduces legislation like Bill C–53 that costs Canadians more and more money.

Despite this reason, which is in itself reason enough to oppose the bill, there are others. In fact the bill should have another name. Instead of Bill C–53 it should be short titled the special interest funding bill.

The special interest funding bill grants to the minister the power to spend millions and millions of hard earned taxpayer dollars on such things as grants for thousands of special interest groups.

Canada is in a fiscal crisis. The federal debt is more than $532 billion. What is needed is a plan to address this dire situation.

The Minister of Finance continues to ask members of the Reform Party for constructive ideas for cutting the deficit. The minister should wake up and pay attention because my colleagues and I have been responding since the beginning of Parliament with good ideas about where to find a whole lot of spending cuts. The Minister of Finance can begin by cutting all federal funding to promote multiculturalism in Canada.

The Reform Party supports a number of principles that I fully endorse and believe in. We believe that the legitimate role of government is to do for people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all or do as well for themselves individually or through non–government organizations. We believe in the value of enterprise and initiative and that governments have a responsibility to foster and protect an environment in which initiative and enterprise can be exercised by individuals and groups. We believe that public money should be regarded by governments as funds held in trust and that governments should practise fiscal responsibility, in particular responsibility to balance expenditures and revenues.

Having said that, one can understand why I believe in the principle that individuals or groups should be free to present their cultural heritage using their own resources. The Reform

Party opposes the current concept of multiculturalism and hyphenated Canadianism pursued by the Government of Canada. We would end funding of the multicultural program and support the abolition of the department and the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism.

If the Minister of Finance sincerely wants ideas on how to cut his deficit, he will get rid of this aspect of special interest funding and immediately save the Canadian taxpayers some $38.8 million a year. If we include official languages in this special interest cash cow we can save close to one–quarter of a billion dollars.

Multiculturalism is an idea that is fundamentally flawed and I will spend the next few minutes explaining this point. Multiculturalism was introduced in the House of Commons on October 8, 1971. In the 23 years that have followed it has been politically incorrect for anyone to criticize it, especially in the House of Commons.

In fact members of Parliament from the Tories, the Grits and the NDP have all used the multiculturalism policy in an insincere, superficial and shallow manner to garner political support from ethnic communities. There is now a new voice, another voice of reason in the House of Commons, a Reform voice that takes the wishes of the majority of Canadians to the House on any and all issues. That includes expressing a categorical rejection of the federal government spending money on multiculturalism.

• (1320)

We all want the right to retain our roots but what we have is Trudeau's enforced multicultural scams. The costs have been excessive. Ethnic group is pitted against ethnic group and the country is fragmented into 1,000 consciences. Trudeau's ideas about multiculturalism continue to contribute as a primary factor in the erosion of federalism and Canadian unity. Catering to special interest groups à la Trudeau and company smashes the spine of federalism. This destructive outcome is almost inevitable so long as we officially encourage large groups to remain apart from the mainstream.

The multiculturalism policy was designed to recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage. It is intended to promote full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in all aspects of Canadian life, including equal treatment and equal protection under the law while respecting and valuing their diversity. The language of the policy is fairly innocuous and well meaning but in practice it endorses the agendas of special interest groups at the expense of the taxpayer.

Before continuing, let me quote from Philip Resnick's book *Thinking English Canada* as he reflects on multiculturalism and its limits:

> The emergence of multiculturalism as a force in Canadian politics was a belated response to a sociological transformation going back to the turn of the century. Waves of immigration pouring into Canada at that period from central, eastern and southern Europe could not with time dilute the overwhelmingly Anglo–Saxon character of Canada outside Quebec. The further migration of millions to this country in the post World War II period and the removal of de facto barriers to non–European migration in the 1960s would deeply alter the face of Canada and its urban centres in particular. Visible minorities from the West Indies, Central and South America, the Far East, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, even Africa have taken on a new importance to a point where they will constitute 15 per cent of the total population of Canada by the year 2000. Audible minorities speaking over 100 different languages and mirroring a myriad of cultures have become an integral part of the Canadian mosiac. To deny their specificity and their presence is to play ostrich, redneck or worse.
>
> At the same time, people of diverse backgrounds have chosen to migrate to Canada and, in most cases to become Canadian citizens. This decision means that they and their offspring subscribe to the political, legal, and other features that characterize this country and cannot expect special treatment or recognition as groups apart, nor can they simply import with them blood feuds and hatred from countries from which they originate and give them new expression on Canadian soil. The price of forging a new nationality out of diverse elements is a fair degree of tolerance and goodwill all around.

Reznick continues on multiculturalism:

> In one way multiculturalism opens up wonderful opportunities to tap the diversity of Canada's ethnic heritage, itself a microcosm, more and more, of the planet as a whole. To the degree that English Canada, moreover, has become less European or less white, to the degree that it has shed a predominantly British Isles tropism, it has gone beyond ethnicity in laying the foundations for national identity.

Such developments, in Resnick's opinion, are reason for celebration. He says:

> English–Canadian society represents a remarkable amalgam of cultural communities and people; wisely it does not require that each of these surrender its identity in order to become Canadian. If English Canada is to develop a sense of itself as a nation, it will be through continuing to foster such open mindedness in the years to come.
>
> Where I would draw the line, however, is with a multiculturalism that might seek to deny a specifically Canadian or English–Canadian identity altogether.
>
> In a world where nationality remains a primary source of identity—whatever the 21st or 25th centuries may bring—English Canadians must be careful not to deny themselves the ability to think of themselves as a nation. National identity requires a primacy for English against any other language, a minimal sense of our past and of the political traditions we have developed, a sense of place, here in the northern part of North America and nowhere else. English Canada is multicultural but it must be based on something more than multiculturalism.

• (1325)

Resnick's ideas capture the need we have in Canada for a new vision of federalism.

The member for Port Moody—Coquitlam placed a question on the Order Paper which requested for 1993 the total amount of funds received by individuals and groups from the Department of Multiculturalism, who these individuals were and how much they received. The response to the question staggered me and should sicken taxpayers.

The response from the government was a 703–page document that detailed 1,350 grants at a cost of $25,041,939. Let me share some of the outrageous grants that are doled out in the so–called interests of promoting multiculturalism.

Lu Hanessian Productions received $19,254 to produce a musical review of 27 songs and musical vignettes about human relationships. That is 20,000 taxpayer dollars wasted on a montage of songs that could, indeed should, have been produced with support from the private sector.

The Ottawa–Carleton Learning Foundation spent $9,044 to study the feasibility of offering engineers courses that integrate first generation Canadian engineers into the profession. Engineers by virtue of being engineers are already fairly privileged. I doubt that they need any further special integration courses. This is an example of the government giving grant money to individuals who do not need it but who should seek professional support from their peers.

The Multicultural Society of Ontario spent $40,000 on activities related to the Montreal venue of the national tour of many rivers. We do not even know what the activities are, but $40,000 is a lot of money for a tour of some rivers.

The Folks Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre is spending $28,000 to study the needs of the community with respect to folk arts. This $28,000 is not even going to multicultural groups themselves. It is going into the pockets of self–appointed experts to determine what the needs of the community are with respect to folk art. This is ridiculous. We have a government spending more time and more money worrying about satisfying folk art needs than it does addressing the debt and deficit.

The Dance Centre will spend $30,000 bringing dancers together to meet and create a list of dance resources. Here is the Liberal government giving $30,000 so that dancers can meet and create a list of themselves. This money is not even going to help dancers dance.

As I said, the grants fill 703 pages. This list of outrageous grants goes on and on. This is a 703–page example of government wasting taxpayers' money. These are the kinds of special interest handouts that have to stop.

Canadians remain unsure of what multiculturalism is, what it is trying to do and why and what it can accomplish in a free and democratic society such as ours. Multiculturalism can encompass folk songs, dance, food, festivals, arts and crafts, museums, heritage languages, ethnic studies, ethnic presses, race relations, culture sharing and human rights. Much of the opposition to multiculturalism results from the indiscriminate application of the term to a wide range of situations, practices, expectations and goals, as well as its institutionalization as state policy, an expensive one at that.

Public support for multiculturalism has been difficult to ascertain. In the early 1970s when the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommended the government introduce some ethnocultural policy, public support for multiculturalism was at around 76 per cent. An Angus Reid poll in 1991 shows that figure has not changed much. It remains at 78 per cent. But what can we make of this level of support? Little to nothing, I suggest. For at the same time that this poll was being done, the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future reported some uneasiness about the Canadian public's attitude toward multiculturalism policy.

• (1330)

It stated: "Overwhelmingly, participants told us that reminding us of our different origins is less useful in building a unified country than emphasizing the things we have in common. While Canadians accept and value Canada's cultural diversity, they do not value many of the activities of the multicultural program of the federal government. These are seen as expensive and divisive in that they remind Canadians of their different origins rather than their shared symbols, society and future".

Further, a Decima survey was commissioned by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews and carried out in October 1993. The survey found that three out of four Canadians expressed a preference for an American style melting pot approach to immigration over the multicultural mosaic that has been officially promoted in Canada since the 1970s.

The survey also disclosed that Canadians generally are increasingly intolerant of interest group demands and that there is a relatively strong view that particularly ethnic, racial or religious minorities must make more efforts to adapt to Canada rather than insist upon a maintenance of difference, especially at federal expense.

Roughly similar proportions of visible minorities expressed the same sentiments. This poll would suggest that it is the prevalent opinion among the groups targeted to receive multiculturalism grants that such grants are divisive and not uniting.

As I mentioned, criticism of the status quo has been increasing from the policy's supposed beneficiaries. Jimmy Wong who emigrated from Vietnam in 1980 and is now a technician at a photo processing lab commented: "The government spends too much money on something that is not necessary. Canada has freedom and work for anyone who wants it and that is all newcomers need". Richmond magazine editor Anthony Choy

agrees that government sanctioned segregation is no good for Canada.

What seems to be clear is that there is an erosion of support for multiculturalism by the citizens of Canada. This erosion of support for the multicultural approach, particularly given that minorities themselves concur, does nothing to promote harmony and unity in Canada because it does not recognize that all Canadians are equal.

Earlier I referred to the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future. This royal commission is better know as the Spicer commission. Mr. Spicer's views were well enough respected to earn him the chair of the royal commission on Canada's future.

We should take a brief look at his views on the future of multiculturalism. Mr. Spicer clearly saw the need for integration. In 1987 he said: "Isn't the time coming to stop making a religion of mosaics altogether and to start fostering a national spirit we can all identify with? With constant intermarriage, for how many generations more must an English or Ukrainian Canadian revere his presumed roots?" Spicer went on to accuse the government of making a virtue of a weakness, a glory of a hindrance to nationhood. We pay people to have foreign roots.

Two years later, just before he was given the chair of the royal commission, he wrote an article which appeared in the Montreal *Gazette* stating that state funded multiculturalism encourages not Canadians but professional ethnics and that multiculturalism was an anthology of terrors: Balkanization, ethnic politicians siphoning off political protection money, ghetto mentalities, destabilization of Quebec leading to secession—look where we are today—reverse intolerance for Canadian culture and institutions and a devaluation of the very idea of a common nationality.

At first blush the armies of the politically correct would have us think that Mr. Spicer's views are extreme and unrepresentative. However, nothing could be further from the truth. I referred earlier to the 1991 Angus Reid study on multiculturalism in Canada. It is the most comprehensive and the most recent evaluation of Canadians' attitude toward multiculturalism. Its findings echo the comments made by Mr. Spicer.

In a section of the study on multiculturalism policy and the federal government in general, groups knew little of the federal government's policy on multiculturalism and most of those who claimed familiarity were, upon further probing, unable to provide substantive details of the policy. Further, the study dispels the myth that it is only the west where we find people opposed to multiculturalism spending. The report states clearly that there was a widespread feeling that the government should not be involved in multiculturalism especially in Toronto and Calgary and the notion that multiculturalism policy was ultimately divisive was expressed clearly in Montreal, Toronto and Calgary.

• (1335)

The study also evaluated the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute, both of which are large components of the multicultural program.

Regarding race relations, respondents did not believe that it was the task of government to eliminate racism. They believed it should be handled within the community or one on one. Regarding the languages institute, respondents in Toronto, Winnipeg and Calgary expressed the view that ultimately the responsibility for preserving heritage languages resides at the family or the community level.

Importantly many participants noted that funds to any of the organizations should come from private not public funding sources. When people begin to criticize multicultural federal funding, the liberal left often trot out section 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to justify the continuous pouring of taxpayers dollars down the multicultural drain. Section 27 of the charter states: "This charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians".

For the Liberal left any reference to the charter is meant to be an immediate conversation winner as it serves as their Bible. Any reference to it is as such deemed to be incontrovertible. However, in this instance section 27 will not save them. Peter Hogg, understood to be the leading constitutional expert, even by the liberal left, doubts the utility of this section, calling it a mere rhetorical flourish.

I must share the words of another Canadian author, Richard Ogmundson. He writes:

> Times have changed and we have moved on, apparently in the most accidental fashion, to a new social policy called multiculturalism. My visceral understanding of this is that the old social contract, upon which I based my life, has been terminated. It has apparently been replaced with a new social contract that emphasizes "old world" cultural identifications. It would appear that the cultural ideal has become that of a hyphenated Canadian. Apparently, one is now supposedly to identify primarily as Aboriginal, French, British, Italian, Sikh or whatever, and only secondary as a Canadian. In this view, it would appear that there is no cultural space available for someone, like myself, who wants to be a Canadian. At best, this category is considered secondary, residual or anomalous. At worst, someone who wishes to identify as a Canadian is likely to be considered chauvinist, reactionary, racist, and bigoted.
>
> My visceral reaction to this sequence of events is that I have been deprived of my primary cultural identification by the opportunists who run this country. In a way, one might consider the multiculturalism program to be a form of cultural genocide aimed at the destruction of a pan–Canadian identity.
>
> I feel an acute sense of betrayal. I feel a sense of demotion. I feel that I have been told that, by virtue of my ethnic heritage, I'm not good enough to be a full–fledged member of Canadian society.

Our vision of Canada should be committed to the goal of social and personal well–being that values individuality while emphasizing themes like family and community assumption of responsibility, problem solving and communicating these value sets to a means of better group life. However, at no time should the rights of a group supersede the rights of individuals unless the group happens to consist of a majority within Canada.

This discussion of multiculturalism serves as an example of how Bill C–53 really is a special interest funding bill. I have shown how the federal government's interpretations of multiculturalism support must come to an end. We can no longer spend money we do not have financing such a notion. The Angus Reid study from 1991 clearly showed that not only has the multiculturalism program failed but Canadians oppose it.

Bill C–53 gives to the Minister of Canadian Heritage the power to spend money on programs which fundamentally undermine the unity of this country. Canadians are tired of a status quo government. Canadians will not support or tolerate further special interest funding and they will not support the bill.

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join this discussion in the House today and to speak to Bill C–53, the Department of Canadian Heritage Act. The bill is designed to give legal status to the amalgamation of five predecessor organizations, the Secretary of State, the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, the Department of Fitness and Amateur Sport, the parks departments of Canada, a component of Environment Canada, and the cultural broadcasting and heritage components of the Department of Communications.

• (1340)

This profound reorganization reflects the government's commitment toward more efficient and effective government. Under the new arrangement one department is responsible for delivering a critical mandate. The Department of Canadian Heritage brings together many elements that define us as Canadians, as who we really are, a multifaceted, dynamic and diverse nation with a very rich cultural and natural heritage. Our geography and our culture are as diversified as one could possibly find. We should not be asking the question of who is a real Canadian. That is answered as a matter of citizenship. We must ask ourselves what are our Canadian values and how do we appreciate and communicate their importance to all Canadians.

I would say that those I have just been listening to have been communicating a tremendous degree of misinformation. I hope my remarks will put proper information in the hands of all Canadians.

The fact is that we have always been a multicultural, multilingual nation, from the many native communities and native peoples that existed here before the founding of our two nations, that is the British and the French who came here and later joined the aboriginal people and the Inuit. We were later joined by people from around the world to build a bilingual and multicultural Canada and that is our reality. This new department is responsible, and I will quote from the legislation, for "the promotion of a greater understanding of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and related values as well as multiculturalism".

Canada's multicultural nature is something we have already entrenched in section 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is one of which all Canadians can be proud. No one has been asked to remove their roots. Everyone has been told they are welcome here in Canada and please bring their culture with them, not their ancient angry patterns.

We have codified our commitment to respect the diversity of this nation by unanimously passing the world's first multiculturalism act. By placing this policy, this program, this name, whatever we wish to call it, by placing multiculturalism within the context of the Department of Canadian Heritage we are ensuring that this is a policy that addresses the needs of all Canadians.

Everyone in the House, regardless of colour, race, language, creed or religion is a Canadian by right of birth or by right of choice if they hold a Canadian citizenship passport.

My vision of today's multiculturalism relates as a word to its policy, to its program, how it describes our reality. It is one that encompasses the full diversity of our people. It includes those whose families arrived from Europe many centuries ago as well as those who recently arrived from the four corners of the globe. Canada reflects the world for the world is here in the nature of our people and the citizenship that they hold.

The mandated program is to provide and promote a greater sense of intercultural and interracial understanding and that is not laissez–faireism. That is active understanding of who we are, how we came to be, and an appreciation of the uniqueness of this Canadian mosaic. That is what I would have liked to have heard from across the floor. It is most unfortunate that was not the language of the discourse.

We must all recognize that in order to achieve this goal of social cohesion, social understanding and acceptance, the government is only spending $1 per year per Canadian. It is barely enough I believe to ensure social cohesion, social harmony and the great country that we are.

[*Translation*]

It is a broad but essential mandate, if we want to consolidate the elements needed to foster a sense of Canadian identity. The place of multiculturalism in this context shows the paramount importance of this policy in strengthening our national identity.

• (1345)

A great deal has been said about the situations that caused deep disagreements within our society. The so–called break–up of the family, the greater visibility of our multicultural population, the prolonged recession from which we are only now emerging have all led us to ponder who we are and what we represent, even though the United Nations still rates our country as the best in the world.

The Department of Canadian Heritage was created to promote understanding of our diversity, active involvement in Canadian society and knowledge of our cultural and natural wealth. It carries out this mandate by implementing policies and programs designed to help resolve disagreements, clear up misunderstandings and make us proud of our personal and national identity.

[*English*]

The increasing diversity of our population is only one of the dramatic changes that we are facing. Efforts to deal with these demographic changes are occurring in the face of a number of destabilizing and worrisome dilemmas: world recession, structural changes in the economy, poverty, job losses and other global moves, youth alienation and the difficulty of achieving political consensus on major issues.

Our response to these challenges demands adjustment by and for our people, both as individuals and in their national institutions. Achieving progress can be a daunting task but a worthy challenge.

For example, since taking on the responsibility of Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and travelling across this land and speaking with the people, I have become aware as never before that nation building in a culturally diverse society is a formidable but necessary challenge. The importance of this task must not be underestimated because it involves reconciling cultural diversity with national goals, with national identity. It involves ensuring respect, understanding and appreciation for differences. It involves ensuring that the tapestry which we have woven together with its multicultural colours and its uneven surface is one to be appreciated and one to be admired, with the overwhelming need to ensure that national unity is understood as a common value of which we can be very proud, talking about a national unity, talking about a sense of pride.

I listened earlier to some of the remarks and I do not feel there is a sense of betrayal. I certainly do not feel like a fractionated or hyphenated or disembowelled individual who has to cut off my roots and sense of belonging in order to have a sense of pride and belonging in order to be seen as a Canadian with all the attributes I bring in that personality and in that persona.

I am just not a hyphenated Canadian. I am a Canadian who is proud of her cultural heritage. In Quebec I am a Montrealer. In Canada I am a Quebecer and around the world I am a Canadian. If anyone asks me it is with pride that I say I am a Canadian almost anywhere in this world including in my own city or province.

Let me make it quite clear that none of those identities is incompatible with the strong sense of national identity and pride. It is very much what I am. It is very much that which I am first and foremost, a proud daughter with Jewish roots. I am a mother. I am a grandmother. I share my care, my love and concern and can spread it equally, evenly and as need be. For me that is no conflict. For Canadians, I have spoken to all origins. Whether Italian, Greek, Hungarian, Romanian, from Sri Lanka, Indo–Canadians, whether they are Chinese or Chilean, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim or Jewish, this is not the issue.

• (1350)

The issue is that there is a social contract in Canada that says we share together, learn together, appreciate what we have here and protect it. It is like a very tender young flower. It is a democracy that is messy sometimes but it is the finest thing in the world. We have every reason to be proud of our families, our roots, our heritage. It is through the family and through volunteerism and with participation with the state and the institutions and structures of the state that we can accomplish the kind of country we have all inherited, are inspired by and have a responsibility to protect.

That is why we work closely and in partnership with other levels of government and with key stakeholders in the community. By bringing together various institutions we work to assist them in becoming more responsive to the access needs of our people, to the sense of belonging, to the need for employment and housing, and respect in our health institutions and all aspects of our daily living tasks. By working as mainstream Canadians with newly emerging Canadians as well as others we help to build a Canada that is inclusive of all people.

Our partnership with organizations such as the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, the Conference Board of Canada, Multicultural Canada, the Canadian Advertising Foundation, the Asia–Pacific Foundation, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters and as well with the mayors of major cities we work and give our funds to these organiza-

tions in shared partnership as leverage so that we can promote a better understanding and destroy myths and stereotypes such as have been promoted from across this floor this morning.

We work with these partners to break down prejudice, misinformation, disinformation and to ensure fairness and equality for all people, to build understanding and create that sense of belonging.

[*Translation*]

Fortunately, Canada's experience in the last 20 years generally offers a positive viewpoint on multiculturalism issues, on bringing cultural communities together. What is needed to bridge the gap between new arrivals and the Canadian community receiving them is to build a society based on a consensus about what constitutes the common good for people with diverse interests, backgrounds, origins and beliefs; give everyone a role to play in the big issues; and identify peaceful solutions to potentially explosive problems.

In short, social peace is behind all the efforts we make through multiculturalism goals and strategies.

[*English*]

I have travelled across the country. I have listened sometimes to the misunderstanding but I have listened to the people and have heard what they have said about our diversity. I have heard about the economic advantage of a diverse population, advantages when we have such increases in foreign trade. We have also learned that when business is responsive to and reflective of its diversity it can be profitable as well.

The advertising council's colour your money study showed that by producing representative advertising companies such as the Bay, Zellers and McDonald's increased their revenues because people felt welcome. They felt they could be received behind the counter and were perceived as clients when the advertising was put out; they belonged as Canadians and would be served by Canadians.

[*Translation*]

This and other experiences have convinced me that the programs and policies under my responsibility are a great help in dealing with the problems facing us as a country with a very diverse population comprised of many different groups and peoples.

As you know, at least 46 different countries and ethnic communities are represented in my riding of Mount Royal, while Canada has over 100 ethnic communities.

• (1355)

[*English*]

Frank Rutter, a foreign affairs writer for the Vancouver *Sun*, has described multiculturalism as sweeping the world and as trying to balance a multicultural heritage with a national soul.

The implications of not achieving that balance are very worrisome, if not horrific. We only have to look at what is happening in the world around us to see the results of not trying to reconcile different realities of diversity and ensuring a sense of unity, a sense of belonging and a sense of pride.

[*Translation*]

I stated the obvious because Canada must clearly approach the issue of cultural diversity with rigour, sensitivity and broad–mindedness or be willing to suffer the consequences. The approach adopted by our country in dealing with multiculturalism is an asset that has allowed us to avoid the ethnic tensions plaguing other countries.

[*English*]

Let us realize the real picture of whom we are today. Forty–two per cent of all Canadians have origins other than British and French. With respect to our people of colour, those statistics are often referred to in Statistics Canada reports as visible minorities in Canada. Nationally these were 6 per cent in 1986, 10 per cent by the year 2000. In our major cities, 17 per cent in 1986 and 30 per cent by the year 2000. However in Toronto alone there will be approximately 50 per cent non–English and non–French backgrounds with 30 per cent visible minorities. Other major Canadian cities are undergoing similar changes.

Therefore the increasing diversity of Canada has broad ranging implications. Given an increasingly multicultural reality, Canadian governments and institutions face a number of practical challenges.

Let me close this part of my remarks by saying that fostering a national sense of belonging does not mean asking people to cut off their roots. It does not mean asking mainstream Canadians to forget their origins. It means telling, asking, expecting, teaching, training and educating so that we have an appreciation of where we started, with aboriginal, multicultural, multilingual peoples, whom we added and how we have lived together in peace and understanding.

I would hope that as I continue talking about the Canadian mosaic people will learn and appreciate the role that we play for a dollar a year for each Canadian.

We have to talk about how we ensure and promote growth and understanding of our diversity while recognizing our common values. I believe we have to find and implement effective ways to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, racism and bigotry based on the colour of our skin, our religious beliefs or our cultural differences. We have to learn how to encourage individuals and institutions to make a commitment to work toward eliminating and erasing racism.

These are all programs and projects which we undertake jointly with community groups to ensure that people can get together to understand and know each other in a much more neighbourly way.

How to involve people in welcoming and facilitating the integration—

The Speaker: We will await the hon. member's words with great anticipation.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

TOM MARTINEAU

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Bosnia, Warrant Officer Tom Martineau, who is serving in central Bosnia with the Lord Strathcona's Horse Battle Group, was injured during an exchange of fire between Bosnian government and Bosnian Serb forces.

Warrant Officer Martineau received a single gunshot wound to his left side while working at an observation post in the Bosnian Serb side of the confrontation line about eight kilometres east of Visoko. He was observing warring faction activity from a Cougar armoured vehicle when he was struck during an exchange of fire between the opposing sides. We are very proud of the useful work that our Canadian forces are doing on the international scene.

Warrant Officer Martineau is currently in the excellent care of Canadian forces medical personnel at Camp Visoko and is listed in stable condition.

I know that all members of the House of Commons here in Canada will want to join with me in extending our best wishes to Warrant Office Martineau and his family during this difficult time.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PARTY FUNDRAISING

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, we learned today that companies, banks and unions contributed over $25 million to finance the national Liberal, Reform, Conservative and New Democratic parties. Big corporations contributed $25 million to ensure that their interests are well represented here in the House of Commons.

The Bloc Quebecois for its part received contributions only from the people and is accountable only to them.

For the sake of the openness and democratic values which guide us, I call on the political parties in Canada to be concerned above all with the people's interests and to refuse contributions from party sponsors. Members of Parliament ultimately owe their loyalty to the people and not to big corporations.

* * *

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, in May I received an appeal from 16 of the high school staff at Lumby, B.C., for assistance in deterring criminal acts such as those committed against Rodney Bell, an Oyama who had his skull smashed by an axe wielding youth, or an RCMP officer who was crippled for life after he was intentionally struck by a vehicle driven by adolescents.

My constituents are asking what the government is going to do about the non–enforcement of our laws, particularly against young offenders.

In their own words the Liberals stated in their red ink book that "dealing with the growing incidence of violent crime will be a priority for a Liberal government".

While the people of Canada are calling for crime control this government instead has moved toward further regulation of guns owned by responsible citizens.

Specifically these teachers and staff of Lumby ask the Liberal government to consider caning as a viable option for legislation.

* * *

HOCKEY

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, the House passed Bill C–212 that recognized hockey and lacrosse as national sports. Hockey is a sport that unites Canadians regardless of region. Canadians have a special relationship with hockey and we are very disturbed over this strike.

I do not stand alone in the House when I say that the revenues and salaries of hockey players and owners are sufficient.

League revenues increased 22 per cent last year from $549 million to $700 million. Salaries increased by 19 per cent. Small markets like Winnipeg are losing money and jobs. Markets like that cannot sustain a strike.

Fifteen to eighteen hundred jobs are directly attributed to the Winnipeg Jets and over $50 million is injected into the local economy of Winnipeg.

Stop this madness. Lock yourselves in a room. Negotiate an agreement and save five small franchise teams in Canada. Do not destroy the livelihood of many ordinary Canadians who depend on sport for income.

Last, I encourage the players and owners to get back to the table, stop the lockout and give hockey back to ordinary Canadians.

* * *

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Body Shop, the Canadian Nature Federation, and the Sierra Defence Fund for their national campaign which begins today to urge the federal government to enact legislation which will protect Canada's endangered species.

It will be important for all of us to pick up the call begun by these groups. In order for future generations to have a sustainable environment we must do everything within our power to protect species, both plant and animal, which are in danger of becoming extinct.

More and more people all over the world have begun to realize over the last few years just how fragile our environment is. I want to thank these groups for reminding us that the time to take action is now.

* * *

● (1405)

GERMAN UNITY DAY

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, four years ago today saw the dawn of German unity, when the governments of east and west Germany forged one republic. Heralded by the fall of the Berlin wall, the coming together of the two halves of that nation hastened the end of the cold war.

The process was not easy. The political differences which separated the two halves were formidable. But the will to achieve a united nationhood and to act on it was stronger. Unity of effort is no less important than unity of purpose.

I call on my colleagues to join in today's celebration of German Unity Day. It marks the triumph of a people's freedom to live in a democracy and the end of a tragic part of German history.

May we find inspiration in the meaning of this day and pledge to uphold the ideals of a Canada united in vision, purpose and effort and thereby secure the strength, prosperity and freedom of our country.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, the consultations by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to set immigration and refugee policy are like this government's other consultations: while the people are being consulted, the real decisions are made by a small group chosen by the minister.

The minister's questionable strategy of openness clearly shows that he intends to keep the major stakeholders, namely the organizations which defend the interests of immigrants and refugees, away from the implementation of this policy.

How can the minister claim to really consult the people when the decisions are made by a chosen few? When will the government really act openly? Those are the real questions that the minister will have to answer sooner or later.

* * *

[*English*]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLAN

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, every year through RRSPs many Canadians manage to put aside a small portion of their income for retirement.

This nest egg does not mean they are wealthy. But it does represent their hard work and gives them some assurance about their future. Today that nest egg is in jeopardy of being taxed because of a government which cannot find a better way to balance the budget.

Instead of encouraging Canadians to provide for themselves, taxation of RRSPs in effect says, do not earn, do not save, do not invest and do not plan for retirement.

To tax our RRSPs is to tax our future. It is a short–sighted solution that will provide for the migration of Canadians and their money out of this country.

On behalf of the constituents of Okanagan Centre I urge the government to listen to Canadians. They are tax weary and they are angry.

Today the debt of Canada stands at $532.8 billion.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to congratulate a dedicated group of public servants who are striving for excellence. The Latin American and Caribbean Trade Division, Ambassador David Winfield and the staff in our Canadian Embassy in Mexico are creating Canadian jobs.

I recently attended the opening of the first Canadian Business Centre abroad and I am proud of this smart initiative. This pilot project in Mexico provides Canadian businesses with a venue to showcase their products through exhibitions, trade shows, conferences and seminars. The centre offers short term office space, computer, secretarial and translation services.

The latest trade figures between Canada and Mexico are at an all time high. The total two–way trade for the first six months of 1994 is up 40 per cent over the same period for 1993 for a total of $2.8 billion. This translates into 12,180 Canadian jobs annually.

[*Translation*]

Investing in foreign affairs and international trade is one of the best ways to create jobs and help Canada prosper.

* * *

[*English*]

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, yesterday 25 Canadian communities walked the fourth annual Walk for AIDS at the start of AIDS Awareness Week. In fact our own Minister of Health was walking for AIDS in the city of Montreal.

More than 1,000 people from the region in which I live took to the streets of downtown Ottawa, raising over $150,000 for prevention and support services for local AIDS victims.

Throughout the week the Canadian AIDS memorial quilt will be on display at the Ottawa–Carleton regional headquarters. A benefit concert of traditional, contemporary and spiritual music by the Canadian Centennial Choir will be presented on Thursday night at St. Joseph's Church on Laurier Avenue. The week will culminate in a 7 p.m. vigil at RMOC headquarters in remembrance of those who have lost their lives to AIDS.

• (1410)

I offer my best wishes to those who have organized these events and I congratulate all those who have and will be participating in AIDS Awareness Week.

* * *

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, today Canada and countries around the world celebrate Universal Children's Day, a day designated by the UN to recognize the rights of children everywhere.

I pay tribute to Canada's children and highlight the many Third World children in need of assistance. I particularly point to PLAN International Canada, formerly Foster Parents Plan, a group dedicated to lifting children from poverty around the world.

S. O. 31

To commemorate Universal Children's Day, PLAN today unveils an African children's toy exhibit at the Ontario Science Centre. These toys, made from recycled material by African children, demonstrate the challenges they face and the ingenuity they possess.

On behalf of the chair of PLAN's board of directors, a constituent of mine, I congratulate the some 611 foster parents of Fredericton—York—Sunbury for helping better the lives of roughly 677 children. There is no better time than today to encourage our constituents to support children everywhere.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FRANCOPHONE RIGHTS

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, first in Kingston and now in Longlac, in northern Ontario, francophones are being denied their rights as taxpayers and French speaking citizens.

The English majority trustees on the school board just blocked the construction of a combined French school and community centre. Francophones in Longlac have been demanding this high school for six years now. According to the daily newspaper *Le Droit*, and I quote: "The ill will of anglophones in Longlac towards their French speaking fellow citizens is blinding them". The chairman of the French section of the school board is equally blunt: "This is an anti–French vote".

Mr. Speaker, this is what one might call pulling a Kingston, and yet this government touts the success of its bilingualism policy.

* * *

[*English*]

REFORM PARTY

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party is giving Canadians a real voice in government. This evening we are going to experience the first ever, Canada–wide, live, nationally televised, interactive electronic town hall meeting.

It is true that technologically we are limited to communities receiving cable television and to people who have touch tone phones, but this is a most important genesis of an idea whose time has come. We are a democracy and it is time that our citizens are heard between elections as well as at elections.

At a time when we are being pressured into redefining Canada, the outcome of which will affect us all profoundly, I urge all members of the House, as I urge all Canadians, to invest the $1 user pay fee to express their views on the subject of national unity. For French dial 1–900–451–4032. For English dial 1–900–451–4841.

WORLD HABITAT DAY

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations has designated the first Monday in October as World Habitat Day.

World Habitat Day is marked through the efforts of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. In this, the International Year of the Family, it is fitting that this year's theme for World Habitat Day is called "Home and the Family".

The objective of World Habitat Day is to focus special attention on shelter. The conditions under which we live affect our health, productivity and sense of well–being.

[*Translation*]

Home is not only a physical space; it is also a symbol of warmth, security and identity.

[*English*]

In other words, home is where the heart is. Canada is among the best housed nations in the world, thanks to organizations like CMHC. Not all are so fortunate however. Over one billion of the world's population are inadequately housed and over one hundred million are absolutely homeless.

We still have work to do here in Canada to ensure all men, women and children have decent shelter. Let us mark World Habitat Day by renewing our commitment to this cause.

* * *

SOCIAL POLICY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, this week the government will be bringing forward its long–awaited social policy reform paper. Certainly poverty is increasing in this country, not decreasing, and there needs to be real change in the way that we deal with these issues.

However, I would say that while we see lots of hype about welfare reforms, let us take a look at whose welfare really needs reform. Each year thousands of corporate companies get away with paying no income tax and receive millions of dollars in tax credits.

• (1415)

There are no means or income tests for the corporate sector as there are for those on unemployment insurance or welfare.

In 1992, 7 per cent of tax revenues came from corporate income tax and 48 per cent came from personal income taxes.

Poverty is on the increase in this country and the Liberal government has decided to hit the middle class yet again through social policy reform while continuing to let the corporations off scot–free.

Take the Auditor General's recommendations. Taxing offshore profits is $600 million and taxing private family trusts is another $400 million.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, climate change represents a real and growing threat to Canada's economy. It threatens our forestry, fishing and agricultural industries, worth over $50 billion. The unabated growth in greenhouse gas emissions will lead to more frequent and severe weather events costing billions of dollars for all Canadians.

The government recognizes the nature of the threat and is committed to having an action program in place on greenhouse gas emissions by 1995. Furthermore, Canada is committed to table its plan. A draft report on options for such action will be before the Canadian public. Consultations are being held this week and next week and comments collected then will be incorporated into the report.

Once a credible program for stabilization is achieved the government will work with urban and provincial governments with the aim of reducing emissions. Climate change represents a tremendous opportunity for Canadians to propose creative and credible solutions. Our children's children are looking to us. Let us not let them down.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, a spokesperson for the Prime Minister's office said in a rather offhand way, and I quote: "The invitation to participate in the trade mission to China was addressed exclusively to the Premier of Quebec". The federal government would not let Mr. Parizeau be replaced by one of his ministers, and the same spokesperson for the Prime Minister even let Quebec know, somewhat contemptuously, that it was not as easy as ordering pizza.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether her government would reconsider its decision and let Mr. Parizeau, who obviously has more pressing matters to attend to, send one of his ministers instead.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we assume the premier of Quebec can accept the invitation since he was elected by Quebecers on a promise of economic growth. He was invited to take part as premier like all the other premiers, and we are waiting for him to reply whether he will play on Team Canada.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one wonders since when does the federal government have the right to set the agendas of provincial premiers?

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister, since Bob Rae may have to decline as well, what Team Canada will look like if neither Quebec nor Ontario are on the team?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the team Canada is sending to the Orient includes a number of outstanding members of the business community in Quebec, including Laurent Beaudoin and Guy Saint–Pierre, who both accepted the invitation. We are still waiting for the Premier of Quebec to decide that the invitation extended by the Prime Minister of Canada is important enough for him to take part as Premier.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister of Canada expect us to take his commitment to co–operate with the new Quebec government seriously, when at the first opportunity, his attitude is so uncompromising and so inflexible that he refuses to let Mr. Parizeau be replaced by one of his senior ministers?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think the main question is that if the Premier of Quebec was elected on a promise of economic growth, is it important enough to him to play on Team Canada?

• (1420)

I think none of the other premiers were given an opportunity to be replaced, not the premier of Ontario nor the premier of Alberta nor the Premier of British Columbia, because we wanted a delegation at the first ministers' level. That is important, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

This effort by Team Canada is an effort at the prime ministerial level. We do not want substitutes because we want Team Canada to be represented by the first ministers across the country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Last week, in reply to a question, the minister claimed that her department was involved in the preparation and monitoring of the operation to clean up sediments contaminated by PCBs in the St. Lawrence River, across from the city of Massena. This operation has in fact been put on hold because of serious safety problems.

Will the minister confirm the direct involvement of her department in this extremely delicate operation, or is her department merely receiving and blindly approving plans made by American authorities?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, last week, I personally contacted the Canadian government representative regarding this issue. Indeed, I was informed that the curtain is not working and that the operation has been delayed. The Canadian Minister of the Environment was on hand every day. I personally wrote to the U.S. EPA administrator to ensure that no operation would be undertaken in Massena without our approval.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, how can the minister claim that her department is fully involved in the clean–up operation when a memo provided by her department to SVP and dated September 23 indicates that no emergency plan, in case of a disaster, had yet been made public, this on the eve of the PCB clean–up?

[*English*]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the note from my ministry made it quite clear that the Canadian government was on site and that the curtain which was supposed to contain the sediment was not functioning. That is the reason the operation did not begin.

I personally contacted the administrator of the EP in the United States to advise her that the Canadian government was taking the very firm position that no dredging would go forth until we were satisfied that the technology was going to protect the environment and the health of Canadians.

* * *

SOCIAL POLICY

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, the well orchestrated leaks to the media from the ministry of human resources leaves little doubt as to the contents of the social policy discussion paper.

The Deputy Prime Minister says this social policy exercise will not go to reduce the deficit. Yet the finance minister says: "It does not take a genius to figure out that the government will have to slash spending to meet its deficit cutting targets".

Given that two–thirds of all spending after interest is on social programs, how does the government square these two statements?

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

The hon. member has to understand that Canada's social security system dates back almost 40 years. There have been

many changes in our system. I think this will give the hon. member an opportunity to debate fundamental issues.

One thing is certain however. The hon. member can rest assured that this government on this side of the House is not advocating the lion's bite as stated by the Reform Party to cut $15 billion, taking away student programs, taking away seniors' programs, taking away all the programs Canadians have grown accustomed to.

Early on in the debate it was quite clear that the Reform Party only cares about who is paying. The Bloc Quebecois only cares about who controls. The only people who truly care about the quality of life of Canadians is the Liberal Party.

• (1425)

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, members opposite lose no opportunity to distort what Reform says on social programs.

Reform's deficit elimination plan calls for reductions in transfers to provinces and now so does the government's social policy paper. For years Reformers have proposed restoring UI to its original role as a short term insurance support in case of job loss and now so does the government policy paper. For years Reformers have proposed a voucher system for distributing federal education dollars and now so does the government's policy paper.

I ask the minister this: When did the government stop reading its red book and start reading the Reform policy blue book?

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member once again for her question. I want to clearly outline to her that we have not tabled the discussion paper yet. I think it is only a couple of days away. She can wait. The member can rest assured that there is only one measuring stick on this side of the House, the discussion paper. The implementation of the legislation thereafter will only be successful if it improves the quality of life for Canadians. That is what this government is all about.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I only wish that we could hear about these proposals here first instead of in the media. The government has obviously been reading the Reform policy book but it has been reading it backward. We recommend reductions to social spending only after there have been cuts in other areas, including reductions in subsidies to businesses, interest groups, crown corporations, government operations and Parliament itself.

Now that the government is proposing cuts how long will Canadians have to wait for cuts to MPs' pension plans?

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has to understand that far too many of our children live in poverty, far too many of our students are having a hard time finding that very first important job, far too many of our workers are having problems with the transition from work to work. The social security review is about bringing positive change to the lives of Canadians and I am sure that the hon. member will participate in this historic debate.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GENITAL MUTILATION

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. During the Gynaecologists and Obstetricians Conference held in Montreal last week, the physicians confirmed they have on occasion treated young girls suffering from the after–effects of genital mutilations done right here in Canada.

These statements show that excisions and infibulations are more widespread than we would have thought. Is the Deputy Prime Minister still of the opinion that the current provisions of the Criminal Code are sufficient, as the Minister of Justice says?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice said in this House, and it is our opinion, that according to the Criminal Code, in Canada, to mutilate a person's genitalia is a criminal act. However, the Minister of Justice also agreed to make sure the Criminal Code was properly enforced in the case of genital mutilation and if not, he said he could take other actions. He will be presenting a report to this House on that issue.

In Canada, it is already a crime for anybody, including a physician, to perform an operation mutilating a girl's genitalia.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, is the Deputy Prime Minister not of the opinion that the best way to put a stop to those inhuman practices is to criminalize them through specific clauses leaving no possible margin for doubt?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): There is no doubt possible. It is definitely against the law as it stands today. In Canada, it is a crime to carry out any mutilation of a woman's or a girl's genitalia. The minister has promised to make sure the Criminal Code is properly enforced. It is already a matter of fact that in Canada nobody has the right to mutilate women's genitalia.

• (1430)

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, last week was a good week for intoxicated criminals. Thanks to the Supreme Court, drinking and driving may hold less serious consequences and extreme drunkenness is now a legitimate excuse for rape.

Does the Minister of Justice agree with these appalling decisions? If not, what does he plan to about them?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised a serious point. The decision has concerned many Canadians. I will bring her question to the attention of the Minister of Justice. I am sure he has this matter under review.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, the House and the country are getting tired of reviews.

A sane society should move toward zero tolerance of drinking and driving, not away from it. A sane society puts rape victims ahead of rapists.

Will the minister urge upon his government a constitutional amendment or the use of the notwithstanding clause to ensure that when the rights of victims and the rights of criminals conflict that the rights of the victim will always prevail?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is deeply troubled by the decision in the sexual assault case involving alcohol. He is looking into it, as is the department. The minister assures the House that the Department of Justice will come forward with its report on this very important situation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux–Montagnes): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. On September 22, Canadian Pacific put out a proposal to buy all of the CN rail network east of Winnipeg. The federal government responded on September 29 by setting up a parliamentary task force on the privatization of Canadian National.

Does the minister not think he was cavalier announcing the creation of such a task force just days before the federal–provincial conference of transport ministers, while the future of rail transport depends to a large extent on its connection with highway transport, which comes under provincial jurisdiction?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to point out to my hon. colleague that the task force in question is not a parliamentary one, but rather a group of government members who were asked to examine the possibility of marketing Canadian National activities across the country.

Naturally, if the government received a counter–proposal from CP, such a proposal would have for effect, if accepted, to privatize all railway operations in eastern Canada, east of Winnipeg. I think that we must make sure we are in a position to submit —not only to the government and to Parliament, but to all Canadians— any alternative contained in the unsolicited proposal from Canadian Pacific.

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux–Montagnes): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport again. Why did the minister not give directly to the Standing Committee on Transport, in which the opposition is represented, the mandate of reviewing the CN privatization plan, instead of assigning this responsibility to a special task force made up exclusively of Liberal members?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the last thing we would want to do, whether as a minister or government, would be to tell the Standing Committee on Transport what to do.

As my hon. colleague and my friends from the Reform Party know—they announced just last Friday that the committee would be holding hearings on airport transfer, on the air navigation system and on bilateral talks with the United States; this makes for a very busy schedule— nothing stops this parliamentary committee on transport from reorganizing its schedule to review the whole issue of how the railway system is going to operate in Canada. Nothing is stopping it from doing that.

* * *

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, another two million fish are missing from the Fraser River. That brings the total this year to well over three million sockeye.

• (1435)

Will the minister allow his management of the west coast fishery to come under the scrutiny of a judicial inquiry, which can subpoena witnesses and take testimony under oath?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that the estimates of salmon provided to both Canada and the United States for our respective management of these fisheries is provided by the Pacific Salmon Commission. This is a bilateral commission

which is jointly funded and jointly authorized by both countries and is independent of both countries.

He also knows full well that on Friday past the executive secretary of the Pacific Salmon Commission acknowledged the counting procedures of the commission and that the numbers which are provided to both countries are off this year. The commission announced its own internal review.

He should know as well that this morning this same commission held a press conference in Vancouver. The commission expressed its deep regret and offered to co–operate fully with the independent review already announced by this government last week.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the review the minister refers to is not an independent review. It is a review by people with deep DFO connections. We had an in house inquiry after the disaster in 1992 and obviously it proved nothing.

We need an independent judicial inquiry which would consider not only the scientific evidence but also the human factor, the management of the resource. Why will the minister not commit to an independent judicial inquiry?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the minister has committed to an independent inquiry led by Dr. LeBlond of the University of British Columbia. Also included are Mr. Joe Scrimger, an acoustics expert from British Columbia; Dr. Dick Routledge from Simon Fraser University; Lee Alverson, a scientist from the United States; and the Hon. John Fraser, former Speaker of the House of Commons.

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[*Translation*]

RADIO BROADCASTING

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Heritage. Last Friday, six radio stations across Quebec closed when the AM networks of Radio Mutuel and Télémédia merged, resulting in the sudden lay–off of over a hundred news employees.

Does the Minister of Heritage agree with the merger of Radio Mutuel and Télémédia, given that it concentrates the news media in Quebec's regions?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, we are never glad when jobs are lost anywhere. What I can say is that at last report, the CRTC received an application for this merger from Télémédia and Radio Mutuel. The case is before the CRTC, which will hold public hearings; under the circumstances, I think that it would be inappropriate for the Minister of Heritage to comment.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Heritage promise in this House to do what is necessary to have the CRTC hold these hearings as soon as possible so that we can get all the facts on this merger and its possible consequences?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Heritage cannot dictate to an independent body like the CRTC, which is also a regulatory agency. It would be quite inappropriate for the Minister of Heritage to tell it what to do.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Minister of the Environment on last week's announcement on the toxic substances policy in order to protect human health and the ecosystem.

When will the minister put into effect the important measures she announced regarding pesticides? How long will it take before the overall policy is fully implemented?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I know he has particular interest in toxins that are killing wildlife and endangering human health. That is the reason we have moved with the toxics framework.

We have asked for a 60–day period for public comment. We hope to receive those comments by the end of November with the intention of introducing implementing legislation in the early spring.

* * *

● (1440)

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, in one year we have come full circle. Last week a Liberal government made a payment to the Government of Quebec for additional referendum costs and in justifying its decision based it on the honour and truthfulness of Brian Mulroney. My question is for the President of the Queen's Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Apparently it was the practice of the previous government to commit millions of dollars on the basis of verbal agreements. If that is what the government is saying, will the minister admit that is not appropriate? In the future will cabinet ministers only make these commitments with full and written documentation and with formal cabinet authorization?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we were simply following a

statement made by the hon. member in question when he stated on September 29: "The federal government is certainly morally obligated to fulfil its agreement".

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, the minister should read the rest of the quote. If government members cannot justify this decision, the Reform Party is certainly not going to do it for them.

How can the government justify the inconsistency of paying $34.5 million to the Government of Quebec on the basis of a vague verbal conversation some two years ago when it refuses the right of due process through the courts to Canadian companies that have written contracts with the government to develop terminals 1 and 2 at Pearson airport?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is quite a simple matter.

The hon. member is taking the position of his transport critic who said: "There is nothing wrong with the Pearson deal". That is what the member of the Reform Party who represents their position on transportation matters said: "There is nothing wrong with the Pearson deal". Anybody over there who believes that will never understand anything I tell them about the Pearson deal.

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[*Translation*]

DEVELOPMENT OF FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, at the Acadian World Congress, the heritage minister announced that the Cabinet had just approved an overall policy on the development of francophone and Acadian communities. However, what was announced is nothing more than the minister's usual commitment to fulfil his own obligations. Unfortunately, the minister did not put in place a real comprehensive policy for developing the francophone community.

While the heritage minister is wasting time on the merits of his action plan, francophones' rights continue to be flouted. How does he account for the systematic obstruction of Ontario francophones' educational rights as is the case in Kingston and Longlac?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the heritage minister is not stalling anything. The previous government, a Conservative government, had commitments under the Official Languages Act that it never honoured. So how could a government that respects minorities and takes all necessary steps to enforce the law be accused of stalling? If that is what you accuse it of, I do not understand your language at all.

Of course, some provincial governments do not behave like the federal government. They have responsibilities to those they must serve, particularly in the field of education. I am very interested to hear the Bloc ask a question in which it wants the federal government to get involved in the field of education. Now I have heard it all!

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not agree that the tremendous difficulties experienced by francophone communities throughout Canada clearly show that the federal government's actions have not done anything so far to protect them?

• (1445)

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, we heard an opinion which is not necessarily shared by the communities I serve. But I see that my colleague wants to portray himself as a great soul and I would be happy to give him food for thought by quoting my grandfather, a native of Sainte–Flore: "God, in His wisdom, made the soul invisible so that no one would know who has a soul and who does not".

The Speaker: I will not enter this debate.

* * *

[*English*]

1–900 NUMBERS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister criticized us for using 1–900 numbers to solicit the opinions of Canadian people. I heard that a little while ago.

Now what I find is that the Liberals are paying for 1–900 numbers on the backs of the taxpayers and they do not even know it. An internal document from a federal institution, of course, shows mostly unauthorized long distance charges of 111 hours in one month alone in this institution.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Since some of the calls were to 1–900 numbers, is it not a double standard for the Liberals, for the whole government, to criticize Canadian citizens for taking part in an exercise in democracy when their own people are dialling the latest fishing news and the latest dating services to 1–900 numbers at taxpayers' expense?

The Speaker: The Chair is having some difficulty. I presume the question is directed to a department of the government. If that is the case, I will permit the Deputy Prime Minister to answer if she so wishes.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I understand from the implication of the member's question that employees of the Government of Canada have been wrongfully dialling 1–900 numbers that we are supposed to be paying for.

Obviously as a taxpayer and as a representative of the Government of Canada I do not want our employees dialling numbers for which the public is paying, quite clearly.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, that is refreshing. Nevertheless it is being done. This example of spending money is so typical of the government. It would be funny if it were not so pathetic.

The case I am referring to is taking place in a federal prison. I might as well ask the Solicitor General about it. Is it government policy to allow only prison officials to phone same sex dating services at taxpayers' expense or are the prisoners also allowed to reach out and touch someone?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I will check to see if the prison officials monitor all those outgoing calls.

In the meantime, perhaps on another occasion the hon. member can tell me why he is so fascinated by this subject.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1450)

The Speaker: This is getting to be a very touchy day.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESSES

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions.

In the red book the Liberal Party addressed the need for small businesses to have access to capital to allow entrepreneurs to make the transition from innovative ideas to actual production.

In Burlington small businesses create many jobs and have the potential to create even more if they could get financing.

What initiatives will the government take to create access to capital for small businesses?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Burlington for that question because I think it concerns every member of the House as to the future of small business.

We have undertaken several initiatives in the last nine months which will become public in the next few weeks. Everyone will see the hard work that has been done. For example, the Department of Industry and the Department of Finance have been working through a private business community group to come up with a number of suggestions for financing. The House of Commons committee on industry will have its report out in the next few weeks on the future of financing those small businesses.

The government has been working very hard to convince the banks to make their lending procedures with small businesses more transparent. We expect to see a new code of conduct become public.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEFENCE INDUSTRY CONVERSION

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint–Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Following the closure of military bases, Maritime provinces lost 3,000 jobs but received $20 million from the federal government to diversify their economy.

In Quebec, 1,000 jobs were lost through the same cuts, but the province only received $200,000 to cope with the situation. How can the Deputy Prime Minister explain such unfair treatment to Quebec, considering the compensation made to Maritime provinces following the closure of military bases?

[*English*]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not have his facts straight. There was an equitable distribution of mitigation moneys.

Leading up to the budget earlier this year on February 22, I said that there would be no mitigating measures the likes of Summerside and GST centres replacing lost economic activity at military bases. There were some moneys available, about $50–odd million that defence made available on a regional basis to the ministers concerned: western diversification, FORD–Q, minister of industry for Ontario and the minister of government services for the maritimes. There was an equitable distribution of those moneys.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint–Jean): Mr. Speaker, on top of setting up the Peacekeeping Training Centre in Cornwallis, the federal government allocated $7.5 million to diversify the economy of that community. Why such a double standard, since the government still refuses to compensate the city of Saint–Jean for the closure of its military college?

[*English*]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member has his facts wrong because my colleague, the minister of intergovernmental services, negotiated an agreement with the former Government of Quebec dealing with the transition of the Collège militaire royal de Saint–Jean. It is a provincial institution whereby certain language instruction and military activity would continue. That costs money. I believe that most of the money we allocated to FORD–Q under the

auspices of the mitigation program went for that particular settlement.

Even saying that, I should remind the hon. member that the share of military spending in Quebec actually increased from 19 per cent to 22 per cent as a result of the budget because everywhere else in the country was hit even worse.

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, responding last week to questions about mismanagement in the defence department, the parliamentary secretary stated there had been no wrongdoing.

Almost every page of the Lagueux report details conflict of interest, contracting irregularities and questionable business practices. People call my office to say that the $327,000 is far lower than the correct figure for the DM's renovations and following on from Lagueux, other reports have reached the same conclusions of chronic problems.

Again I ask, will the Minister of National Defence commission an independent public inquiry into his department to clear up this matter and enable him to resolve any problems it reveals?

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, when he gave his response last week in my absence was absolutely correct in that he believed the question was pertaining to allegations of wrongdoing by senior officials in the department such as the deputy minister or assistant deputy minister.

• (1455)

I want to assure the House that no such wrongdoing has been proven in any way and I have full confidence in the senior officials and my deputy minister.

Second, on the question of the renovations of the deputy minister's office this is really an Order Paper question that is separate from the larger question that the hon. member—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Collenette: If he would listen, it is separate from the larger question that the hon. member has a right to be concerned about. There were irregularities in contracting. There was harassment. There were management practices that were wrong.

The Lagueux report, an arm's length report from a senior ADM in the department, uncovered these wrongdoings. In one case there was a criminal prosecution. In the other there were dismissals.

The hon. member has all the facts. I think he now has read the Lagueux report. In no way does this implicate any of the senior officials in the department. The fact is in a big organization like defence or any corporate organization there are going to be problems. When we see that the problem is there, where we find irregularities, we deal with them. Some people were dismissed, one person was charged and subsequently convicted.

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his forthright response and I want to go on record as saying I am not accusing anyone of anything, nor have I ever meant to do that.

I would like to say that a confidential memo dated April 13, 1994 and released under the access to information reveals that officials in the defence department informed the minister that the media might be asking questions about the deputy minister's office renovations.

If his own staff felt compelled to warn him about media interest, will the minister not admit that there was at least a perceived problem with this matter and move to resolve it by getting on with an independent inquiry?

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, one of the problems we have in government is that there are from time to time disgruntled employees. In this case there was a leak from the department about certain renovations.

Those renovations to the executive suite of defence I believe can be fully justified. I will make all the documents available to the hon. member. I will table them in the House.

We have to keep some perspective here. It is not cheap to run a government. It requires that administrative measures be taken. In this case the expenses were fully justifiable.

* * *

TRANSPORT

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

I know that all Canadians were shocked last week by the tragic sinking of the ferry *Estonia* and that they join me in extending our deepest sympathy to the families of those so tragically affected.

Could the minister give Canadians his assurance that our Canadian ferries are safe?

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that this is not a laughing matter.

I join with my colleague who has just expressed our deep sorrow and regret at the tragedy of the *Estonia* and therefore the question is quite appropriate.

I want to take this opportunity to convey to Canadians that our passenger ferries are absolutely safe. Since 1987 Canadian passenger ferries have been subjected to independent audits to ensure that safe operating procedures are followed.

I must also add that Canadian standards for inspection of ferries exceed those of international communities so that the Canadian public and this House can be assured that our ferries are safe.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport and the Prime Minister, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Speaker: I am sure that the hon. member inadvertently made his first statement. We do not refer to the presence or absence of anyone in the House. Would he please put his question.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, the Western Grain Transportation Act was presented by a past Liberal government as a new balance between the needs for railway revenues and the legislative guarantees to farmers in the historic crow benefit.

The Minister of Transport has made cuts to the farmers' side of the equation and is proposing to stop the payments altogether.

What is the government proposing for the various lucrative formula induced revenues that the railways receive under that same legislation?

• (1500)

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member again does not have his facts straight. The minister has not made any statement as to the future of the WGTA. He has made a statement and has put in process the opportunity for all of the participants in the grain industry to take part in a debate in the consultation process regarding the future of that type of support to Canadian agriculture.

* * *

FIREARMS

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, in a judgment rendered on April 28, Judge Demetrick of the Alberta Provincial Court declared that portions of the definition of a firearm contained in the Criminal Code are so convoluted as to be legal fiction and twice removed from reality.

I ask the Minister of Justice to comment on Judge Demetrick's declaration and to tell us how such convoluted legislation can have any impact upon the criminal use of firearms.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice, when going across the country this summer to speak to groups concerned about these proposed changes to the firearm laws, assured the people with whom he spoke that he would undertake a review of what was Bill C-17 and the regulations to assure that the language and the intent of those laws and regulations were pertinent and of value. If they were not, if they were convoluted, he gave the assurance that he would either change the wording or remove the regulations altogether.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

The Conseil du patronat du Québec is once again asking the Minister of Finance not to eliminate, next January 1, the federal tax deduction for money paid by Quebec businesses to finance health care with Quebec taxes on payroll.

Will the Minister of Finance urge his colleague to maintain this tax deduction, in compliance with the views expressed by the Minister of Finance himself, when he was in opposition?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, all provinces are discussing this issue with the government and a decision will be made before January 1.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Health.

Pursuant to Standing Orders 108(1) and 108(2), following consideration of the evidence received and the conclusion reached by the subcommittee, we have studied the process by which order in council appointments are reviewed by the health committee.

The committee has agreed that any such review should preferably involve referred nominations rather than appointments and should focus on the qualifications and competence of the individual, having taken into consideration any regional aspects important to Canadians.

• (1505)

The committee agreed to recommend that the House consider referring the issues raised in this report to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that although the Bloc Quebecois members sitting on the committee approved the report, they disagreed with the following statement: "It would be appropriate not to take into account the political allegiance of those appointed".

[*English*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership in standing committees. If the House gives its consent I intend to move concurrence in this report later this day.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–278, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill is to provide for the establishment of a system allowing persons who do not wish to receive direct mail advertising or mailing of printed matter without further address than householder, box holder, occupant or resident to notify Canada Post Corporation accordingly; and that Canada Post respect the wishes of the home owner if they do not wish to receive junk mail, and that Canada Post comply accordingly.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

HOLIDAYS ACT

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–279, an act respecting flag day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce today a private member's bill, the subject of which is to recognize the third Monday of February of each year as flag day, a national holiday.

Previous attempts at recognizing this holiday have referred to the day as heritage day. However I believe flag day more appropriately reflects a symbol which unites us as a nation. This is a flag that is recognized throughout the world. The fact that 1995 will represent the 30th anniversary of our flag is one more reason to take this occasion to reflect on our traditions and customs.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent of the House to dispense with reading of the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

In that same spirit of consent I move, seconded by the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester, that the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

PETITIONS

ETHANOL

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to present this petition on behalf of my constituents who call upon the government to support the ethanol industry, and thus support farmers and rural communities in the dramatic creation of long term jobs.

This petition is in addition to the 10,000 names my colleagues and I have already presented on ethanol earlier this year.

• (1510)

ABORTION

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I have two other petitions, pursuant to Standing Order 36, signed by 76 of my constituents who call upon the government to amend the Criminal Code to extend protection to the unborn child.

NATIONAL UNITY

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present. The first one has 200 signatures. These people comment on the fact that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has travelled to other parts of the world to promote the separation of Quebec from Canada.

These petitioners call upon Parliament to inform the Leader of the Opposition that he is not supporting the majority view of the residents of Ottawa Carleton when he is travelling to promote the separation of Quebec from Canada.

HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS ACT

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is with regard to tobacco and the Hazardous Products Act. The petitioners believe that tobacco is a hazardous product

and that the exemption that it presently has under the Hazardous Products Act should be removed.

POSTAGE STAMPS

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition from 1,455 people across Canada with respect to the post office.

They cite that the Government of Canada has allowed that the Canadian postage stamp to be printed outside of Canada by another country. As petitioners they request that Parliament enact legislation against the Canadian postage stamp being printed outside of Canada.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition which is signed by hundreds of residents from across Canada.

[*Translation*]

This includes Quebec residents. The petitioners point out to the House that the Criminal Code, as it now reads, deprives terminally ill patients and people suffering from irreversible and debilitating disease of the right to choose freely and voluntarily to end their life with the help of a doctor. Consequently, they urge Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure that all Canadians have the right to die with dignity.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition signed by residents of the town of Maple Creek in my constituency.

They petition Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide are enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

This is in addition to several petitions on this subject signed by hundreds of my constituents which I have previously submitted.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my pleasure to present two petitions on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe Centre today.

The first petition requests that the Government of Canada not amend the Human Rights Act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners are concerned about including the undefined phrase sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Refusing to define the statement leaves interpretation open to the courts, a very dangerous precedent to set.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a second petition on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe Centre on the subject of euthanasia.

The petitioners request that current laws regarding active euthanasia be enforced.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)): Mr. Speaker, I was addressing the challenges that were before us as a society to erase racism, to ensure social cohesion and to also assure that there would be shared responsibility between different levels of government, between citizens and industry and the private sector to enable Canadians to live in peace and harmony with respect and understanding.

• (1515)

The questions I had been addressing, as members have heard, include those about how to address the special problems faced by disadvantaged minorities, by immigrant women, by women of colour, by youth caught between two cultures, by dislocated seniors, by those who look different from the majority, by those seeking medical assistance who face language and cultural barriers and how to ensure fairness and equity of access and equivalent accreditation of skills and educational undertakings learned in other places but brought to bear, to enrich and to enable our country to grow and develop.

Last, how do we marginalize those groups which would actively promote hatred against others. In that regard, I would like to warn members of the House and the public of the activities of the Nationalist Party in the promotion of European Heritage Week. This group is clearly racist in its intent, white

supremist, and we must not support the activities that they are undertaking.

Do not be fooled by fancy posters. Look at the group behind. They have become very sophisticated in their approach. I particularly want to thank Mayor Rowlands of Toronto for bringing this matter to my attention.

These are the important questions that together we want to answer at all levels of government and institutions. I believe those institutions that we have put in place are there to protect our democracy, which I pointed out earlier is very fragile. With the non–governmental organizations and our community–based volunteer groups, we can make a difference.

After nearly a year on this job, I have to report that it works. I have travelled to hear and to listen. The framework that brings together the wide–ranging concepts of our society associated with heritage are in place, for example, our cultural policy, our official languages policy, the policy on multiculturalism, the physical properties of national parks, the importance of human rights, charter challenges, volunteerism, sports and a number of others.

Despite the fact that Canadians have diverse backgrounds and origins, they are united by a shared sense of values and an attachment to Canada which we have built together, in English and in French, as well as with respect for the heritage, language and customs of our Canadian citizens.

It is also apparent that Canada's increasingly diverse population provides a unique resource, a resource base actually for successful development and expansion of our economy on domestic and international levels. We all know that business is international today, that business is multicultural today.

We have found in Canada people from all languages, cultures and religions who understand the culture of business around the world. They could help us develop and expand our economy at the domestic and international level.

What this implies is that we will fully use those cultural languages and skills and the knowledge that people have, and the fullest potential of everyone who comes to this country, recognize the personal contacts and the means that people have to open doors to business, to new markets, to new products and new services.

If we have the collective will to use the potential of all our citizens, and in a sense of fairness and equity for the individual and in an undertaking in the best interests of all Canadians, I believe we will move forward with a great sense of prosperity and understanding.

To close off, I want to talk for one moment about this. Canada, in its very multicultural mosiac, has a set of laws that are unique in this world. They have been coalesced under the proper kind of umbrella for their added protection. We wish to all share in the development of the experience that we have had here, in the way we have the machinery of government in place and that is to be shared with the rest of the world.

We have been asked to do that. Australia has just copied us. We have been asked to go elsewhere where things are even more sensitive. Here at home I want people to recognize that we have built a constructive model with enormous potential to ensure the future success of our society but we should always keep in mind the aphorism "if you're in the business of shining shoes, your shoes had better shine". Our programs need constant upkeep, tender loving care and appreciation by the people in the House and the people in the country.

• (1520)

We must not undervalue the civilizing influence of our multicultural policies. They may be more lasting than many of our great monuments. These policies are about the quality of life, about the power of humanizing nations, about people living together with hope and a sense of understanding, respect and appreciation for the future with a sense of belonging.

Canadians must be ever more vigilant. While those who promote hatred and bigotry use even more sophisticated technology and high tech, we must redouble our efforts in promoting a truly just, inclusive and representative society. We cannot afford to do less. Giving us this right in the Department of Canadian Heritage under Bill C–53 is a status that I believe is important. Canadians will learn to treasure the great resource we have in all our cultural diversity and give it respect and understanding.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member's statements. I have a couple of comments and questions I would like to ask.

In this great country one of the real freedoms we have for people who immigrate to Canada from other countries is the freedom to preserve their cultural heritage and cultural traditions. One of the questions we are asked by Canadians as we talk to them about multiculturalism is: Why does the federal government feel it is necessary to provide taxpayers' money to these groups in order for them to pursue their cultural heritage?

Some comment that if a particular ethnic group felt so strongly about preserving their cultural heritage they do not need federal taxpayers' money to do so. It is provided in the freedoms that they enjoy in this country.

I would like to ask the member what specifically is the government's justification for providing taxpayers' money to these cultural groups in order for them to preserve their cultural heritage?

I have another question or perhaps a comment. I am sure I heard the member earlier say that when she was in Quebec she was a Quebecer and when she was in Canada she was a Canadian.

Mrs. Finestone: I did not say that.

Mr. Harris: I would like to ask the hon. member if in fact she did say that and if she did not would she refer back to that portion of her speech because I thought I had a question for her?

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, the end result of whatever it was that I said—I would have to look at the "blues" because I do not have everything written down—is the fact that I said I am a proud Canadian everywhere and anywhere and that is what I am.

With respect to the freedoms that the member spoke about, with respect to the importance of the federal government lending a hand to groups across this land, particularly new Canadians, Canadians who have arrived from countries where they have suffered terror, trauma, torture and lack of understanding of the role of the police when they arrive here because they have lived in a police state, I would say to the member that as a government, as a people and as human beings it is important for us to help them understand the structure of our society to enable them to integrate into this society.

I have not noticed that without some help major groups have volunteered so quickly to go in and help them. I would also like to point out that if the member is from an immigrant group—and I know from his riding he has had requests and received and given grants for immigrant and visible minority women—I wonder if he would believe that those visible minority women have triple discriminations, have a difficult time adapting to our society and have some skill re–learning to do while at the same time helping their children get settled.

As the member well knows, this country is not famous and businesses have not been famous and are just learning to hire people who are of colour as one of the equality measures as well as on their competence and ability to do the job. We have not recognized skills that are learned outside of this country. We have accredited to them the equivalences of what they have learned elsewhere. Now you do not want to give money to those kinds of groups, the visible minority groups who have come to him, the Abbotsford youth commission that has come to you, the native friendship centres that need money, the anti–racist and anti–hate education councils. These are the groups you would like to deprive of doing work both at the public, the volunteer, and at the institutional level. Well I do not agree with your perspective.

• (1525)

The Deputy Speaker: Before I continue the period of questions and comments I would like to remind everyone to direct their comments through the Chair.

There are occasions, and maybe in most instances, when you could exchange comments very cordially. I know you all debate very well and are very respectful of one another but there are times when it is awfully critical to go through the Chair. I think it is a good practice for all of us when intervening to direct our comments through the Chair.

With the few moments left in questions and comments, the hon. member for Elk Island.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, I listened with real interest to the speech. I am very interested in the direction the government is taking Canada with respect to equality of our citizens.

Over and over when I have been speaking to groups I ring a chord of agreement when I say we need in government policy to remove totally any reference to gender, colour, race, or to culture because only then can we treat people equally.

I have an example of racial and gender discrimination in my riding in the person of a young man who in applying for an RCMP position for which he was qualified in every way was disqualified because he happened to be white and he was male. That is sexual discrimination. That is racial discrimination. I do not care how you cut it.

The direction we are taking where we name certain races, certain colours, and female gender as having special privileges is perpetuating the kind of apartheid that brought South Africa down. We need to remove that. That will be the healthy direction.

I would really be interested in the minister's comments on that.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, you were in this House when we spent a great deal of time studying section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That was such an important section that we delayed the application of section 15 for three years. It came into effect April 15, 1985.

We do not have time to undertake an extensive examination of why section 15, the non–discrimination section of the charter and the right to affirmative action given equal competence and equal skills is of fundamental value in this country because it is equal to the question of fairness, access, respect and appreciation for differences.

I would suggest, if I may, that the "Equality for All" report be given to my hon. colleague. I am sure he would like to read it and understand why it is not discrimination and is only in the sense of the best action, not only in pay equity but employment equity, that one would want to move forward anyone who has compe-

tence regardless of colour, regardless of language, and it is antithetical to what South Africa did.

It is too bad that this member and the member sitting in front of him did not have the opportunity to read the report that could have enlightened some very biased disinformation that was given this morning.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C–53. This legislation, described as a mere technicality, provides an ideal opportunity to explain Quebec's perspective to our fellow Canadians.

As you know, the Bloc Quebecois has the mandate to protect Quebec's interests at the federal level. Those interests are largely dependent on the development of Quebec's own cultural life as well as on its exclusive control over it. This is what Mr. René Arpin, chairman of the advisory group on Quebec's cultural policy, said at the hearings of the standing commission on culture, in June 1992.

• (1530)

He said that "Quebec's distinct character and sound management of priorities require that the province have complete control over its cultural choices". Mr. Arpin added that "the federal government must completely withdraw from the cultural sector, regardless of Quebec's constitutional future".

Around the same time, the then Quebec minister of Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Frulla–Hébert, who can certainly not be labelled a sovereignist, said: "When it comes to programs, the federal government does little or no consultating". Genuine consultation is practically non–existent, and, when it does occur, it is often at Quebec's request. When, as often happens, it is faced with a *fait accompli*, Quebec has to state its real needs after the fact".

Since Bill C–53 mainly concerns federal activities in the cultural sphere, I will discuss certain aspects of federal encroachment in this area and, more specifically, the causes of this intrusion, how it is expressed in the bill, and its harmful impact on Quebec's development as an autonomous State.

Federalism or the invasion of Quebec: the origin of Quebec's problems lies in the very nature of the federal system. In fact, Quebec is considered to be just another province, one of ten, which is a denial of reality. Federalism means a central government that must reconcile the usually divergent interests of various regions and cultures.

Because the Canadian government, in its infinite wisdom, decided that some day we should have a Canadian identity, it blithely ignored the situation in Quebec. Now this situation is quite different from Canada's. Quebecers are not concerned about their identity. Studies keep reminding us that Quebec's identity is alive and well, thank you very much. Canada's existential problems do not concern Quebecers.

Quebecers worry more about their economic and cultural development. However, since English Canada is seeking its elusive identity, Quebecers will have to contribute financially to this quest for the Holy Grail. This, without any decision–making power, since the power is shared among representatives of the ten provinces. That is one of the ways in which the federal system has an impact on Quebec.

Another side of federalism we cannot ignore is the negative consequences of the federal government's tremendous spending powers. These spending powers were gradually granted to the Canadian government by the courts which were, and still are, dominated by the legal profession from English Canada. However, as constitutional expert Gérald Beaudoin has pointed out, the courts are uneasy about with this power.

After analysing the jurisprudence in this area, Beaudoin noted that judges often issue formal warnings to the effect that spending powers should not be legislated in an area under provincial jurisdiction. He wrote that it was clear that abuse of spending powers confused the issue of government responsibilities in a federation and could upset a sometimes fragile balance.

The message is clear. Spending powers which initially were to be exercised only in exceptional circumstances are now used, at the drop of a hat to intrude in areas under provincial jurisdiction. Professor Beaudoin also quoted Professor Jean Beetz, former Justice of the Supreme Court, and we found his comments very revealing. The former Justice wondered about the financial power of federal institutions. Despite ineffectual warnings in the jurisprudence, a new kind of legislation had been created that allowed the federal government to influence provincial jurisdiction by dispensing its largesse as it saw fit.

The minister's powers, duties and functions under this legislation mostly concern matters of provincial jurisdiction. I am referring to the arts; the status of the artist; cultural heritage and industries; the conservation, exportation and importation of cultural property; and, to a lesser extent, amateur sport.

• (1535)

The federal government will be investing more than a billion dollars a year in Quebec on culture only, and we contend that this legislation is a form of back door intervention and an

encroachment on provincial jurisdiction. We strongly denounce such federal schemes in Quebec.

As I said earlier, Quebec officials have been asking for years for the exclusion of the federal government in the area of culture and the transfer of all powers to Quebec. Yet, section 4 of Bill C–53 would give Heritage Canada full power in the area of Canadian cultural development. Subsection (2) lists the areas of jurisdiction, and I will give you some which worry us: the arts, including cultural aspects of the status of the artist; cultural heritage and industries, including performing arts, visual and audio–visual arts, publishing, sound recording, film, video and literature; the formulation of cultural policy as it relates to foreign investment; the conservation, exportation and importation of cultural property. This is not just encroachment, this is a full–scale invasion.

The predatory attitude of the federal government illustrates very well the impossible Canadian duality. On one side, English Canada is seeking a national cultural umbrella, hoping it will bring about a Canadian identity—a national obsession—and hence a Canadian culture. On the other side is Quebec, where identity and culture are alive, dynamic and strictly our own.

Quebec does not need federal intervention. On the contrary, to ensure that Quebec culture continues to blossom, we must be free from federal intrusion. We must be given the money spent in Quebec by the central government to use as we choose and according to priorities that we would set ourselves to meet our needs.

There are at the present time an astounding number of overlaps and duplications between the cultural institutions and programs of Quebec and Canada. Here are some: the arts councils, the state television networks, the archives, the national libraries. Why not save millions for the taxpayers by eliminating these duplications and giving Quebec sole responsibility in an area so vital for its future as a nation?

Culture is what drives society. In a publication entitled *Le Québec dans un monde nouveau,* the present Quebec Premier said it in these words: "Our culture is the blend of our common history and heritage, of our common values and institutions. Our life as a community, our solidarity and collective vision are based on our culture". He then added: "Culture is the expression of a feeling of belonging to a community, it is the very fibre of our people. It is incarnated in our way of life, our way of thinking and creating. Within the particular North American context, Quebec culture must continually assert itself, promote creation expressing its originality, and seek enrichment by assimilating contributions from outside its borders. These are the requirements necessary to our vitality and survival".

Within such a context, it is easy to see how different the Quebec culture is from the Canadian experience. We must promote the development of our culture, but not within a framework imposed by a government representing the other group.

This was the conclusion reached by two well–known Quebecers who followed one another as Quebec Minister for Communications and Cultural Affairs. In 1992, Mr. Jean–Paul L'Allier and Mr. Denis Vaugeois wrote: "Political subordination and economic inferiority can only breed an atrophied and diminished cultural life. It can be artificially sustained for a certain period of time as is the case in Canada and Quebec. But money is not enough. Inspiration is needed. We must be able to rely on our own resources. True development cannot come from outside".

It is imperative for the federal government to withdraw from Quebec culture and to compensate the Quebec government accordingly.

Multiculturalism is another area under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Here again, Quebec's specificity is not being respected.

• (1540)

There is in Quebec a consensus on how to deal with our fellow citizens from outside Quebec. The position adopted 20 years ago and systematically maintained since then is based on integration and respect. Quebec society favours the full involvement of all its members, whether they were born here or elsewhere. However, in order to meet this goal, integration into Quebec society is emphasized. We expect new immigrants to learn the national language, French, and to familiarize themselves with our traditions. This position does not imply in any way that racism or discrimination in any form is tolerated. On the contrary, Quebec society makes it a point to respect differences and individual rights.

Yet, respecting differences is not the same as officially promoting and institutionalizing these differences, as the Canadian multiculturalism policy calls for. Quebec has chosen to integrate its new members into Quebec society rather than the opposite. There is a major and, in my opinion, irreconcilable difference.

This is another area in which the central government flouts Quebec policy. The federal government legislates, creates programs and spends considerable amounts to promote the opposite approach. While, in our opinion, respect for individual rights clearly comes under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government continues to encroach on Quebec jurisdiction. We denounce and will always denounce this situation. That is another fine example of federalism's benefits.

Before closing, I will point out another insidious aspect of this bill, namely the Canadian heritage minister's duty to promote and develop English–speaking minorities. No one needs a history lesson to know that only Quebec has an English–speaking minority.

Quebec anglophones are the best–treated linguistic minority in Canada, a fact that some of them even recognize. Representatives of French–speaking groups from outside Quebec would be easily satisfied with the status enjoyed by English–speaking Quebecers. Of course, I am not saying that there is no room for improvement. However, Quebec treats its minority with a very open mind.

It is in that context that we question the federal government's intentions in this area. In pursuing the objective of promoting the development of that so–called minority, does the government intend to legislate against Quebec's policies, even though these policies are very generous? Since federal legislation takes precedence over provincial legislation, Quebec's language policy could thus be subverted.

Does the government intend to spend large amounts to promote English in Quebec? Does it intend to give anglophones social and cultural facilities that are out of proportion to this linguistic minority's share of the population?

Let me reassure you that neither I nor my colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois nor the government in power in Quebec have any intention of reducing in any way the advantages that our English–speaking fellow citizens enjoy. On the contrary, the Constitution of a sovereign Quebec would confirm the rights and advantages that the English community enjoys now. That is public knowledge.

However, I am concerned about what the federal government actually intends to do in Quebec. The government has no obligation to consult the provincial government and would probably feel no obligation to do so, as history shows. These issues are too important to give the central government complete power in this area in Quebec without saying a word.

Another issue raised by the bill is equal treatment for French– and English–speaking minorities. How can we ensure that francophone minorities will benefit fairly from federal largesse? How can we ensure that they will be able to catch up with Quebec's anglophone minority to some extent? Bill C–53 remains silent on this fundamental aspect of the treatment of minorities in Canada.

Quebec knows what to do; it knows what to do for its culture and for its minority. The central government should restrict itself to its own field of jurisdiction. Perhaps that is what good government means!

• (1545)

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I wish first to inveigh against such a lampoonist speech! What it described is very far from the reality of the federal contribution, which is extremely generous in Quebec, to the promotion of the French Canadian culture across the country and around the world.

Tell me something: how is it that Telefilm Canada, which comes under this department, subsidized Mr. Falardeau's latest film, *Octobre*, with the participation of the NFB as well?

I wonder if there is another country in the Western hemisphere that would subsidize a film produced, written and directed by a separatist, a fellow who is bent on breaking up his country. Do you know of any other country that would do the same thing, a country with the will to finance such a project? Name one.

Tell me something else: did the hon. member know that over 40 per cent of the National Film Board's budget goes to Quebec productions, to productions in French?

I would also like to know this: on the subject of the federal contribution, we could also mention the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. I learned recently that the CBC produces more hours of original programming than France does for its own programming, its own culture. In a country with 6 million francophones and a total population that is half that of France, the Canadian government spends more than France on this. And then, some say this is a ploy on the part of the federal government. Some people have the nerve to talk about interference. When you look at the figures though, they speak for themselves: the federal government is the one promoting the Quebec culture and I think that many creative artists recognize this.

Finally, I understand what the Bloc Quebecois is driving at, but let us not forget that opinions are divided in Quebec. You have producers, directors and people who would readily admit it. As a matter of fact, we saw in certain documents last year that the involvement of the federal government should be maintained because it is generally more responsive to the aspirations and legitimate financial needs of our producers in Quebec.

I am prepared to take questions from the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Gagnon (Quebec): Mr. Speaker, given the questions asked by the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine, it seems like he did not understand the points I was making.

Earlier this afternoon, in my speech, I talked about the federal government's involvement in what should be provincial jurisdictions. What we want in Quebec is to manage our own money and to decide what we want to do with regard to promotion in Quebec, outside Quebec and throughout the world.

For the federal government to implement institutions is one thing, but to decide what to do in the province of Quebec is quite another thing.

As a matter of fact, I sit on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage where many questions will be raised. We have met with artists' associations which are complaining about the decisions made by the government and the federal institutions, because these decisions do not completely allow the

government of Quebec to maintain its own institutions and jurisdictions.

I can see that the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine did not understand a thing I said. We do not want to hear about how many millions were invested; we want to decide, by ourselves, how to spend that money.

I think I have answered the questions put by the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine.

Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, I was just saying that 40 per cent of the National Film Board's productions in Montreal are French productions. So, if I understand the opposition's logic, if Quebec were to separate tomorrow, funding would fall to 22 to 25 per cent. Quebec would be the loser in this situation and that is what the opposition does not seem to understand.

• (1550)

Where will the people on the other side get the money to organize trips and trade shows? Let us not forget that a lot of money comes from federal grants. I was just talking about the Monument national, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Radio–Canada and Telefilm Canada. The Canadian government has never questioned the work of our artists from Quebec.

As I was saying earlier, the hon. member does not want to admit to this 40 per cent, to the fact that Quebec receives more than its share of funding for its cultural institutions. She cannot give me an example of a film like Mr. Falardeau's *Octobre*, a film about the FLQ that was funded by Telefilm Canada and by the National Film Board. I challenge you to give me an example from another country. Do you know of any film about the Corsicans or the Bretons that was funded by the government of France?

Mrs. Gagnon (Québec): I can see that the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine still has not understood the meaning of my intervention. The federal government invested in the movie *Octobre* because that is where the money is. If Quebec had had the money, then Quebec would have been asked to fund this type of production.

I am sorry, but I have to say that this bill will just aggravate the problems related to Quebec's cultural identity.

I am also aware that these funds come from the money we give the federal government to manage our country, which means that Quebec pays for these federal grants. We would like to see how we could manage our own programs. Of course, it would look bad if the federal government did not give anything to our producers and artists from Quebec. Nevertheless, it is an historic event. We could have a debate about the October Crisis here in this House, show you the movie, show you how some Quebecers were treated and how Mr. Trudeau sent in the army. This crisis—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. This debate generates a lot of passion, which is good, but the Chair would appreciate it if hon. members showed more respect to those who express their views.

Mrs. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that the purpose of this bill is to promote, with our own money, a single vision which melts Quebec's culture into a multiculturalism program which presents problems for Quebec and which will also present problems for English Canada.

In fact, there is no consensus regarding this multiculturalism program. We should have a debate on the objectives of such a program. We want newcomers to adopt Quebec's culture, to learn French and to respect our institutions and customs. Indeed, it is one thing to know these institutions and customs but quite another to respect them.

This is what we mean when we say that we want to manage our own programs. We want to have control over the programs and the money used to promote the distinct character of our society. We speak French and we want to promote our own culture.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and a privilege to speak on Bill C–53, An Act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage. I believe the best way to use the time at our disposal is to review the programs and responsibilities which fall under the jurisdiction of this new department.

First, I want to point out that the Department of Canadian Heritage has actually been in existence for over a year. Since its inception, which goes back to the general government reorganization of June 1993, officials of that department have discreetly but confidently succeeded in strengthening the links between the various and excellent programs which fall under its scope. This "growth stage" has been exciting and enriching. The fact is that it is not over yet.

• (1555)

There is still a lot of interesting work and progress to accomplish before the Department of Canadian Heritage is fully recognized and plays its important role among other federal departments. Obviously, the tabling of this bill was a major step in that direction, as will its second reading.

[*English*]

I have just alluded to the range of programs within Canadian Heritage. I want to elaborate upon the department's composition and the scope of its activities. Before I begin let me add a caveat. Because of time constraints, my review of Canadian Heritage program areas cannot be all–inclusive. Nonetheless I am confident that the members present will find this description illuminating.

Undoubtedly, one of the most visible programs administered by Canadian Heritage is Parks Canada, one of the department's three principal sectors. Many Canadians, and for that matter many visitors to Canada, have been fortunate enough to experience the splendour and richness of the country's system of national parks, national historic sites and historic canals.

A steward of these unmatched examples of our national and cultural heritage, Parks Canada is charged with the protection and interpretation on behalf of all Canadians. Given the nature of its mandate, Parks Canada is primarily a regional organization. It has strong and respected presence in every region of this country, including the Gaspé Peninsula, contributing significantly to the local economies of communities all across Canada directly through expenditures on its own operations and indirectly through the tourism and economic benefits generated as a result of those activities.

[*Translation*]

The second major departmental component is centered around the Canadian identity and the contribution of all citizens. Without question, it represents one of the largest series of responsibilities and incentives throughout the government. It includes programs promoting the official languages, excellence in amateur sports, human rights, the welfare of aboriginal communities living in large urban areas, the development of our cultural diversity, and finally, the full contribution of all citizens, including recent immigrants, to our society. In brief, these programs are of interest to each and every one of us, since they deal with what it means to "be Canadian".

We live in an era marked by major social and economic change. No one can deny that. In this context, initiatives undertaken by this departmental component are considered even more important. In fact, by promoting and increasing our sense of community and identity, these programs can truly help us to understand today's goals and to prepare for tomorrow's challenges.

[*English*]

The purview of the third major departmental component can broadly be described as encompassing cultural development and heritage. The responsibility of this sector extends to the arts, broadcasting and heritage conservation programs as well as the cultural industries pertaining to film, video, sound recording and book publishing.

In an age of unparalleled technological advancement where adaptability to change has become a prerequisite for success and where globalization of markets presents both potential for growth and new competitive challenges, Canada's creators, artists and producers are looking to government to provide leadership in formulating the legislation and policies that will allow them to compete and thrive.

To cite but two examples it means taking action to ensure that creators are justly compensated for the use of their works. It means fashioning a policy framework that will ensure a place for Canadian content and cultural products on the information highway of the future.

In general, it means ensuring that Canadians continue to see themselves reflected in a strong and vibrant culture.

[*Translation*]

I have briefly described the department, the activities of which are far–reaching and of significant importance to all Canadians. Although these programs may seem disparate at first, a slightly deeper examination would dispel these doubts. I hope I have managed to demonstrate, to some extent, that the various components of this new department have much in common, that, given their purposes, they complete each other and generate a kind of synergy that truly makes it more than the sum of its parts.

• (1600)

[*English*]

I look forward to the enactment of the Department of Canadian Heritage Act. That step cannot fail to have beneficial and enduring effects in enhancing our sense of Canadian identity and participation in society, in furthering our cultural development and ensuring the continue appreciation and protection of our priceless array of natural and cultural heritage resources.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member to explain a couple of things emanating from his speech.

He talked about the department being "successful in cementing relationships in this reorganization". If that was exemplified by the previous exchange between the hon. member and the member for Quebec Est then I would have to question the validity of that comment. He might wish to expand on that point.

The member also went on to give a lengthy list of all of the departments and all of the responsibilities of Canadian heritage, but he glossed over one point: the well–being of native peoples. I would like him to explain how and why he believes that Canadian heritage is indeed addressing this point. Our aboriginal people really do constitute involuntary citizens of Canada. They were never asked their opinions on the French or British regimes nor on Confederation and what really constituted their disenfranchisement.

I would like the hon. member to please give some thoughtful reasoned debate to the question of the well–being of native peoples. I would also like an explanation on the first comment he made regarding the successful cementing of relationships in the reorganization of his department.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that we also have a department for Indian and northern affairs. We have a most capable minister with a budget who tries to address the varying issues that touch upon aboriginal communities.

I can speak for my area where the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs promotes various school programs for youngsters trying to lead very interesting lives as full partners in Canadian society. We may have to make a distinction however because when it comes to cultural affairs there is probably more that can be done in trying to enhance aboriginal culture.

In my speech I was speaking in terms of aboriginals in urban areas such as Toronto, Montreal and elsewhere. There is much to be done in trying to give them the opportunity to express who they are and their culture to fellow Canadians.

On the second point the hon. member quite correctly pointed out there are various views and opinions in terms of the role of the federal government in Quebec. As members know the Bloc Quebecois may have the majority of seats on the opposition side but it does not have the majority of votes in the province of Quebec. We are talking of only between 44 and 48 per cent.

We should also take these things into account. We do not speak for all Quebecers. I have tried to inform the hon. member that the federal government has been a most productive and viable force in my home province of Quebec in terms of encouraging cultural development.

An hon. member: And everywhere else.

Mr. Gagnon: And everywhere else. It is important to note that the federal government has invested heavily in French culture to a point that our investments in CBC productions are far superior to what the French government invests in its own TV broadcasts. That is astonishing.

Forty per cent of the productions by the National Film Board are French Canadian. Regrettably, the hon. Bloc member is saying that Quebec wants it all for itself. However it would have to settle for 25 per cent if it opted for independence and right now it is getting 40 per cent.

• (1605)

What I am trying to tell the two hon. ladies is that the federal government is doing its part in promoting arts and culture in Quebec and across Canada and it is doing a fantastic job.

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is a small point but it has occurred time and time again that we are not referred to in this House all of the time as hon. members and that is what we are. We are not hon. ladies, girls or anything else. We are hon. members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): While it is not a point of order, I think it is a point that has been made and should be taken as such and rightfully so. In the most respectful parliamentary fashion we refer to one another as hon. members.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague likes very much to listen to himself talk. He talks and talks and talks. I also like to talk, but at least I do not deny it. What is important here is that as much as I recognize the member's expertise in some of these areas, I have to say that he is talking through his hat with regard to Canadian heritage. The CBC costs us a fortune. It costs us 65 per cent of the $1.5 billion spent, and it is watched by only 13 per cent of English Canadians. This is not a good price–quality ratio. There is too much money paid to too many people for nothing. It is simply too expensive.

I would like to know what information the hon. member has on that. I am a bit tired, and so are Canadians, of hearing that we are the greatest country in the world. That is all very nice, but 20 per cent of our children live in poverty, the unemployment rate is at 25 per cent and we have a debt that grows larger by the second. When will the government stop saying that we are such a great country and start doing something to really make Canada a great place to live? Do you not think that our country is going bankrupt?

Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, if I had been asked to comment on the country's economic situation, I would say that the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata is right. Much remains to be done. I think that together, united and strong, we stand the best chance of putting this country on the road to economic recovery.

However, and I am nevertheless mindful of what was said by the hon. member and by my department, and I am referring to the department I represent here today. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has done a lot for culture in Quebec and for the culture of the francophone minorities outside Quebec. Thanks to the CBC, people know what this country is about. I do not know the exact ratings, but I do not think anyone can deny that Canadian productions are worthwhile. I think we have made some very good films with producers from Quebec and from English Canada. We have promoted the expression of Quebec culture, and I think this is largely thanks to the federal government, which gave Quebecers a chance to express themselves and say who they are, to Canada and to the whole world.

I think the Government of Canada is to be commended for having invested so much in Quebec, and what probably bothers the opposition is the fact that more and more performing artists and producers are aware of the positive role played by this department, and especially by the Government of Canada, in

promoting French Canadian and Quebec culture throughout the world.

[*English*]

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to participate in the debate on Bill C–53.

The debate we just listened to reminds me very much of the failure of federal spending. It is no different on job creation from what it is on cultural matters. If federal spending created jobs, every Canadian would have two. If federal spending helped on some of these cultural matters, people would not be voting by turning off their television sets when it comes to a lot of the programming on CBC.

• (1610)

Bill C–53 is one multifaceted attempt to right every perceived wrong in the government's quest for political correctness. It is a continuation of hyphenated Canadians and funding of special interest groups which in the final analysis has hardly promoted unity and has only been a drain on the public purse.

Nowhere in Bill C–53 can I detect any change in this litany of throwing money at something we are desperately trying to understand. It seems that government thinks it can buy peace and unity by entrenching more rights and latitude for special interest groups. When are we going to become Canadians rather than a mishmash of individuals with a particular axe to grind?

While I am on that topic of special interest groups, it might not be as bad if more members of the special interest groups were beneficiaries. Too often a few greedy, self–serving individuals who head up the leadership of these groups are the main recipients.

I am told that one individual who is paid a $60,000 a year salary to head one of these groups, a person in their thirties is nearly a millionaire. Is this where the funding for some of these groups is going: membership at the Rideau Club, first class air travel, cottages in the Gatineau?

Bill C–53 will not correct this injustice but will only entrench it further. One has to simply take a cursory look at the 1994–95 estimates for Canadian heritage. Every conceivable special interest group is on the payroll. What is the effectiveness of these programs? Is there demonstrable success to parallel their mandates? Are they accountable or merely sinkholes of largesse? My Reform colleagues will chronicle the misplacement of funding in this debate.

I would now like to turn to an element of responsibility of the Department of Canadian Heritage as contained in Bill C–53, specifically Canada's Metis. The department mandate states that the programs for Metis are designed to help the Metis define and participate in the resolution of the social, cultural, political and economic issues affecting their lives in Canadian society. A common feature of the program is that projects are community based and are initiated and managed by aboriginal people.

I can count some $40 million directed at those programs. Is it being used on what is intended? Is it accountable? One does not have to do much research before one's antennae beam on specific examples where accountability is questionable. I refer to the Metis nation of Saskatchewan.

Last March and April headlines in regional Saskatchewan and national newspapers screamed out headlines of mismanagement of funds, accounting anomalies and refusal by Metis leaders to co–operate with audits. At one point over $1 million was unaccountable. No one questioned the legality of the Metis in this circumstance; they did question accountability and proper management of funds.

It seems in government quests to keep everyone happy, we make the cheques and never ask another question. When someone stumbles over some anomaly regarding procedures, we get the whitewash. The bureaucrats and some antsy national Metis council officials get on the damage control mode. This is not good enough. Bill C–53 does not improve on it. What the cloud of uncertainty over the Metis Society of Saskatchewan did was create a splinter group of concerned Metis citizens. It seems they too felt that those Metis leaders handling the funds at the local level did not have the capacity to do it and it reflected badly on the members. Bill C–53 does not address this; it entrenches further mismanagement.

• (1615)

In preparation for this debate, my office called a few departmental people, research officers appointed to and in these debates, and naturally talked to others interested in this subject matter. Is it not interesting that I still do not have a bottom line on funding through Heritage Canada to the Metis. I really do not think Bill C–53 will contribute to enlightening the House any further on this issue.

Other newspaper headlines suggest that Metis leaders are ignorant of public trust, that funding provided through Heritage Canada for programs and activities of Metis groups, often for worthy undertakings, may not be trickling down from the Metis leaders in charge of disbursing funds. It is simply not good enough to concentrate control of funds with the leadership. It would be better to have these funds administered by a council or committee made up of all strata within the Metis society.

The very thing I speak of is what prompted the RCMP investigation of the handling of funds by the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan. I ask how window dressing the plethora of multiculturalism undertakings into the department of heritage will solve this disbursal and accountability of funding for Metis societies.

Bill C–53 merely complies with political correctness and assures a supply of government funds to be doled out by sometimes incompetent individuals.

I would be remiss if I did not touch on one other aspect of funding that should trouble us greatly. What Bill C–53 manages to accomplish is to again ensure continued funding for the industry that has been created around the Metis societies. Make no mistake about it, this is an industry unto itself, secret, paranoid and accountable to no one.

There was an instance this last spring in the midst of investigation into the Metis nation of Saskatchewan that funding cheques were still being issued to the same individuals under investigation, so–called representing a specific Metis society. What kind of power and control do these individuals in this industry have on this government? Instead of codifying more programs, which in the Saskatchewan Metis experience have caused disunity, not harmony, we should be drafting accountability guidelines for these bureaucrats handing out the largesse and establishing disbursal guidelines for these Metis bodies.

I am not breaking any new trails here. I have asked a series of questions of the minister of heritage, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development regarding the Metis and aboriginal funding. I have attempted to enlighten this administration about who is really getting rich. With the current method, rank and file Metis are not the recipients. Bill C–53 will ensure it is business as usual.

Mr. Jim Sinclair, president of the Native Council of Canada, in testimony before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs stated in April of this year that he would welcome his books being audited by the Auditor General, not the Secretary of State now Heritage Canada. There has to be an arm's length relationship when it comes to the auditing function. Again Bill C–53 ensures that Heritage Canada will continue to audit itself. I call it vertically integrated bureaucratic control. It should be eliminated by the government.

• (1620)

The federal interlocutor for Canada's Metis, the Minister of Natural Resources, is another participant in the process. She indicated that the federal government is prepared to assume 50 per cent of the cost of establishing and maintaining a registry of the people of the Metis nation.

We had a census in 1991. Why would the federal government want to encourage further racial divisiveness by committing to a racially based census? Surely such an undertaking is another instance of the potential for more misunderstanding of the government's uncontrollable urge to create special rights for various groups within our society. Does anyone know how to say no?

At the same time that the federal interlocutor is committing to this census, the Metis leadership is proposing a national legislative assembly, a capital in Batoche, a flag, an anthem, an emblem, Metis and Canadian citizenship and Metis law making authority. Does the minister want to encourage all this by providing funding for an as yet undefined census based on racial characteristics where the proponent has a vested interest in inflating the membership qualifications as much as possible? What is the federal interlocutor of the Metis doing by committing funding to create another group on which to confer special rights?

Either the Minister of Canadian Heritage through Bill C–53 is the minister responsible for Metis or he is not. Clearly responsibility for Metis is outside the purview of the minister of Indian affairs. It should also be outside the purview of the Minister of Natural Resources. Why do we need two ministers responsible for the same issue?

We have a litany of funding and accounting problems in not only the Metis society in Saskatchewan, but there are problems in other jurisdictions as well. This is what Bill C–53 should be addressing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I address this House on Bill C–53, which confirms the structure of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Canadian government has used this bill to bring together under one roof several elements of our Canadian identity. Of course, when we speak of heritage, there are those who think of the past, of historic sites and buildings, of monuments and museums.

But there is much more than that. Our heritage is also the present and especially the future. That is why the new department includes: the development and promotion of our unique culture; communications and the development of the information highway; the cultural industries, which are taking their place, with much success, on the world scene; official languages, multiculturalism and heritage languages, essential elements of our national affirmation; amateur sports, which give expression to our search for excellence.

All these elements play a role in making us what we are, proud Canadians who are respected and envied the world over.

I came to Canada at the age of 16. I chose this country for its promise of a future, social stability and a tradition of welcoming new citizens. And I must say that I was not disappointed.

• (1625)

Yes, Canada's doors are open. Yes, Canada is full of opportunities. Yes, Canada is a land of justice and sharing. Yes, it is the best country in the world!

And even if the Canadian Heritage critic for the Official Opposition does not agree, I would like to tell him that there are millions and millions of human beings in the world who would give everything they have to be admitted into Canada and to live here with us. Despite our difficulties, our differences, our economic and financial problems, this country is still the best in the world. And in Quebec, it is a minority that wants to separate Quebec from the rest of Canada and destroy this country.

Let us not be misled, this country is still the best in the world. This fact has been recognized twice by the United Nations and most importantly it is acknowledged by all of us who, day after day, live in peace and prosperity on this vast North American territory.

I am a Canadian proud and aware of the considerable benefits that this country provides. I am also a full–fledged Quebecer who realizes how beneficial it is for us to be part of the Canadian entity.

There are few places in the world where two great cultures can blossom out in such harmony and with such autonomy as in Canada. And this is where the role of the Department of Heritage becomes so important. Our government recognizes that culture is not an abstraction detached from reality but a vital link that binds us all together.

As a matter of fact, in our red book, we say that "culture is the very essence of national identity, the bedrock of national sovereignty and national pride".

Several of our major cultural institutions, namely the CBC, the Canada Council, the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada contribute year after year to bring to the fore artistic talents from Quebec.

Heritage Canada supports, finances, develops markets for francophone cultural products that are essential to our artists in Quebec. The Canadian Museum of Civilizations in Hull, as well as the Quebec Citadel, trace the history of the first inhabitants and the first settlers that came here. Our parks and historic sites give the millions of tourists who visit our country an idea of the richness of our natural heritage.

The works of Michel Tremblay, Alice Parizeau, Antonine Maillet and many others have reached far beyond the boundaries of Quebec and of Canada. Those works are translated in several languages and have become the delight of readers all around the world.

The Cirque du soleil, a unique cultural product, conceived and realized by Quebecers, fills with wonder the young and not so young on several continents.

Quebec films, songs and plays have extensions on all continents. In television, the TV5 channel opens a window on the French–speaking world. This international cooperation allows also the francophonie to learn what goes on in our country. Programs produced in this country are broadcasted in Rome, Warsaw or Cairo.

The Canadian government plays a leading role in the expression and promotion of French culture in Canada and in the world.

We support creation. We support production. We encourage young artists. We negotiate agreements regarding export of our cultural products.

In the day–to–day life of French–speaking creators, the federal contribution is irreplaceable. Without the contribution of the Canadian government, many of our famous writers, our established actors and actresses, our renowned movie producers would have never taken off. We know it and this is why, despite our limited resources, we give particular attention to cultural development. This is part of our mandate, part of our responsibilities.

We should not underestimate the economic value of our cultural sector. Today, cultural enterprises rank ninth among our national industries. They generate direct revenues amounting to $22 billion a year.

• (1630)

About 600,000 Canadians work in this field. This clearly demonstrates that our cultural industries are closely linked to the economic development of our country and actively contribute to our prosperity. In addition to preserving and promoting native, French and English cultures, Canada officially recognizes its multiculturalism.

Moreover, the building of this country has largely been influenced by several waves of immigrants who made their homes here. Thousands of immigrants have developed Canada's natural resources. They have settled vast territories. They have helped build our cities.

Most regions of Canada have developed their own characteristics inherited from different cultural groups. This diversity is the hallmark of the Canadian identity and culture. Canadian multiculturalism is two–pronged. It encourages all Canadians to take an active part in society, in either official language. It also urges society to get rid of all obstacles impeding full and equal participation.

Cultural harmony is being promoted through initiatives such as teaching heritage languages, assisting ethnic artists and encouraging cross–cultural activities. While recognizing that

our roots are an important part of our identity, Canadian multiculturalism urges us to make a commitment to Canada. It respects everyone's cultural identity. It encourages creativity and cultural exchanges. It helps us to realize not only what our rights are as a member of society, but also what are our responsibilities.

In Canada, we do not ask newcomers to leave their culture at the door to be welcome. As the Prime Minister would say, you can be proud of being a Canadian as well as a Quebecer. That is what makes us Canadians so unique.

The role of the Heritage Department is precisely to support the development of our national identity. Having grouped all the means of expression of this identity under one department, the government is being consistent. In so doing it is ensuring sound management of our investments and greater efficiency. It proves that federalism can be adapted to our society's changing needs. It proves that several cultures, living in harmony and sharing, can flourish on the same territory. It proves that, together, we can create and share a reality which is unique in the world, and that is the Canadian identity.

[*English*]

This is a time when we have to pull together. Yes, we have some financial difficulties. Yes, we have some serious problems that we have to solve. However, we should look at the number of people outside Canada who are waiting in line in different parts of the world in different Canadian embassies. Think of the millions of human beings who would give everything they have to be here in Canada, to be a Canadian resident, to be a Canadian citizen. Yes, we have problems. Yes, we have a lot of differences. I think that as in the past we can work together, pool our resources and continue to ensure that this is a country of generosity, a country of understanding.

• (1635)

It is only by working together in this globalization that we are going through that we can survive and maintain this unique Canadian way of doing things. We have the Canadian way of welcoming new Canadians in this country and a Canadian way of making sure that our seniors are protected. We have a way of protecting our health system. This is unique if I may be allowed to say that.

That in a way represents Canadians' generosity. Look at me. I came to Canada when I was 16 years old. Today I am a member of Parliament, the highest tribunal in the land. I speak the two official languages. I am of Italian origin. I raised a family. We worked together and we are proud of our achievements.

I was able to achieve because our country and our system allows me to achieve. Therefore I will work hard in future months to make sure that the federal system that we have ensures equality and protection for everyone. We have prosperity and hope that our children will have it.

I am sure there is a solution to all the differences and all the problems that we have. The only way we can solve this is working together. We look forward to solving these problems. A lot of countries look at us and at the way we have been solving and will continue to solve our differences. This is the future of the world. This is where the rest of the world is going.

It would be a shame to depart from this tradition, the way we have been doing things for 125 years.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Saint–Léonard. It is the first time I have had the honour to listen to him in this House and I did so attentively. Other duties prevented me from hearing him before. I do not want that to be taken in a negative way.

I listened to his speech attentively. What struck me the most is that to define himself as a Canadian, the hon. member for Saint–Léonard only spoke about Quebec francophones, which is rather surprising. So I went to see my colleague from Calgary Southeast to ask her the name of an English philosopher, which she could not remember either. There is an English Canadian—whose name you probably know—now living in Vancouver who has asked out loud what many people quietly think: Is there a Canadian identity? The answer is no. There is no Canadian identity. What is a Canadian? Who is a Canadian? Is it someone who lives in Canada? I myself live in Canada because I do not have a choice but I am a Quebecer and not a Canadian. The Premier of Quebec made a mistake; he did not know any more if he could be a Canadian or a Quebecer, a Quebecer or a Canadian.

A Canadian is defined as someone who lives in Canada, in a country with two languages, multiculturalism and everything. Come on! That is not what defines a Canadian. So he spoke only of Quebec's French–speaking writers. We never denied Radio–Canada's part in Quebec's francophone culture. We never denied this or any other roles. But what is the heritage department doing now? It is cutting off all funding to the National Film Board. They are strangling the NFB. Telefilm Canada was ordered to cut from 5 per cent to 8 per cent. They will no longer be able to produce films.

It is the same everywhere. Let us stop deluding ourselves. It may be the most beautiful country in the world, but I have seen the Rockies and they are nothing compared to Charlevoix.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her initial remarks. She is trying to define what it is to be a Canadian. I have always defined myself as a Canadian, a Quebecer of Italian descent. That is the beauty of it. I tried to explain it earlier. I started to in English, and I will now continue in French.

• (1640)

That is the difference. I think that I am a product of what we could call a Canadian. I came to Canada when I was 16 years old. I have no problem with this country that may mean nothing to you because you do not care much about the Rockies, but Charlevoix is quite beautiful. As far as I am concerned, the Rockies are beautiful and so is Charlevoix. I have no problem because I feel like a Canadian, like a Canadian and a Quebecer, and it is this country, this country's federal system that the Official Opposition, the Bloc Quebecois, criticizes day in and day out and are trying to destroy.

An hon. member: You are talking about a single culture.

Mr. Gagliano: I am not talking about a single culture, but rather two official languages, the French culture—as I indicated in previous speeches—the English culture, and a multicultural culture. That is the Canadian reality, its cultural identity, with both the French and English cultures and the multiculturalism that make Canada a tolerant country, as I said in my speech, if only the hon. member had listened.

When you come to Canada, you must not leave your culture at the door; you must bring it along, protect and nurture it, and together with other cultures continue to build this great country. Globalization is a world–wide phenomenon. We must not fence ourselves in as the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois are trying to do in Quebec.

We have faith in this huge country stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, point of order. The member cannot say that the Bloc Quebecois wants to keep Quebec inside a small culture. I ask him to withdraw his remarks right away.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I am listening carefully to the speeches on both sides of the House, and with all due respect to all hon. members, I do not believe that this is a point of order. I again give the floor to the Hon. Secretary of State.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the hon. member understood me or if I expressed myself poorly; I was talking about fencing oneself in and said "clôture"; I did not wish to imply that it is a small culture, and did not say "culture". Perhaps my colleague was not wearing an earphone; I said fencing, because I have great respect for the French culture. In the ten years that I have been here, I have always defended the French language and culture and Quebecers' rights and the interests of the Canadian Confederation. She needs only refer to the *Hansards* which report everything that is said in the House and even what is said outside the House. So she thinks I said small culture, but I was talking about fencing. Either I mispronounced the word or she misunderstood.

Personally, I respect the hon. member's option. I believe in this Canada. I feel comfortable defining myself as a Canadian. I am Canadian. I feel confident. I believe that in spite of all our differences, Canada will continue to exist and will continue to develop. Canada will become a model in the world because it is the only way, with a strong Quebec inside Canada. That is the difference! A strong Quebec inside Canada; that is the difference and that is how Canada will be a model for the rest of the world. When we see what is happening in the rest of the world, people will look to Canada, and the Canadian federal system will still be the best. In the future, you will see that Canada's federal system will continue to progress and succeed despite our differences; the whole world envies us and will continue to envy us.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I too appreciated the comments of the hon. member.

I am going to phrase the context of my remarks within the history of my family. My grandfather came from Croatia as a very young man. He was thinly clothed, he had very little money and he certainly did not have any government waiting to give him a handout when he came here. He came alone, without his young wife and without his baby daughter, my mother. They stayed behind in Croatia. He worked his heart out for three years and he paid their way over here. In all of the years I knew my grandfather until he died at 68 years old he worked and paid his own way. Our family learned that tradition of paying your own way. You do not go to government for handouts. If you have a problem you go to your family, you go to your friends and you go to your community support and that does not mean a federal handout.

• (1645)

I am also quite concerned that this debate is grinding down into a Quebecer and English Canadian issue. This is not the issue today. The issue is the legislation of Bill C–53 which means—and let me say it again—we are looking at entrenching multiculturalism funding and we cannot afford it. We are looking at national enforced bilingualism and we cannot afford it. We also cannot afford the funding of special interest groups.

When the hon. member speaks about the economic impact of some of our cultural industries bringing $22 billion into our coffers that is a drop in the bucket against a $532 billion deficit whereby this government will only bring in revenue of $110 million per day. It spends more every day than it brings in. It does not take very long to eat up $22 billion. I would like the

hon. member to perhaps refer to a cross benefit analysis that he has done to substantiate his remarks.

Finally, the hon. member has not addressed the real issue here. In this legislation there is no downsizing, no streamlining and no financial savings. That quite frankly is what Canadian taxpayers are looking for from this government. Those are the things they are looking for because those are the promises of that infamous Liberal red book.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I would like to tell my hon. colleague that when I came to Canada I did not receive anything. Everything I did I paid for. I went to night school and I paid for the lessons. I shovelled snow in the winter and delivered groceries. I did these things and I am proud of it. However, that does not mean that because some years ago we were in a certain situation people in need should be forgotten.

I agree with the hon. member that there is abuse in the system and we are trying to correct it. I believe the hon. member does not draw a line of what the legislation is and what she would like the legislation to do.

This is a bill to organize a department. This bill is to legalize, to put in perspective of the law the departmental reorganization that the Prime Minister announced in November 1993 when we took office. She mentioned the red book. We had a promise that would cut expenses right away from the top, from the Prime Minister's office down to all the ministers of $10 million a year. I think so far we have accounted for $13 million. This part of the reorganization.

In terms of funding that the member is talking about, the member should take note, probably next week when the Minister of Finance goes before the finance committee and presents his budgetary vision on the next budget and consults with Canadians, of the estimates. That is where funding is provided for every program and for every department.

What we are talking about here is the legal frame of a department. We see here 40 departments that we had in 1984 reduced down to 22. These are the savings and the promise that we kept in the red book.

I invite the hon. member to wait until Wednesday when the minister of human resources will table his discussion paper on social programs. I am sure she has a lot of things to say there and I am sure she will contribute to the debate, not only in this House but also across the country. I am sure she is waiting patiently for the Minister of Finance to come to this House and go to the finance committee to give reference of his consultation for the next budget. There hopefully altogether we will continue to reduce expenses and look at ways we can serve our citizens more with less.

• (1650)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before continuing debate on Bill C–53 it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Mercier—unemployment; the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake—low level flights.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my views on Bill C–53, An Act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts. The Department of Communications, the Department of the Secretary of State and the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship were abolished following the government reorganization announced on June 25 and November 4, 1993. This exercise resulted in the creation of a new portfolio, the Department of Canadian Heritage.

For the first time, all federal agencies in the cultural sector, including the Canada Council, CBC, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, the national museums and parks of Canada, the National Archives and many others, are part of a single superdepartment.

I want to quote an important provision regarding a field which comes under the minister's jurisdiction. Clause 4(g), on page 2, states that the Minister of Canadian Heritage must promote "the advancement of the equality of status and use of English and French and the enhancement and development of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada".

That clause provides a good description of the federal government's objective to promote a Canadian cultural identity primarily based on the main features of a bilingual and multicultural Canada. However, no reference is made to Quebec as a society, nor to its cultural and linguistic specificity.

Once again, Ottawa denies the distinct cultural reality of Quebec by attempting to dilute its French status and culture in a supposedly bilingual and multicultural Canadian cultural identity. The creation of that department is in compliance with the defunct Charlottetown Accord, which proposed an artificial and false recognition of the provinces' exclusive jurisdiction over culture.

Never in the past, much less now, did the federal government consider withdrawing from the cultural sector despite Quebec's demands for the transfer of cultural jurisdiction and related budgets from Ottawa. The establishment of this new department is proof positive of this: the federal government is turning a deaf ear to Quebec's demands concerning language, education and, most of all, culture.

The federal government will continue to use its spending power to play a role in Quebec without any regard to the priorities and demands of the Quebec government in matters of language, education, and culture. How many more times will we

have to fight for Quebec's interests and demands? Why is the federal government ignoring Quebec's jurisdiction over culture and language?

My colleagues on this side of the House received a clear mandate to stand for the interests of Quebecers. Quebec's demands concerning cultural and linguistic jurisdiction are part of that mandate, and I will fight for them with conviction and determination.

I would like to quote what the late member for Brome—Missisquoi, Gaston Péloquin, was forever repeating to us and trying to convey to his constituents. It is a true depiction of the Canadian situation.

• (1655)

"The fundamental difference between the two solitudes is that Canada is a country looking for a people, and Quebec is a people looking for a country". The fact that my federalist friends refuse to talk about sovereignty does not mean it will not happen. Quebecers will be deciding for themselves, and the other nine provinces will have to accept that decision out of respect for justice and democracy.

The federal government keeps encroaching on exclusive Quebec jurisdictions. It can offer no guarantee about language, education and culture.

The Canadian Heritage Department is a typical example of this kind of interference in an area of jurisdiction claimed by Quebec. Essentially, the policies and priorities of the department, which were designed without consulting Quebec, are more in line with the prospect of an hypothetical country–wide cultural identity which seeks the outright assimilation, sooner or later, of the French language and the Quebec culture. I believe that is the real objective of the federal government.

[*English*]

The notion of cultural identity is what brings people together in a society. This notion helps to build and establish on a permanent basis the institutions that constitute a given society. What this government must understand is that the notion of cultural identity cannot be commanded or imposed in a democratic system or regime.

Thus the federal government cannot make an abstraction of the French culture and language that give distinct identity to Quebec society. The fact is that Canada is constituted by two nation states. Canada is not composed of a unique culture as the federal government would like us to believe.

These are the facts and the Minister of Canadian Heritage will have to deal with them.

[*Translation*]

History clearly demonstrates this. The federal government has always been trying to ignore the cultural identity of francophones, and its bilingualism policy is the proof. Bilingualism in Canada is a myth, a beautiful dream, a policy that has never really worked. We must say it: the bilingualism policy has proven to be a real failure.

The fact is that francophones cannot live and get an education in French everywhere in Canada. We have the example of Franco–Ontarians. Their history is marked by struggles, by legal battles and, indeed, a resistance to assimilation. And we have the most recent example of Longlac, in northern Ontario, where the francophone community is unable to get services.

A second example are the francophone and Acadian communities in the rest of Canada. In a submission to the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages in the House of Commons in May, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes sounded the alarm, sending out a cry of distress and demanding that the federal government emerge from its indifference.

I quote the federation: "The emergency situation in which members of our communities are living is unacceptable. The assimilation rate, which is increasing from one census to another, and the social and economic situation, which is deteriorating, do not seem to worry the government overly—"

On a five–year period, the assimilation rate has increased by 4.5 per cent in the overall francophone regions outside Quebec. That is a fact. If we do not act immediately, assimilation will continue on its irreversible course, whatever people think and say here.

• (1700)

A third example: the closure of the Collège militaire royal de Saint–Jean. This decision is, I believe, the worst the federal government has taken in a decade.

How can the federal government justify the closure of the only French–speaking military college in the country and continue to promote its bilingualism policy? How will the federal government be able to ensure progress towards equality of status and use of the French language in the armed forces without a single French–speaking institution in this country?

According to reports the Kingston military college is not at all ready to accommodate French–speaking servicemen and to offer them the necessary training.

Those are the facts. This is the reality. The federal government denies francophones an equal status.

To continue on the same subject, I would like to give the House some statistics. Out of 13,000 so–called bilingual positions in the armed forces, only 6,000 are held by individuals sufficiently fluent in French and in English. The other 7,000 so–called bilingual positions are held by individuals who speak only English.

This again shows that the bilingualism policy has failed in Canada.

Here is another figure. The great majority, 85 per cent, of the 63,870 designated bilingual positions across the country are along the Ottawa—Montreal—Quebec axis.

As a consequence, the budget cuts that would lead to the elimination of the annual bilingualism bonus advocated by the Commissioner of Official Languages would affect mainly francophones working in the federal public service. It would mean approximately $43 million in lost wages for francophone bilingual employees working in the federal public office.

Such is the initiative to promote a cultural identity based on bilingualism as a main characteristic of Canada from coast to coast.

Ottawa's lack of global vision considerably hinders the development and prosperity of francophone communities throughout the country.

When answering a question from the opposition about this claim, the Minister of Canadian Heritage admitted that presently, his government had no global policy for the promotion of the development and prosperity of the French fact.

The attacks the current Liberal government carries out in reaction to the Bloc Quebecois's demands simply seek to blind us to the failures of its policies to promote French in the English–speaking provinces.

Those who suggest the status quo should know that, for a lot of francophones outside Quebec, in the long term, that means assimilation.

How can we deny that the fundamental difference between Quebec and Canada is precisely rooted in the fact that English Canada is unable to recognize the existence of French–speaking Quebecers as a nation?

Quebec's aspirations to develop as both a distinct nation and a full member of the Canadian federation were always repressed. Today, Quebec has chosen to develop within its own political infrastructures, as would a truly sovereign country.

Quebec's sovereignty is not a goal per se, it is rather the means to achieve the coherent development of our potential. It is the most appropriate means we have to make efficient use of our resources.

As long as it is in Ottawa the Bloc Quebecois will keep on denouncing the federal institutions' indifference regarding Quebec and French language, education and culture.

I was sent here to shake up the political inertia of the federal government and to bring to the attention of the House of Commons the concerns of francophone communities wherever they may be in Canada.

The federal government must correct all its deficiencies in order to better answer the aspirations of francophone communities.

Quebecers have used most of their political energy over the last three decades to build a political structure that will allow them to develop as a people. It must be understood that if something binds Quebecers together it is their refusal of the status quo.

• (1705)

Quebec's political and economic context has changed radically over the last fifteen years. Those changes explain the strong comeback of the sovereignist movement in Quebec after the referendum defeat in 1980, the Meech Lake Accord and the Charlottetown Accord.

Since the days of Jean Lesage, all the federalist premiers have struggled hard to provide the Quebec State with the decision–making powers which it needed to exercise a real control over our collective destiny.

The vast majority of Quebec federalists refuse the system in its present form. What made them different from sovereignists for a long time is that they hoped that the system could be modified, especially by transferring powers from Ottawa to Quebec and recognizing the distinct nature of the Quebec people.

For their part, sovereignists had come to the conclusion that Quebecers could never fully develop as a nation within the federal framework the structures of which were frozen in time.

After 30 years of fruitless efforts and countless attempts to change the federal system, even federalists in Quebec have to face reality: the failure of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords have put an end to any hope for a renewed federalism.

Today, Quebecers, both federalists and sovereignists alike, can be sure of one thing regarding the status quo: they can either take it or leave it. Everyone will have to make this choice. Nevertheless, when it comes to the mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage, we cannot have just one cultural policy since we have two distinct cultures.

As such, the policy of the Department of Canadian Heritage cannot be developed and applied uniformly across the country. Consequently, the Bloc Quebecois will make sure that the various measures taken by the federal government are in tune with the general direction of Quebec's cultural policy.

The Bloc Quebecois will demand that Quebec get its fair share of federal funding through the main cultural institutions such as museums, the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The Bloc Quebecois will also make sure that cuts in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's budget will not be made

at the expense of its French network and, therefore, of Quebec artists.

The Bloc Quebecois will also ensure that the Quebec cultural community receives its fair share of grants from federal agencies such as the Canada Council and Telefilm Canada and from the resource envelopes of the program.

Such is the mandate I received from Shefford constituents and I intend to be worthy of their trust.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am always interested to hear members of the Bloc Quebecois talk about their culture and about other French Canadians, especially Franco–Ontarians, and how they are going to be assimilated, saying that the federal government has no role to play.

I must tell you that I am a French Canadian, born in northern Ontario in a family which has been living there for generations. I was raised and educated in French.

Let me tell you that my roots are the same as theirs, even though for economic reasons, my ancestors chose to go and build a country, Canada. Some stopped in Ontario, others continued further west. We now have our schools, several of them in fact. There are programs to teach English to francophones and French to anglophones.

• (1710)

It is certainly not perfect, but it is a lot better than it was 30 years ago. Do you think for one moment that without a federal government we, francophones from outside Quebec, would have had anything from people like the members opposite who choose to deny our very existence, and claim they are the only francophones in Canada? May I ask them what role they intend to play in the life of my children or my grand–children with their activities? To resort to such trickery is a disgrace.

Mr. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague for her comments. I simply quoted figures in my speech. When you hear about the assimilation process taking place in Canada and see figures, real figures, like the ones I quoted, I think there can be no doubt. We are all entitled to our opinions and to think that things are actually better around us, but in the light of objective figures—those I quoted were from Statistics Canada if I am not mistaken—I would say it is undeniable.

As the minister said, she is, of course, bilingual. As far as I am concerned, I used to teach English as a second language before I was elected to this House. I must tell you that I have a great deal of respect for the English language, and the English culture in general. My thinking regarding Quebec changed progressively; it was not a choice made overnight.

When I was younger, I did not belong to a sovereignist political party; I was a federalist. Then, in 1980, I voted yes in the referendum, and this was the proudest day of my life. I am very proud of having voted yes. Since then, I have matured. I think that is the right thing to do. I would like francophones outside Quebec to be provided better protection. I would like them to have rights.

During Statements by members under Standing Order 31 today, I rose to point out that, in Northern Ontario today, francophones are having problems getting recognized. I do not know where the hon. minister is from or what newspapers she reads, but this is a fact and I think it is important to point it out. Canada as a country will continue to exist; I have no doubt about that.

I remember reading a book that said that birds migrate to the south and that Canada was a fictitious country because it stretched from East to West while the normal axis was North–South. I think it must be true.

When Canada was an English colony, the English had lost the whole southern part and they wanted to protect the North; that is how a fictitious country with two founding peoples was born. Of course, many other cultures came and joined them and they must be respected.

People tend to think that minorities are poorly protected in Quebec. I would like to tell you that the English courses given in our schools in Quebec are improving. Our English–speaking fellow citizens have good facilities, like hospitals in Montreal, schools, three universities in Quebec territory. No other province does as much for its minority, except possibly the national capital, with the University of Ottawa and Saint Paul University. Except for that, there is nothing. I think that it is important to say so.

I want to tell you that I want Quebec to be a sovereign country. Yes, Quebec and Canada should have good relations; we should learn to live together side by side in harmony and trade with each other. As you know, one side cannot do it alone. We in the Bloc Quebecois are in this debate and we will win.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to follow the line of questioning of my colleague, the Minister of Health. I am sure I heard the hon. member talk about his commitment, his responsibility and his party's responsibility for francophones outside Quebec.

• (1715)

If they are successful in creating a country called Quebec, how do they expect to honour those commitments to francophones outside of Quebec? Instead of focusing on francophones and their needs in this great country, are they focusing instead on the creation of a country for the self–serving politicians who in fact want to lead a nation?

Mr. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

In the same way that Quebecers treat their minorities well, I believe that in a separate Canada Canadians will treat their minorities well. It will be both sides treating their minorities well. That is important for the future of our maybe two countries. I do not think there is a problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the hon. member's comments and I find it strange that he did not mention that, while there are 1 million francophones outside Quebec, 250 anglophones are now enroled in French immersion classes. We were even told that young Chinese are enroling in large numbers in Vancouver's French–language schools, a fact that should not be forgotten. I still think that they forgot to tell us about Canadian realities. Despite what they say, this is not a fictitious country. This is a wealthy country that belongs to the Group of Seven and that has achieved a great deal. We helped liberate France, Belgium and the rest of Europe in World War II. I think that Canadians have demonstrated their maturity, their know–how. They got involved when other countries did not heed the call. I think that we were able to accommodate Quebecers' needs and desires, because the federal government has invested heavily in Quebec to enable it to express its identity.

Our Quebec includes Natives and anglophones. The Quebec forest that their PQ friends in Quebec City talk about is not only French–speaking; it also includes several cultural communities. Yet, I hear the hon. member speak as though only those people descended from the 60,000 settlers identified by Lionel Groulx were real Quebecers.

I would like to know if, in his opinion, today's Quebec includes other cultures. We often hear about a Quebec open to the world but the hon. member would have us forget this 15 or 20 per cent of the population that is an important part of Quebec as we know it today.

Mr. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I will respond to my hon. colleague simply by quoting figures to show him that the tree always falls on the same side here in Canada. Of the 13,000 so–called bilingual positions in the armed forces, 6,000 are held mainly by bilingual francophones, while the other 7,000 are held by anglophones for lack of bilingual candidates. Yet they decided to close the military college in Saint–Jean where anglophones could have been trained in French, where they could have taken immersion classes and gone outside the military community to experience a little Quebec culture and practice their French. But no, they will be taught French in Kingston where there is no immersion, where they will stay in an English–speaking environment and try to learn French as best they can.

That is an example of this government's bad decisions. The tree always falls on the side of the majority. If we look at what is happening in Canada, it is very difficult for a majority to understand a minority. However, since Quebecers are a minority in Canada, we understand well the problems of the anglophone minority in Quebec and we have given anglophones their own institutions. I challenge anyone in this House to find better anywhere else in Canada.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this legislation. I begin by saying that as I sit and listen to the Bloc Quebecois I continue to wonder whether we have lost our minds.

We are looking back over the last 25 years. I had the great privilege and opportunity to work for the greatest Prime Minister this country ever had, Pierre Trudeau. I think of what this one Quebecer did to make sure that the presence of the francophone culture permeated every region of this country. I think of the fights and the battles and the commitment that he led to move and expand opportunities for Quebecers right across this country, not just in the public service.

By his example and by his presence, he created an environment where Quebec business leaders are now running companies in every part of our country. I think of the Public Service of Canada right across this country. Maybe it is not a majority but a very high percentage, very close to 50 per cent of the public service positions right now are managed by francophones. In fact most of these senior positions are bilingual imperative.

I know that the system is not perfect, but there are signs regarding the great experiment, the great drive to respect so much of what the members in the Bloc are fighting for, respect for their culture and respect for their language. I cannot believe that they do not really believe in their heart of hearts that it has moved forward tremendously.

Could one imagine 10 or 15 years ago that in the province of Alberta today, as we now have, there are lineups to get into French immersion schools? If 15 years ago someone stood up in Alberta and predicted that in 1990 there would be lineups to get into French immersion schools, the person making that statement would have been thought out of his or her mind. But that is the reality of Canada today. There are lineups to get into French immersion schools in nearly every part of this country, including my own community.

I do not want to suggest that the system is perfect, but we have moved a long way. I will tell this House what bothers my constituents. We are trying to build this country, trying to develop national programs and a national spirit. We have tried to move the French language into radio, television and into senior positions in the public service. Now, all of a sudden, we have a small group here from the province of Quebec who would say to all of Canada: "Well, it was a nice try". In spite of the billions and billions of dollars that all Canadians have paid to make this great experiment work, we now have a small group of people

here who want to say: "We quit. We quit this great experiment". It is more than an experiment; it is working.

I am very excited about this bill because I have always believed in the Government of Canada presence being promoted right across this country. One of the reasons why I ran to be a member of Parliament in downtown Toronto was because I opposed the Meech Lake accord.

• (1725)

I opposed the Meech Lake accord because I do not believe in dismantling national programs and national institutions. I do not believe in giving any group preferential status in this country. I believe in a multicultural society. A multicultural society means to me that no culture is less than or greater than another culture.

When one wants to talk about a distinct society that has special status, do not count on me to support that kind of thrust where one gives a special status to any particular culture in this country. Respect for bilingualism? It is the law of the land. I support that fully. However, to give special status to one culture over another, no way. That is not on.

One of the reasons the Bloc Quebecois does not like this legislation is that it will once again reinvigorate the department that is so important in our rebuilding the Government of Canada presence in the province of Quebec.

We talk in this bill about making sure that our parks and all of our Canadian symbols, our broadcasting and our cultural policy reflect the fact that we are a country from coast to coast. We do not just go from the west coast and jump over Quebec to Atlantic Canada. This is a country from coast to coast.

Nothing should please Canadians more than making sure that the federal presence is reinvigorated in the province of Quebec. I believe, and this is where I come apart from my friends in the Reform Party, that if we want to keep this country together, we have to spend some money.

An hon. member: Your grandchildren's money.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): The member is absolutely right. The Reform Party says that it will be my grandchildren's money. I don't have any yet, but hopefully.

There will not be anything for our grandchildren if we do not rebuild the national presence, the Government of Canada presence, and the symbols of Canada in the province of Quebec.

This is what I cannot understand from the Reform Party. For 10 years we had a Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, who basically retreated from building, exposing or showing what the Government of Canada did in Quebec. He was quite happy to shovel off and devolve responsibility to the operating province of Quebec.

One of the reasons we have such a strong separatist feeling in Quebec right now is that the Government of Canada presence, the services, the programs, the symbols and the things that all Canadians pay for, is not realized by Quebecers. It is in the billions. In no other province in Canada do we have a situation like that.

When government programs, government services and government activities happen in all the other provinces and in the Northwest Territories, they are plainly and clearly identified. However, in the province of Quebec we basically dismantle the federal presence. That of course is the reason as I said earlier why the Bloc Quebecois does not like this legislation. With this legislation we are going to once again try to rebuild that presence.

If we go to Quebecers and ask: "Do you want to continue to be a part of Canada?", let us at least let Quebecers know what we are doing.

• (1730)

It has nothing to do with the heritage department. It has to do with all those symbols, services and programs that right now are not known as Government of Canada services and projects. Once again I stand here and say we in this Chamber are trying to rebuild the spirit of this country. We are trying to make sure there is a national feeling shared by all Canadians right across the country. I hope that one day a large majority of Quebecers will see that the best opportunity for their language and culture is by being a part of the whole nation.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I feel my temper rising, but I will try to stay calm. Really, that is the absolute limit! That is dreadful! Where does the parliamentary secretary come from? Toronto, surely. He apparently visits Ottawa, but he never goes anywhere else because what he says is totally false.

For nine years, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney did everything in his power to bring Quebec back into Canada. Take Meech Lake, for example, who blocked it? Who stood in the way? The Grits did, the hon. member in particular. He just admitted it. There was a lady whom we cannot name, who is now somewhere, but we cannot say where, and who has just been rewarded for doing the good deeds requested today by the lady whom we cannot name. I refer to Sharon Carstairs. We will not name her. That was one.

Two, the sorry tale of Charlottetown. What a farce. What a pity there was no Mr. Lisée in 1867 to tell us how Canada was built. What about a railway system right across Canada? And a ferry to Prince Edward Island in perpetuity; so we amended the Constitution for the ferry. The deed was done in a business–like fashion by a bunch of businessmen with no long–term vision

about the chaos they were sending this country into. We no longer have a railway system. That was the only cross–country link we had, and it does not exist any more.

Mrs. Ringuette–Maltais: Thanks to the electronic highway, we have made progress, in our part of the country.

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): We will see what happens in New Brunswick. He says that Canada is not visible in Quebec. This is why they want to implement their social reform. They want to give students a cheque with a red flag on it. They want to bring together the young and the old. They scare old people when they give them a cheque with a red flag. But seniors in Quebec are no dummies. They know what is going on. They realize that whether the cheque is blue or red, the money comes from our pockets. There is no pot from which to hand out money to Quebec seniors every month. There is no such thing and seniors have figured that out a long time ago.

Actually, Canada is visible in Quebec. There are big signs now. But they never thought of putting up such signs before Mr. Lévesque's government decided to do just that. Such an idea had never occurred to them. Only when Mr. Lévesque got his blue signs out did we start to see nice red signs go up. Now, those signs are black and white; they are as bleak as can be. Like the future of Canada. Completely shut out in total darkness. Such is Canada's visibility. Canada never gave us our fair share. This is what we said; this is what Quebecers know; this is what we will show and demonstrate to them. Canada has no future in Quebec and Quebecers will remember that on referendum day.

[*English*]

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I did not mean to get the member upset.

The member stated that Canada has no place in Quebec. If I understood the member correctly, she implied that the rest of Canadians have not done that much to contribute to the development of Quebec within the context of Canada. It is sad the member believes that because we are all doing our best to make this work. Today several members on this side of the House have stated that the system is not perfect but it has been getting better. By refusing to work at building the country the member will only make the situation worse because the facts will eventually be communicated to Quebecers.

• (1735)

We are entering a very tough period where not only Quebecers are doing the substantial in depth analysis of government programs and services and fiscal transfers. We are talking about programs and transfers of all the things related to our heritage not only in the province of Quebec but right across the country.

When all of those analyses are done, as the Bloc so often likes to do line by line, Quebecers will see that Canada is a much better deal than most of them ever realized. Certainly when every member in the Bloc goes through the line by line exercise in relation to the whole, they are going to see that Canada is the place to be.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am a westerner and I am from Alberta and I heard—

Mr. Speaker, excuse me. Remarks such as those are out of order. I have an opportunity to speak on this floor.

In my view the hon. member who just spoke did not speak of a long term vision that addressed all of us in Canada. Is his view that what is required now is to continue to increase program spending to pacify Quebec? Quebecers appear to have made a decision here. The hon. member is suggesting that indeed we have not yet spent enough to facilitate and support Quebec to keep it in this federation, which quite frankly is falling apart.

This bill is about legislating and entrenching multiculturalism which we cannot afford, national bilingualism which we cannot afford, and special interest group funding which we cannot afford. As an Albertan and a westerner I take great exception to the fact that this debate keeps wallowing in the issue of Quebec separation.

I would like the hon. member to address these points and to remember that Canada does extend beyond the Ontario border. There is a whole other part of this country called Canada and it is the west. The west is getting really fed up with all of this talk as well because it is all just talk. I am equally as disgusted and fed up as the hon. member from Quebec who just spoke. I am fed up with this whole debate as well, because it is going nowhere. It is grinding down into a ridiculous discussion about more spending and Canadian taxpayers will not tolerate any more spending.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the member was suggesting that more resources were needed in Alberta to augment the bilingualism line–ups. Is that what she meant?

• (1740)

One of the greatest issues in western Canada which the western members especially those in the Reform Party talk about is eliminating the grants, program funding and all of those other things that help us develop as a nation. But very rarely do we hear members, especially those from Alberta telling us to cut the oil tax grants that are buried in the tax act of Canada. I cannot wait for the day when the hon. member says: "Cut those oil and tax grants". That is the day I am waiting for.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of people reading *Hansard* I will tell them that I am wearing a tartan tie which I purchased in Scotland this summer. It is my family tartan and I am very proud of it.

I just want to make a couple of comments about this whole business. The Liberals have permitted this debate to fall off the tracks. It has ended up in a squabble match between them and the Bloc over whether the Bloc is right or they are right or whatever.

As I said, my wife and I visited Scotland this summer. I was very impressed that the people of Scotland, who have much blood on the ground over various things which have happened in their history, are very, very proud of their Scottish heritage. I can only hope after we are successful in defeating the separatists in their referendum whenever they want to bring it, that the Quebecois in exactly the same way that the Acadians have, will say: "I am proud to be a Quebecer," in the same way that the people in Scotland say: "I am proud to be Scottish, but boy am I happy to be a part of the United Kingdom". I can only hope we will see a move in that direction.

The member for Broadview—Greenwood finally mentioned the word parks in this debate. Surprisingly in the grab bag that is Canadian Heritage, national parks are actually included. I suggest that parks possibly have more in common with the Department of the Environment. I have a couple of thoughts along that line in terms of the reorganization of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Canadian Parks Service objective for national parks as enunciated in 1991 is to protect for all time representative natural areas of Canadian significance in a system of national parks and to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this natural heritage so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations. It is for this reason that I suggest because of the very obvious close connection to the Department of the Environment that perhaps parks would be better served in a different department.

Let me also read from the 1990 publication "State of the Parks". The introduction says in part: "The national park profiles and national historic site profiles are designed to identify basic data for each park and site in the system. As such they will provide a context for the first state of the parks report. They represent a first attempt to provide a comprehensive reference list of the values, conditions and threats which occur throughout the system".

At another point it says: "At this stage the data for the profiles are preliminary and reports of conditions are generally based on professional judgments rather than definitive criteria. This report fills an important function in that it identifies quite specifically gaps in the information systems which need to be addressed". And this is the specific connection: "Canada's green plan will provide resources to take an ecosystem approach to the management of national parks. In co–operation with other services of the Department of the Environment, the parks service will be developing indicators to measure the condition of the natural resources and the stability of the cultural resources".

• (1745)

It is important to note that the introduction to this presentation in 1990 was done at a time when parks were actually a part of the Ministry of the Environment. Under Kim Campbell's regime she made this grab bag of Canadian heritage that now happens to include parks.

For reference let me also read from the news release from the current minister dated March 24, 1994. In its background, national heritage considerations, ecological integrity: "In the establishment and management of national parks, Parks Canada strives to maintain the ecological integrity of those protected areas. Ecological integrity is defined as a condition whereby the structure and function of an ecosystem are unimpaired by the stress of human activity and are likely to remain so.

The 1994 Parks Canada guiding principles and operational policies provide the framework for achieving this condition within national parks in conjunction with their sustainable use and enjoyment by visitors".

Parks are of great interest to me because I have three parks in my constituency; Kootenay National Park, Yoho National Park and Glacier National Park. Therefore I am quite interested in them. I have also taken time to read the current and most recent study from the Glacier–Mount Revelstoke National Park management plan.

In summary this very good document tells me the direction the park wants to go. Basically it is leave it alone, do not touch it. Leave it in its natural state. It also talks about the fact that if certain flora or fauna or smaller animals or birds have been removed through the mismanagement of the parks, the parks would like to add them back.

Interestingly though, they say that they will only let wild fires burn if they are in very remote areas and would simply go straight up the mountain. I can appreciate that where we have the Northlander Lodge and other buildings of that type, even parks buildings and camp sites with washroom facilities and so on and so forth that you would want to protect that area. However the difficulty is because we do not have a really clear definition of what we want to do in our parks. Because we have a Disneyland, Bambi kind of an idea about what a forest looks like, we are saying: "Leave it alone, except we will suppress fire".

The difficulty is that even in Glacier National Park there is an area of the park that has a campground in it that has root rot. Root rot is something perfectly normal that is going to happen to trees. Therefore, due to lack of understanding, people from

Canada, the United States and Europe travelling through will say: "Oh my, how awful, this part of the forest has died".

Forests live and die in the same way that populations or people within populations live and die. We have a situation right now in Kootenay National Park—and I would suggest that this would be applicable to parks on the east coast and on the west coast—where we have a bug or a blight. We have in quite a number of trees an infestation where the trees are all turning red. How terrible. No, it is not terrible. That is part of nature's plan, of regeneration.

As a matter of fact the reason why we have dominantly lodgepole pines up through Banff, Kootenay Park, Yoho Park and on up through Jasper is because around 1885 for a three–year period fire actually started as far south as Mexico and slowly worked its way up so that we have this monoculture of lodgepole pine. The trees have now reached a point where they are attracting disease or bugs.

• (1750)

If we as human beings have not learned anything from what was in many cases an explosion in Yellowstone National Park where the place turned into an absolute inferno with no conceivable way of being able to control that inferno, then we have not learned very much. Particularly in Banff National Park they have tried burning some of the undergrowth and underbrush, to try to maintain this Disneyland kind of Bambi, Smoky the Bear, approach to what a forest is supposed to look like.

I also read in the same report under sustainable use that throughout the consultative process leading to a revision of Parks Canada policies, discussions surrounding national parks underwent the most scrutiny. There was concern about which activities and facilities are appropriate within the confines of national parks.

In response a revised policy reflects the role of national parks as part of larger ecosystems. Therefore decision making must be based on an understanding of surrounding environments leading to partnerships for the protection and sustainable use of the whole ecosystem. In the national parks context this means that people gain direct and indirect benefits from heritage resources over the long term without destroying them.

Herein lies the conundrum. Herein lies the problem. In fact, in my judgment in many situations in our national parks—again I direct this to whether we are talking about the east coast, the far north, central Canada, because of our Disneyland approach to parks—we are actually letting the parks act as an incubator for bugs and disease where the trees are being killed. As a consequence we are loading the fuel and when it takes off there is going to be no stopping it. Commercial forests outside of parks are going to be negatively impacted either by disease, bugs or fire.

Glacier National Park has a budget of $7.3 million and 99 full time people. Yoho National Park has a budget of $5.8 million with 81 full time people. In the case of Glacier National Park the vast majority, 75 to 80 per cent, of the budget is for road clearing. I would like to know what in the world Heritage Canada is doing in the road clearing business when we have perfectly competent, capable, equipped departments, subcontractors or contractors to the provincial government?

To give an idea of where this is going, I have a press release in my hand of September 12 from Doug Martin, regional vice–president, Public Service Alliance of Canada and it reads: "Parks Canada is contemplating centralizing Yoho National Park highway crew to Banff and Lake Louise. Also being considered for transfer are the finance and store operations. Yoho employs approximately 60 full time and seasonal employees. The proposed transfer affects upwards of 40 employees who will be required to move to Alberta". It goes on and raises some very legitimate concerns.

I was speaking about an hour ago with the mayor of the town of Golden which is in my constituency. The mayor was asking me: "What is going on, what is happening". He is going into a council meeting tonight. They want to know. They need to know.

I lay at the door of the Liberal government the fact that this area of parks management is completely up in the air, is rolling over, is appearing to be completely out of control. We are into a process of redirection and there is no direction from the top; the top level being the minister of parks.

• (1755)

Furthermore, in taking a look at the whole issue of highways and asking why Parks Canada is in the highway business, I read in a note from the Northlander Lodge, which is up in Rogers Pass: "The Alberta Truckers Association lobbied long and hard and advanced the position that they should not have to pay to transport commercial goods across Canada on the Trans–Canada Highway just because the highway happened to go through the federal park". Parks Canada made a policy decision and in a speech in Calgary the minister announced that through commercial traffic would no longer have to pay a toll to go through the parks. He is asking if there is going to be a reimposition of the toll in the parks because it very directly impacts on his business.

If there is a reimposition of the toll for the vehicles going through the parks, then people coming through are going to be in a position of saying: I am not going to stop at the Northlander Lodge because I did not pay my permit; I am not going to stop for a cup of coffee, I am not going to stop for that extra gas that I think I need, I am going to bypass it. This directly affects him.

The reason why I am asking if it makes sense for parks to be in the highway business is that the last time I looked commercial vehicles, for that matter passenger vehicles, are presently paying to all the provinces diesel and fuel taxes that should be

going to the capital cost of maintaining roads as well as the day to day maintenance of roads.

I believe in user pay. The Reform Party believes that those who are using a service should be paying for it. I understand that and I support that. However if it works to the detriment of the businesses that are located in the parks, then that is just plain wrong–headed thinking.

Right at the moment we have a situation in Kootenay National Park—again let me put in parenthesis that I am referring to some specific situations I am personally familiar with. I have every reason to believe that the same kind of situation is in place in virtually every park across Canada. We are talking about a management situation, what should we be doing. With the greatest respect to my friends across the way, the people are not getting direction from the top.

For example we are looking at enterprise units in parks. What is an enterprise unit in a park? If you have hot pools in Radium, in Banff and in Jasper and the revenue from the visitors to those pools is just going into consolidated revenue, that does not generate efficient management of those pools. As an example, that is the first of the enterprise units. They have hired an individual and the revenue coming in from the pools is going to be segregated so that they can use it to manage the park facilities related to the pools.

Here again, we have an issue of hiring practices. Should we not be making sure that the parks are in a position to be able to hire people with pool management backgrounds rather than being forced to hire from within the civil service, still with the civil service mind, to be able to get the job done?

In conclusion, I believe for dollar efficiency that the heritage department should turn over parks back to the environment department. I also believe in the concept of enterprise units, where you would have user pay so that you get the dollars to provide the service.

Finally, may I suggest that Canada sell the parks building in the very high rent district in Calgary, get out of Calgary, move the people into a town like Golden which is right in the centre, and manage the parks from a low rent district and a district that more reflects the area than the area the bureaucrats in Calgary are presently in.

• (1800)

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue, Mr. Speaker. These are a few ideas that I have with respect to parks. In summary I say I believe parks should be moved from heritage back to environment.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's comments. I was studying today's material about our national park system because my riding of Algoma is one of the most beautiful areas in the country and should have been looked at seriously for a national park, parts of it anyway.

I wonder if the hon. member would comment on my concern and impression that he would like to see parks totally self–sufficient in a fiscal sense. Truly there are parks in this country that must be preserved for the good of our children that will never be sustainable on a purely fee for service basis.

Does he believe that the heritage of our country in its natural areas can only be preserved on a fee for service basis? Does he not believe that we cannot look at these resources only from that point of view?

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question because it is very valid. If we were just talking about a fee for service basis and we were losing sight of the fact that the parts of the parks that people most frequently want to go to, like the Burgess Shale in Yoho Park, and I am sure there are some other specific areas that people want to go to, there must be a control. There must be a park warden. There must be people who are actually going through the process to make sure that the integrity of that area is under proper control.

I would suggest that for those areas in particular that where we have to be spending dollars using resources to give special protection to those areas, those areas should be not only preserved for the good of our children which would happen, not only totally self–sufficient but I believe they could actually be profit–making so that some of the cost of doing the general work that the member refers to would be able to come out of that revenue and thereby be less draining on our bankrupt treasury at this point.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member. I listened very intently to his concept of parks. I have been to a number of parks in his riding.

I guess the concern I have which follows along with the previous comment is whether our parks are ones that we want to prevent people from using based on their income. In other words, I think most people look at our parks in Canada as part of our national heritage. I suppose that is what we are debating today.

To the extent that a poor person possibly cannot access some of these areas, I think of the sulphur pools and so forth that the member is talking about, because the maintenance cost is such that they become prohibitive to do so, only wealthy people or middle class people, however you want to define that, will have access to our national parks. I wonder if that is not somewhat of an abuse of the concept of user pay.

I noted one other point. The hon. member talked about the roads that would not be user pay but that some of the facilities in the part should be. I wonder how he gets around that contradiction.

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, handling the last point first, the roads currently are user pay and that is currently going into provincial coffers by way of fuel taxes.

What I am attempting to find out is the relationship between the amount of fuel tax that goes into the coffers of the province of B.C. and the fact that basically the province of British Columbia at this point appears to get off scott free from the very excessive costs of trying to keep Rogers Pass open which is a real chore. It is the same thing in Yoho Park.

The member's point is well taken and I have given a lot of thought to his question.

• (1805)

In the area of the pools I do not think there would have to be an excessive charge. If they are handled on an entrepreneurial basis as their own enterprise unit, which is the experiment currently being tried, we would find that the prices probably would not have to go up. If there were an entrepreneurial spirit on the part of management it would end up taking care of itself.

It is just that previously when the dollars were coming in and then going into consolidated revenue, there was no connection between the dollars coming in and the maintenance required because the maintenance required did not have anything to do with the dollars coming in. That is why I support the concept of the enterprise unit.

I would suggest that the member and others consider the Tatshenshini which is an area as far north and west in British Columbia as one can go. It is a large triangle shape that fits into the top corner of the province, right behind the Alaska panhandle. This is an area that the province of B.C. has now turned into a class A provincial park.

I cannot afford to go there. I literally cannot afford to go there. I do not happen to have $5,000 for a helicopter. I do not have another $1,500 for the rafting. It is there if I have the resources and I want to go there. If I have the $5,000 or $6,500 I can get there, but I do not have those dollars.

I suggest that the member consider that what we have done in the case of Tatshenshini in the province of B.C., recognizing that it is not a national park but still in concept, is to take an area, set it aside, take it out of the mining grid and turn it over to people who happen to have $6,500 so that they can raft down the river.

This concept of user pay for specific areas I do not think anybody is going to find too difficult when they put it against the cost of actually providing the service on a park by park basis.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières): Mr. Speaker, as critic for the Industry, I am pleased to take part in this debate on the Department of Canadian Heritage Act, particularly since last Monday, exactly a week ago, I also raised, as critic for my Party, to speak on the Department of Industry Act, a piece of legislation aiming at combining former departments which was drafted by the Campbell government and copied by the current government.

At the time, we said that the Department of Industry had so many responsibilities and such a scope that the Parliamentary Secretary, who unfortunately has left, called his minister "superman". We said that we will leave it to the voters to decide whether or not the Prime Minister has made a wise decision.

During the debate, we recognized that the mandate of the Department of Industry was wide–ranging and that there was a lot of duplication with Quebec's regional development programs as well as with other federal institutions dealing with regional development, particularly the NRC.

But the reason I wanted to speak on this bill is that there is also a lot of duplication and overlap, and very little progress, where Canadian heritage and this bill are concerned. Indeed, when it comes to jurisdictions and the powers, duties and functions of the Minister of Industry, clause 4(1)(h) of Bill C–46 provides that the powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, board or agency of the government of Canada, relating to

> (h) patents, copyrights, trade–marks, industrial designs and integrated circuit topographies;

And pursuant to clause 4(1)(k), the powers of the Minister also extend to

> (k) telecommunications, except in relation to (i) the planning and coordination of telecommunication services for departments, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada, and (ii) broadcasting, other than in relation to spectrum management and the technical aspects of broadcasting;

Thus, we see two important areas where there is duplication and a little overlapping concerning copyrights and telecommunications.

As for copyrights, it has to be either a chance mishap that should be corrected without delay or a deliberate decision. If it is a deliberate decision, it is very tendentious and significative to entrust the Department of Industry with the whole issue of copyrights.

• (1810)

Everybody knows, since they have their own personal culture, that when you delegate a question like copyrights to the Department of Industry, you are going against a whole culture. Just as a business has a culture, a department has one, and in this case it is a business culture.

Writers were familiar with the Department of Communications which was the organization previously responsible for everything pertaining to "Canadian" culture. These people, in Canada and Quebec, were in the habit—a good habit—of dealing with people who understood their problems and with whom they had probably established relationships.

Now, the government supports the Conservative Party's approach of treating copyrights like any other commercial product; this approach was condemned in English Canada as well as in Quebec. We have information on the subject. The whole situation gives rise to so much unease, discomfort and unfairness that it strains the relationship between the artistic community and the Canadian government, as represented by the Department of Industry.

But even worse, we must know that Industry Canada is beholden to American interests, and this is part of the international problem. That was the case with the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, in spite of all its pretensions, is no better. It seems that the arts community feels very affected by the situation. For reasons of efficiency and respect for individuals and organizations in the field, bringing the whole issue of copyrights back under the responsibility of the Department of Canadian Heritage has been suggested.

The other aspect concerns communications and telecommunications. There is a lot of duplication and it is very tendentious and revealing. And again, form is favoured over substance. The tools used in the world of telecommunications today are very sophisticated, whether we are talking about optical fibres or coaxial cables, and it is the tools that are the government's main concern.

The Department of Canadian Heritage deals with communications and telecommunications, but it has to take into account the business concerns of Industry Canada. When we say that Industry Canada is beholden to American interests, it is important to know that, according to the information we have, the situation has completely changed in the United States, which means that the cultural sovereignty of both Canada and Quebec is at stake.

There was a time when the Americans' own market was enough to meet their financial needs. They just had to export part of their output to cover their costs and make profits. Today, they have to export a lot more because production costs have become excessively high, as we can see in the world of sports for example.

That is why the cultural pressures from the United States that we have always felt since the Second World War have become even greater over the past few years. Today, the Americans have no choice. This is very serious for us in Quebec, and maybe even more serious for English Canada.

In Quebec, as far as cultural sovereignty is concerned, we, the sovereignists, are in the process of settling the matter. We are taking steps so that the issue of Quebec cultural sovereignty, as well as its full sovereignty, could be settled in a matter of eight to ten months.

But the situation is not the same as far as the cultural sovereignty of Canada is concerned. Instead of putting sovereignists on trial here in this House, if members opposite do not realize that the cultural sovereignty of Canada itself is threatened because of the overpowering influence of telecommunications, they will soon have to deal with problems of great magnitude.

• (1815)

On the week end—as luck would have it—I was listening to a public affairs program of an economic nature, dealing precisely with cultural development. They were saying that Toronto, which had fallen on hard times because of problems in real estate and because of the recession, seems to be recovering much strength, thanks mostly to the cultural sector. Toronto is indeed regaining its demographic and economic weight because of billion–dollar developments in that area. So much so that Toronto has become the third largest cultural city in North America, after Los Angeles and New York, but it is Toronto, American style.

That is a problem people across the way should be concerned about because they face a giant that will smother whatever is left of the distinct personality Canada claims it has. I hate to think what would happen if Quebec decided to go its own way. We are playing our role as the Official Opposition when we tell Canadians that they should shape their own future the same way Quebecers will, shortly.

Since we are talking about broadcasting, telecommunications and communications, I would be remiss in my duty as the member for Trois–Rivières if I did not mention the recent decision broadcasters in Quebec made, almost arbitrarily, it would appear, or at least without notice or with very little consultation, to close down six AM radio stations overnight. I am dismayed to see this happen, and I want my constituents in Trois–Rivières to know it. I already had an opportunity to comment on those radio station closures.

Such a decision raises two concerns. One is the media concentration in Quebec and the attendant curtailing of freedom of expression through various channels. As a result of that concentration, those who work in the media will have to abide by their code of ethics even more strictly in order to do their work properly.

At noontime, the Minister of Canadian Heritage rejected all responsibility. We could very well blame the CRTC or question its decision to grant too many new FM licences, because those new stations slowly but surely eroded the advertising revenues the AM stations depended on. We now see the results of this laxism.

Lastly, in the communications sector, there is also the electronic highway which, likewise, has a commercial aspect. The vehicle is given much more importance than the content and Quebec is completely excluded. This responsibility is assigned

to Industry Canada. In Quebec, however, Mr. Parizeau recently assigned it to his Minister of Culture. I believe that is the right way to go about it and Canada takes a different approch to government, which is not necessarily sound.

I would like to conclude on the fundamental question of what pertains to Heritage Canada. We can argue that one activity should come under this jurisdiction or that another activity should under that jurisdiction, but for us, as sovereignists, Heritage Canada is a major tool of a supposedly profitable federalism, a major tool for the assimilating Quebecers or attempting to assimilate them and intrude in a field which clearly is in provincial jurisdiction, especially in Quebec, where it should come under the sole jurisdiction of the Quebec government. All the money for Quebec administered by Heritage Canada should be given to the Government of Quebec, as soon as possible.

Therefore, I support the amendment presented by my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata.

• (1820)

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member's comments were most interesting. There was some discussion of the technical aspects, since according to him, copyright should be patriated from Industry Canada to Culture Canada, and I thought that was very interesting.

However, according to his last comments, the role played by federalism, Culture Canada, the CBC, Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board and all agencies concerned with promoting French Canadian culture in Montreal and Quebec is an attempt at assimilation. I think that is strong language that does not reflect the real situation at all, because I explained in the House—and I got no reaction—that 40 per cent of the films produced by the National Film Board were French. I think that is a very real aspect of our Confederation.

Again, I got no reaction when I said that the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada largely subsidized Falardeau's last film about the October crisis. I asked them if they could find an instance in which France provided funding for a Corsican or Breton nationalist to produce a similar film. I believe that the role played by the government reflects a wide–ranging, generous and comprehensive approach, and the maturity and confidence to consider the views of the opposition, as we are doing today.

We are still discussing the pervasiveness of American culture in our cultural industries. Sure. It is a fact of life that we, a nation of 6 million francophones, are like an island in a sea of anglophones. Incidentally, I was interested in the references to France, a country which I know fairly well. In 1984, when people went to the cinema in France, more than 70 per cent of the films they saw were French productions. Unfortunately, today, only 30 per cent of the films seen by French movie goers are French productions. It is clear that France has lost control of its national production, while we in Quebec, thanks to the generous participation of the federal government, have been able to produce quality films and support French Canadian songwriters and composers.

I am thinking of Canadian productions like Roch Voisine and Céline Dion, good singers all of them. The Canadian government has also helped small producers who were not a big international success and who were not a big success in the United States. I do not think these small producers really have to go and produce in the United States. We are here to encourage them to develop French culture in Quebec and Canada and to provide them with a market, not only in this country but also internationally.

Today, unfortunately, the opposition failed to take this opportunity to recognize that the federal government, thanks to its grant system and participation, has been a major factor in the growth and development of Quebec culture.

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see the member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine is adopting that point of view on the issue because if, in their longing for sovereignty, there is one area where Quebecers can be proud and sure of themselves, surely it is the arts. The very existence of Telefilm Canada means there is great talent in Quebec.

• (1825)

We saw it again, yesterday evening, during the Gala des Gémeaux: we had the opportunity to celebrate dozens of people who make us sincerely and spontaneously proud and who are part of our own. I think this is an element on which Quebecers will have to base their judgment; the ability in arts and sports of this small group perched in the northern part of North America. Recently at the Olympic Games, we showed the world how good we were. And we showed it also in the economic sector with Québec Inc. We can be sovereign in all areas; we can take our fate into our own hands and take the necessary steps to reach full development.

I think we owe nothing to the Canadian government because the help we received from Telefilm Canada and other agencies was due to the presence of talented francophones who were appointed there and had the insight to see talent and promote it with taxes paid by Quebecers.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pursue a little further the member's expressed concerns about the invasion of American

culture which might overwhelm all of Canada including his province, according to his thesis.

I really wonder if he believes that in an independent Quebec in the English cultural sea which the hon. member opposite mentioned they could hope to resist these forces without the protection, care and nurturing that French Canadian culture gets outside of Quebec? This is the buffer zone and we pay for it. We westerners pay for it at enormous cost.

I do not say I like it, but it is happening. I think the hon. member should be duly grateful.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, I just want to go over the things that could threaten the Quebec culture and the Canadian culture, if it exists, because I really think there remains some doubts about that in some circles. In Quebec, in part for historical reasons, we are in a process of taking over our own destiny and making sure that our culture, which is unique in the world, will survive and develop.

It seems that the same cannot be said of the Canadian culture and that the Canadian stakeholders have not yet understood how critical the situation is. It is high time, given the communications systems in place today and the American domination over this small country which is Canada, north of the United States, and what will be left of it after Quebec separation, that these people take their future in hand and understand how critical the situation is. For us, as far as the francophones outside Quebec are concerned, we are going to take care of them like people of the diaspora and perhaps we will demand more than provincial and federal governments do today. We could cite the example of the anglophone minority and the other minorities in a sovereign Quebec and legitimately demand that the rest of Canada be as generous as we are.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated a lot the comments of my colleague from the Reform Party. It is a bit disappointing to see that the debate is getting out of hand. We have clearly stated our positions, we have said that we are against that bill for very fundamental reasons and all day long, members of the government kept on rising to tell us again and again how wonderful our country was, how beautiful and how great it was. Both Telefilm and the National Film Board make lots of films.

The National Film Board no longer has the money to make films and this is no secret. It makes films like Léolo. When Telefilm Canada makes a film like Octobre, it is not investing in the culture of Quebec, but an historical event that took place in Canada, in October 1970. Who is the one who introduced the War Measures Act? It is Trudeau. Who caused us to make that movie? Who sent the army to Montreal? The army, that is Canadian for sure. Thus, even if the event took place in Montreal, it is Canadian. We must never forget that. It is not because Telefilm Canada gives money to Quebec to make films, it also gives money to Toronto. We have never denied that cultural aspect. However, we are sick and tired of hearing people talk all day long about how beautiful Canada is while those same people will not admit that this department is going to divide our country instead of unifying it.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

• (1830)

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, last week I raised the question of the federal environmental assessment panel investigating a proposal to expand low level military flight training in Labrador, specifically flying over the territorial land of the Innu.

In asking the question I noted that all the public interest groups, including the Innu and the Sierra Club, have withdrawn from the hearings, rendering the process nothing short of a farce. The public has demonstrated by withdrawing from the process a lack of confidence in that process.

I asked the minister what the federal government would do to fix this so that the public and the most disadvantaged group in the area, the Innu, could participate.

Since the question, the Minister of the Environment has met with representatives of the Innu people and with Mr. Paul Wilkinson, a former and recently resigned member of the assessment panel in question. At that meeting and in a letter, Mr. Wilkinson said: "I was forced to conclude that I had outlived my usefulness on the panel when the chairman was effectively telling me that my opinion as a member of the panel carried less weight than that of the Department of National Defence".

The issue of the panel's bias is only one reason why the Innu and others are justifiably not participating in the hearings. According to the Innu, the panel seriously compromised the integrity and independence of the process when it failed to require the Department of National Defence to table critical information before the start of the public hearings so that it could be reviewed by the interveners.

The panel also prejudiced the hearing process by not requiring DND to provide an analysis of the impact of low level flight training on aboriginal rights, including the negotiation and settlement of land rights in Quebec and Labrador.

The Innu requested the right to cross examine DND technical experts but they were denied by the panel. They are therefore saying that they cannot participate in a hearing process in which their land, their lives, the environment around them and their rights are at stake but in which the proponent is not required to put information on the table or stand accountable for other information that is in question.

The Minister of the Environment has heard the arguments and has indicated that mediation may be needed to make the hearings more fair and visibly impartial.

I once again ask that the federal government suspend the flights and suspend the hearings until the Innu rights and concerns are addressed and that after addressing those rights with or without mediation the federal government put in place an independent environmental review process that is fair both to the Innu and the land in question.

The minister has indicated in other places that Canada's new environmental assessment legislation may be proclaimed within two weeks. That new legislation sets out a process that may be fairer. Perhaps the minister would suspend the present hearings until what we know as Bill C–13 is proclaimed and then establish a new panel under the auspices of the new agency and do things right for a change.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his intervention on the low level military flying activities in Labrador and Quebec.

The Minister of the Environment met recently with representatives of the three native groups who have decided not to participate to hear firsthand their concerns with the panel's review procedures.

The minister listened very carefully to their views. She respects their perspective but considers that the panel is conducting its proceedings fairly and in accordance with its mandate and the long tradition of independent federal environmental assessment hearings.

The minister has stated in this very Chamber that if she is presented with any evidence of bias on the part of any panel member she would not hesitate to remove that member. However, to date there is no evidence of any bias among the panel membership. The panel will hear from those who are interested in participating in a process that is important to the government's decision making on this issue.

The participation of the First Nations and Inuit among others is an important aspect of the public review process. The member will be happy to know that the panel has indicated its willingness to be flexible in its procedures and in responding to the interests of key stakeholders.

Thus far there has been valuable participation of stakeholders, including First Nations and Inuit representatives, in the review process. It would be unfortunate if important groups continued to choose not to participate but no group or individual can be forced to be part of this open process.

The panel has received substantial written information from the groups that will not be participating in the hearings and will be using that information to the extent possible. The government encourages all affected groups and individuals to participate in the public hearings and I hope I can count upon my colleagues to also urge all affected groups to participate rather than to abstain.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.36 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 4, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the second report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food which deals with Bill C-49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act.

[*Translation*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the thirty-eighth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with respect to the list of associate committee members.

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

* * *

• (1005)

[*English*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-280, an act to prevent the interruption by labour disputes of the orderly progress of grain from the farm gate to export and to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act in consequence thereof.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to seek leave to introduce a private members' bill entitled an act to prevent the interruption by labour disputes of the orderly progress of grain from the farm gate to export and to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act in consequence thereof.

The purpose of the bill is to prevent work stoppages affecting the transportation of grain from the producer to the point of export by establishing a system of arbitration of disputes by final offer selection, a mechanism that is very consistent with the collective bargaining process.

I am very pleased that several of my colleagues have formally indicated to me their support of this bill. They are the members for Lisgar—Marquette, Vegreville, Okanagan—Shuswap, Prince George—Peace River, Yorkton—Melville and Kindersley—Lloydminster.

Theirs and other members' support is greatly appreciated and will be duly and officially recognized through the proceedings of the House as it deals with the bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-281, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Prisons and Reformatories Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, inmates in federal institutions have sometimes deceived innocent people by contacting them through the mail.

Recently a British woman began a relationship by mail with an inmate in my riding. She moved to Canada thinking that circumstances were normal and that she had a normal contact through the mail. However, she was murdered during a conjugal visit at the prison.

Today I have the honour to table a bill that would require officials to clearly mark all mail sent by inmates with the words: "sent from a correctional facility". I believe that this bill will protect innocent people.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to dispense with theread-

ing of the 38th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

If that is the case I move, also with unanimous consent, that the 38th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

PETITIONS

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I rise to table two petitions from residents in my constituency of Surrey North.

The first petition, signed by 40 residents, asks that the Parliament of Canada prohibit and continue to prohibit assisted suicide and to support the Criminal Code provisions prohibiting such activities which exist at the present time.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, also signed by 40 residents, requests that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, excuse me, I do not have a petition to present, but I have a motion. Should I have presented it earlier?

The Speaker: With the consent of the House, we could come back to it.

[*English*]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present two petitions today.

The first is on the subject of abortion which is very important and is in the news these last few days. I feel privileged to present a petition signed by 88 of my constituents who call on Parliament to pass legislation which protects the unborn child.

I and the petitioners are concerned that currently there is no abortion law in Canada. Together we call on the government to protect the weakest people in our society.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present my second petition on behalf of members of my constituency, most of whom belong to the Netherlands Reform Congregation, regarding the subject of sexual orientation.

The petitioners state that same sex couples should not be accorded special status by including the undefined phrase sexual orientation in human rights legislation. They do not want the government to include it in legislation which they believe would encourage this type of lifestyle. I agree with their conclusions.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a series of petitions on five separate subjects which I have received from individuals of my constituency of North Island—Powell River.

I present two petitions that call for no amendment to the Criminal Code concerning physician assisted suicide, one petition calling for a ban of the serial killer board game, one petition calling for respect of the unborn, two petitions requesting Parliament to resist pressure to include sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the final petition calling for greater protection of children from sexual assault in the memory of Dawn Shaw.

The Speaker: My colleagues, I inadvertently missed one of our colleagues on motions. I wonder if we could have unanimous consent to revert to motions.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, I ask the House for unanimous consent to propose an amendment to the title of my Bill, C–277, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (circumcision of female persons), by removing the word "circumcision" and replacing it with the words "genital mutilation".

I would also like the English version of the title to be amended accordingly.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

WEST COAST SALMON FISHERY

The Speaker: I am in receipt of a notice of motion under Standing Order 52 from the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 52 to request an emergency debate on what can only be described as an emergency today but as a crisis on the west coast of Canada.

When I first raised this matter two weeks ago it had been found that 1.3 million salmon had mysteriously gone missing. No one could account for them. We were concerned at that point and asked for an emergency debate. Now 1.9 million more have gone missing.

I know that the minister said there would be an investigation and he will report some time next year. Not only do members from the west coast want to debate this in the House but members from all sides do, knowing full well what happened on the east coast when the government was reluctant to take action and to provide strong leadership.

It is a disaster. It is a crisis situation.

• (1015)

The public confidence in terms of the ability to manage those resources has, for all intents and purposes, evaporated completely in British Columbia. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to consider calling for an emergency debate on this issue later today.

The Speaker: This indeed is an important issue. The hon. member has seen fit to bring it before the House on two previous occasions. However, I would rule that his request does not meet all of the conditions for emergency debate at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA GRAIN ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food) moved that Bill C–51, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act and respecting certain regulations made pursuant to that act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce for second reading today this legislation to amend the Canada Grain Act. These amendments will contribute substantially to the competitiveness of our grain industry and the well–being of the many communities, families and individual Canadians who earn their livelihoods in this very important sector of the Canadian economy.

As members of this House will be aware, the Canada Grain Act is administered by the Canadian Grain Commission. Under the act the commission is responsible for regulating the handling of grain in Canada and for establishing and maintaining standards of grain quality. The commission plays an essential role in maintaining the international reputation which Canada enjoys for high quality grain products.

I therefore wish to take a moment as we begin this debate to acknowledge the hard creative work performed by commission employees from Prince Rupert, British Columbia to Baie Comeau. I would also like to thank commission staff for its contributions to the preparation of the amendments that I am bringing before the House today. In expressing these sentiments I am sure I am speaking for all members who appreciate and understand the challenges which we as legislators place before the men and women who work in Canada's public service.

I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge the weighty contribution to this bill that has been made by Canada's grain industry. These amendments are the product of lengthy, detailed consultations throughout the Canadian grain industry with producers, grain industry executives and farm organizations which represent the full spectrum of that important industry.

I want to outline the consultation process so members of this House can share the confidence that I have that the legislation we have before us today does represent the needs, the expectations and the views of the overwhelming majority of stakeholders from all sectors of our grain industry.

In February, 1991 the Canadian Grain Commission initiated a review of licensing and security issues arising under the act. The commission circulated a discussion paper and held face to face consultations with the representatives of 45 organizations. These organizations represented grain producers, elevator companies, grain dealers and so on.

Then in August, 1991 the commission circulated a policy proposal which was the subject of wide discussion throughout the grain industry. The grain commission met with the representatives of 57 organizations. This second round of consultations produced much useful feedback and resulted in a revised proposal being circulated in November of 1991. Each group that had participated in those earlier consultations received a copy and was asked for additional written comments and recommendations.

• (1020)

Based on the responses to this round of consultations the grain commission produced a revised proposal and circulated it again in February 1992. Additional suggestions were made in discussions with stakeholders that occurred during the 1992 federal regulatory review process.

The legislative amendments that I bring before the House today are rooted in this consultation process and form an essential part of government's general commitment to strengthening Canada's competitive position in world markets.

For purposes of our discussion today I would group the amendments that we have before us in three broad categories. The first deals with enhanced competitiveness. The second deals with more protection for grain producers. The third is focused on new safeguards for Canadian taxpayers.

I would like to deal with the issue of enhanced competitiveness. The grains industry in this country is changing and the pace of change is accelerating. To remain competitive in global markets, markets in which Canada sells most of its grain, we need a regulatory and legislative framework which protects the shared interests of all of the stakeholders.

At the same time it must assist individuals and groups within the industry to compete successfully, adding value where possible to their efforts. Our proposed amendments to the Canada Grain Act are designed with these concerns in mind.

The Canada Grain Act will be amended to strengthen the role that quality plays in Canada's grains industry. This will help reinforce the many things we do in Canada which ensure that only the best grain varieties are developed, marketed and transported through our bulk handling system. This amendment affirms that as Canada's grain sector evolves quality will continue to be a cornerstone of the Canadian grain marketing strategy.

Canada's commitment to grain quality will be strengthened in other ways as well. The definition of contaminated grain will be clarified and the responsibility of elevator operators for the safe handling of hazardous compounds and the safe disposal of contaminated grain will be clearly spelled out.

As well, an amendment will confirm the commission's authority to set standards for the drying of grain. This is perhaps more important than first might appear. Because improperly dried grain often cannot be detected until it is actually processed the first sign of a problem in this area could be a dissatisfied customer, and that is obviously too late.

This amendment provides the commission with another means by which to maintain Canada's reputation for grain quality. This translates into enhanced competitiveness for Canada's grains industry.

In the spirit of removing unnecessary laws, process elevators will not be required to undergo weigh–overs. A weigh–over is a procedure in which an audit is conducted to verify tonnage in store by grade. Weigh–overs obviously serve a useful purpose when conducted at terminal and transfer elevators because in those instances the elevators are often handling grain they do not own. By contrast, process elevators own the grain they have in stock and therefore weigh–overs serve no useful purpose.

A central objective of this government is to remove laws and regulations which have outlived their usefulness and this amendment supports that objective.

As I announced in July 1994, the grain commission will no longer be required to set maximum tariffs for elevators. Elevator tariffs are the fees that grain elevator companies charge for their services. Government regulation of tariffs dates back to a time when producers were much less able to protect themselves from the setting of unfair prices. However, because producer owned or controlled companies now control the majority of elevator capacity in Canada, there is no need for government to continue to regulate tariffs on behalf of producers.

• (1025)

This deregulation of maximum tariffs will proceed in two stages. First, during a two–year transition period, the commission will retain the authority to set tariff ceilings by order. I would not anticipate any significant problem with this process.

In the current crop year terminal elevator operators were given the power by commission order to set their own elevation tariffs. For the most part, their increases were relatively minor and on the whole fair. This bodes well for the future and I am confident that allowing the market to function more freely will provide benefits to everyone concerned.

At the same time, even after the two–year transition period the commission will continue to have the authority to deal with maximum tariffs if that should become necessary. During and after the transition period the grain commission will perform an ombudsman role, responding to complaints and seeking remedies.

I wish to stress that this amendment arises from our commitment to regulatory reform, removing regulations that hinder the competitiveness of Canadian industry, and developing a regulatory regime which adds value to the efforts of Canadian enterprises to compete in international markets.

Bill C–51 will remove the requirement that only public carriers transport grain interprovincially. This will benefit producers, providing them with transportation options that may help them to reduce some of their marketing costs. Other amendments will allow the grain commission to stipulate that electronic transmission of transactions may replace paper documents. This will save money and time for the grain commission and for the industry as a whole.

I would now like to turn to the issue of protection for grain producers. The Canada Grain Act of 1912 established the Canadian Grain Commission in large measure to protect the interests of Canadian grain producers. This remains a central feature of the act, and several of the proposed amendments

before us today are designed to maintain this protection function.

They include granting authority to the grain commission to act against companies that illegally use Canada Grain Act grade names. The bill also includes provisions that require licensed grain dealers to use Canada Grain Act grade names in all of their transactions with producers, provisions to specify the way in which grade, dockage and moisture content are determined and recorded at the country elevator, and provisions to allow the suspension of licences of primary elevators where overages exceed allowable limits.

Overages are discrepancies between the amount of grain an elevator has in store and the amount that it should have according to records of shipments and receipts. The amendments will also include provisions that confirm the authority of the grain commission to require operators to fully ensure the grain in their elevators.

The current reporting requirements are not as effective as they should be under the law for determining the financial health of a prospective licensee. Therefore, this bill contains provisions that require prospective licensees to provide specified financial data which demonstrate their financial viability.

I would now like to turn to the issue of enhanced protection for taxpayers under this proposed legislation. The amendments will provide such protection for the taxpayers of this country. Members will recall that in 1991 the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that the grain commission was liable for losses sustained by producers in the early 1980s when two licensees went bankrupt and their security posted with the commission did not cover their liabilities.

As a result of this, Canadian taxpayers were required to pay more than $3.9 million, an amount equal to the difference between the security posted by the companies and their actual liabilities to grain producers.

While the Federal Court of Appeal has obviously disagreed, it is the view of many in the industry that the Canada Grain Act was not intended to provide unlimited protection for grain producers in all circumstances.

• (1030)

Unlimited business protection of the kind apparently envisaged by the Federal Court of Appeal judgment is unknown in virtually any other sector of our economy. Most producer organizations understand how it can lead some producers into making unwise business decisions.

Therefore, while protection by security posted by licensees is one of the rights producers have under the act I believe, and the majority of producer organizations with which the commission consulted agree, that grain producers need to assume somewhat more responsibility for their own business dealings.

While certain of our amendments give the commission more authority to deal with licensees whose security may be insufficient, other amendments place an onus on the farmer to help minimize his or her own risk. These provisions include, first, an amendment that will provide by regulation protection for producers for a prescribed period from the date of delivering their grain to a licensee.

If producers decline to accept payment for their grain within that specified period, they will not be eligible to be paid out of the licensee's posted security should that company ultimately fail. Based on consultations which the grain commission has conducted with producers and the industry the prescribed period will be 90 days. There will be a requirement that the farmer must notify the grain commission within 30 days of a failure to pay or default by a grain company.

The amendments will also place a responsibility on the farmer to determine if he or she is in fact dealing with a duly licensed company. As only licensed companies must post security with the grain commission, claims will not be valid if the farmer is dealing with an unlicensed company.

A provision will require the producer to obtain grain commission authorized documents from grain dealers and other grain commission licensees. The amendments will permit the commission to set percentage limits on security coverage. The commission would not however be able to use that particular regulatory power without governor in council approval. Currently coverage is 100 per cent. I expect this will remain the case for the foreseeable future.

Finally, the amendments explicitly limit the ability of the Canadian Grain Commission to have the amount of security posted by licensed companies through the commission. This provision is designed to bring the protection enjoyed by producers more in line with security provisions common in many other areas. It is a bit analogous to the limits placed on what the government will guarantee depositors in a financial institution that fails.

These provisions are not a cure–all. No legislation can ensure that grain companies will not make bad decisions. No law will prevent bankruptcies. Nonetheless, these amendments will place more responsibility with the producers for dealing with licensed, viable companies. As well these provisions will encourage producers to refrain from taking unnecessary risks when dealing with any company, licensed or otherwise.

These amendments will reduce the risk which has been borne in the past by the taxpayer. As I said in my first introductory remarks this package of amendments was preceded by a series of

in depth industry consultations across the grains industry in this country.

These consultations demonstrate conclusively that the industry has changed, strengthening our conviction that Canada's legislation has to respond to those changes. I believe the amendments before the House today have the support of the majority of participants in our grains industry. These organizations share my belief that these amendments will produce substantial benefits for producers, taxpayers and the grains industry as a whole. I recommend the amendments contained in Bill C–51 to the House for approval.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to participate this morning in this debate on Bill C–51, an Act to amend the Canada Grain Act.

• (1035)

Bill C–51, this bill to amend the Canada Grain Act we are debating this morning will not cause much of a stir. The proposed amendments are rather technical and are aimed at increasing efficiency in the administration and operation of the Canadian Grain Commission and the grain industry.

The Canadian Grain Commission is responsible for the implementation of the Canada Grain Act. It is required to establish and maintain standards of quality for Canadian grain and to regulate the handling of grain in Canada.

The bill before us has a triple objective: first, to improve the competitiveness of the grain industry; second, to ensure better protection for producers when they do business with grain dealers and big companies; and third, to protect taxpayers more adequately.

Last Saturday, I had the chance to meet with greenhouse tomato producers in my riding, and one of them told me this story that I would like to share with you this morning. Here is how the story goes: tomatoes he sells 70 cents per pound to the supermarket and delivers himself because he handles the marketing are sold minutes later at the same location not for 79 cents per pound, not for $1.39 per pound, but—listen to this— $2.39 per pound.

So, this greenhouse producer said: "You know, I have to work four months to grow my tomatoes before I can sell them at 70 cents per pound, but all the owner of this supermarket has to do is to keep them in his refrigerator or display for 24 or 48 hours to make a net profit of $1.70 per pound".

Producers are sometimes believed to pocket the biggest share, but they are not the ones. In this case, there was no intermediary; this producer handles marketing himself, yet the tomatoes he gets paid 70 cents a pound for, the very same tomatoes sell for $2.39 per pound, just 24 to 36 hours later.

Coming back to Bill C–51, in order to increase competition, the commission will no longer have to set maximum elevator charges. Such deregulation will come about gradually however, and the commission will retain the discretion to set a ceiling through regulation. It will also have the power to investigate complaints and, of course, settle them. We are told that this will give elevator operators more flexibility in setting their prices based on market conditions.

If there is a problem, the board reserves the right to set a ceiling. Producers must enjoy sufficient protection so that the time needed to handle their complaints does not push them into bankruptcy.

Some of the amendments have aroused concern, however, since the regulations that go with the bill will have a very big impact on the bill itself. We hope that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food will table the regulations in committee so that we can assess the impact of the bill before us this morning.

• (1040)

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the deregulation provided for in this bill will lead to a rise in consumer prices. Let me explain. The Canadian Wheat Board pays producers based on the price it gets on the international market. The government for its part, after assessing the market outlook, sets a base price it is committed to paying to producers.

In the last several years, the base price has been set at a very low level, which minimizes the government's obligation to reimburse producers in case sales collapse on the international market. When the international price is higher than the initial price, the board pays producers the difference. If the reverse is true, the difference is paid by the government. It should be pointed out that production or transport costs have no impact on the initial price level.

In the event of a significant decline in the market price, producers will rely on the income support program that includes the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan and the Net Income Stabilization Account. If the market price remains stable but production costs rise, producers will dip into their Net Income Stabilization Accounts. This account is financed by producers' premiums. Up to 2 per cent of his gross revenue is matched by the federal and provincial governments and a further 20 per cent that is not matched can be added.

The producer receives interest on the invested funds at 3 per cent above the market rate. He draws on his account if his profit margin is less than the moving average of previous years. As a result, the operators would have to overcharge considerably to lower the producer's profit margin; the producer could then draw on his stabilization account.

It is therefore unlikely, but nevertheless, should it occur, taxpayers would have to supplement a drop in the producer's net income with matching payments. Deregulation also allows producers to use private rather than public transportation to take grain from one province to another. That is something new.

Madam Speaker, let me now show you and this House how this everyday bill is a perfect example of the gulf between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Since most grain growers are in Western Canada, logically the associations representing them should be consulted about the impact of the bill before us, C–51.

• (1045)

Out of curiosity, I went to find out what Quebecers are thinking. The producers who should be concerned, Quebec's grain growers, are not. The reason is very simple: they are mainly under provincial legislation. So Quebec producers again have to deal with two levels of government. For example, the primary elevators are in provincial jurisdiction, while the transfer and process elevators are in federal jurisdiction.

The Government of Quebec has authority for everything concerning the domestic market, including the shipment of grain. Outside Quebec borders, federal jurisdiction takes over. There is a long list of such waste of time and money in every sector and department.

In terms of the grain required to feed its cattle, Quebec is 70 to 80 per cent self–sufficient. Here, I must pay tribute to the former Quebec Minister of Agriculture, my friend Jean Garon, with whom I had the pleasure of working on several occasions. By the time he left the agriculture department, in 1985, he had increased the province's self–sufficiency to over 80 per cent.

The other 20 to 30 per cent comes from Ontario or the United States. These percentages clearly show why Quebec producers have concerns other than those addressed by this legislation. Their situation is completely and totally different. Since the federal government gives us so many opportunities to make suggestions, I will make one this morning: Why does the Minister of Agriculture not look at the problem experienced by maple producers, considering that 86 per cent of all the maple syrup on this planet comes from Quebec?

The monies invested in that sector by his department are absolutely insufficient. In my riding of Frontenac, where exceptionally good quality maple syrup is produced in great quantities, producers are lamenting over the fact that their syrup is still being sold at the same price as ten years ago. Because there is a major surplus, they have no choice but to accept the price offered to them. Their latest idea to dispose of their stock is to sell maple syrup to be used in ice cream, in the form of maple sugar bits. This product is extremely popular right now in the U.S., in Canada and of course in Quebec. There is also maple syrup yogurt. I do hope, however, that nobody finds a way to replace maple sugar or syrup by a substitute which will taste the same but will not be the real thing and may well not be much cheaper.

I urge you, Madam Speaker, as well as hon. members in this House, to sample the cakes made with maple syrup by the bakery in Saint–Méthode. You have? Good. These are made with real maple syrup and not a substitute. Last spring, when I visited that bakery, they were proud to tell me that they had already used 500 barrels of maple syrup.

• (1050)

Now, if the federal government would only look beyond what it is doing in Western Canada for farmers and realize there is a case for investing in research and development in Quebec. This morning I mentioned the maple syrup industry. There are other examples of areas where Quebec is well ahead of the other provinces or other countries. Milk production is case in point, since Quebec is responsible for 48 per cent of Canada's milk production.

So why not invest more to develop the potential of a sector that already has an excellent record? We in the Bloc Quebecois have no objection to the measures being sought by Western farmers, and we have no objection to their excellent association supporting such measures. We have conducted consultations and checked our facts, and Bill C–51 appears to have the approval of Western farmers. Farmers in Western Canada are in the best position to know what is good for them. It is only fair to give them the tools they need to develop their potential.

In turn, we would like to see the same respect shown for the choices Quebecers will make in this coming year. Let the people who know what is best for them decide what kind of future they want.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity, and I can assure the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food that all Bloc Quebecois members in this House will support Bill C–51.

[*English*]

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of both members this morning. I will address this bill on the basis that I agree with some points and feel very negative about others.

The Canada Grain Act is administered by the Canadian Grain Commission which is the agency mandated to establish and maintain grain quality and regulate the Canadian grain handling system.

I can support the main intentions of this bill as it aims at making our grain industry more competitive. We all want to see Canada build on its reputation as a producer and supplier of quality grain to the world.

It is important to remember that there are many important components that make up the grain industry and we should be sure that they are all working in top form to ensure the health and viability of this sector.

For example, last year we had problems caused by disruptions in the grain transportation system. This year it looks like we are going to experience some of the same problems which are disastrous and detrimental to our industry. Clearly we have to learn to start taking problems for what they are and try to solve them from past experiences without jeopardizing the future or the well–being of the industry.

Turning to the bill, I will outline some of its provisions. The Canadian Grain Commission will no longer be required to set maximum tariffs charged by grain elevators. Over time it is hoped that this will allow elevator operators to be more flexible and competitive in pricing their services while encouraging capital investment. This will also give grain buyers more authority to penalize people who put grain into terminals but do not move it quickly enough.

• (1055)

This amendment may solve a problem that was evident last year when the Canadian Wheat Board plugged elevators with grain for which there was not immediate buyers.

With the current legislation, terminals do not have to wait for boards to sell. They can legislate increased premiums or tariffs. This will probably have a positive effect on the system. Cabinet through governor in council will have the power to reverse these amendments. It remains to be seen whether this amendment will give terminals any real power or whether the Canadian Wheat Board will continue to be protected by the government through the undemocratic governor in council process.

I also wonder if the government in the future will invoke governor in council provisions to give more power to the Canadian Wheat Board and further regulate the industry.

The legislation states that after the maximum tariffs are eliminated the role of the Canadian Grain Commission will be that of a conciliator in resolving tariff disputes. This raises the question that if there is a need to further define this role, how will this be accomplished? Will it be through legislation or through governor in council?

The legislation allows for free movement within the western jurisdiction and within the eastern jurisdiction but not between the two jurisdictions. I wonder why there are these restrictions on interprovincial trade within Canada. As hard as it may be to believe, there are more barriers to trade between provinces in Canada than there are between countries in the European community. I really question the rationale that says there should be restrictions for grain movement within Canada.

This summer we saw the first ministers sign an interprovincial trade agreement that actually did very little to promote free trade. It surprised me that when they had an opportunity to solve a problem that has to be resolved, they accomplished little, especially in the area of agriculture. This is all the more surprising when one considers that these restrictions are not imposed by us, by foreign governments or international regulations. These are pitfalls that we have set up for ourselves and which we have to be more determined to remove.

By eliminating internal trade barriers we can remove the distortions in our markets and ensure that producers in this country have more control in setting prices instead of having a system where internal trade barriers ensure that trade prices are artificially inflated.

This bill will also remove the requirement that only public carriers can transport grain interprovincially. This is a good idea that will hopefully allow producers to reduce their marketing costs by giving them more transportation options.

The amendments in Bill C–51 also attempt to provide increased protection for grain producers. These include giving the Canadian Grain Commission authority to act against companies which illegally use Canada Grain Act grade names; requiring licensed grain dealers to use Canada Grain Act grade names in all their transactions with producers; specifying the way in which grade, dockage and moisture content are determined and recorded at the county elevator; authorizing the Canadian Grain Commission to suspend the licences of primary elevators where overages exceed allowable limits, which is very preferable; confirming the authority of the Canadian Grain Commission to require operators to fully insure the grain in their elevators; and, requiring prospective licensees to provide specific financial data which demonstrates their financial viability.

Certainly increased protection for producers is something that should be pursued but there is always a danger that by adding more regulation the system is being weighed down more and more. We have to find ways to get protection for producers without getting into the way of how they conduct their businesses.

• (1100)

There are also aspects of these amendments that will hopefully result in increased protection for taxpayers. Under the bill producers will have 90 days to seek payment for their grain after delivery to a licensee. If producers do not seek payment within that time period they will not be eligible to be paid out of the licensee's posted security. Then the companies go bankrupt.

The farmer would also be required to inform the Canadian Grain Commission within 30 days of a failure to be paid by grain companies. The onus will be on farmers to determine if the companies they are dealing with are licensed by the Canadian Grain Commission.

Since licensed companies must post security with the Canadian Grain Commission, claims will not be valid if farmers are dealing with unlicensed companies. The Canadian Grain Commission will be limited on its liability to the amount of the security posted by the licensee. It is intended to be similar to the limits placed on what the government will guarantee depositors if a financial institution fails.

These are some of the bylaws I can support. As the House knows, I am no great friend of the Canadian Transportation Agency or the Canadian Grain Commission. Why is that so? I would like to remind the House that as a farmer and as a politician today I like to deal fairly with every individual.

In May of this year the Manitoba *Co–Operator* published an article that read: "Double standard claimed. The Canadian Grain Commission, guardian of the quality control system that makes Canadian grain exports the best in the world, tells farmers to do one thing but one of its assistant commissioners has been practising another. This commissioner has grown unregistered wheat for a whole year before it was internally licensed". If that is not a double standard, if that is protecting the Canadian farmer, I cannot agree with the bill.

When questioned one Domain area farmer said: "How political was the decision not to register Grandin grain or how political was the decision to bring it in?" When the wheat board commissioner, Mr. Murta, replied to it, he said: "It is an indication of a system that almost got ahead of itself and you can see the result".

We were to have a grain commission to protect the quality of our grain and what did it do? It illegally allowed one of its assistant commissioners to bring in grain.

When another farmer was asked how he felt about it, he replied: "Although the first Grandin wheat came into the prairies illegally, one of the first farmers to import it says Agri–Canada officials told us how to do the paperwork. They told us we didn't have to use variety name. We could use lot number".

Is this the type of grain commission we want? Not I, not as a farmer. It bothers me when I see there will be no limits on storage costs. Will it really increase competition or will it allow big grain companies to fill their terminals and then charge farmers through the wheat board for these costs? There is no incentive for the wheat board to move that grain because I pay the costs, not the wheat board.

One prime example is the situation at Churchill to date. As of Monday there were two ships sitting and waiting for grain. There is no grain available. Elevators in southern parts of the provinces are plugged. Boxcars are sitting idle. We do not need hopper cars to go to Churchill. Boxcars are sitting idle. Transportation costs to Churchill are from $10 to $20 per tonne cheaper than either to the west coast or to the east coast. There is no incentive for the grain companies to move grain to Churchill because the terminal is owned by the government.

• (1105)

Last July I went to investigate the port, to have a look at it. A ship was due for arrival that took on 40,000 tonnes. That terminal with the capacity to store five million bushels had 4,000 tonnes in it. Are those the regulations we are debating? Is that the type of system that is protecting farmers? I feel we are getting shafted.

Why should we be worried? I received a letter last week from a seed cleaning plant which does not come under the rules of the Canadian Grain Commission. Through its expertise and incentive it developed a market for special crops. The seed plant was notified that it would have to become a grain dealer or an elevator with a licence. It would have to put up bonds. It would have to put on insurance. There will be extra costs for the small seed cleaning plant, of which there are hundreds in rural parts of the prairies. The operator told me point blank: "If that is enforced upon me I will be shut down. There is no way I can compete with a UGG or a pool cleaning system. No way will I survive".

Is that increasing competition? I think it is decreasing it. Why are we doing it? Why are we continually allowing bureaucrats and government to enforce regulations or stipulations that hurt the small person?

I would like to go a little further. I noticed in his opening remarks the hon. minister indicated that they wanted to save taxpayers' money. That is one thing Reform is always pushing for. We could very easily do so by removing some wheat board commissioners who were politicians, are drawing a gold plated pension plan and are still drawing a wage more than that of an MP in the House. If that is looking after the small guy, I do not want to be looked after. These grain board commissioners are lifetime appointments.

I read in the new bill that the age limit will be removed. Why? Is 65 not old enough? Why would we want to increase the age until these grain commissioners finally die? That is the only way we will ever remove them and get people to represent farmers.

It is not only that. Further in the bill I read that we are going now to give the commissioners the authority to set their own wage scale. They will not have to go to the cabinet or use an order in council. If that is saving taxpayers' money, I do not think I want to support the bill.

How do I feel about the bill? It reminds me very much of a chicken farmer who is trying to protect his flock in the hen house. He is looking for a guard dog and finally somebody camouflages a fox and says: "Here is a good guard dog. Set him in front of your door". Not only are we being brainwashed or whitewashed with the guard dog; we are throwing him into the chicken coop and closing the door. The guard dog will have his meals any time; he will have any one of the chickens he desires. I cannot support legislation like this.

• (1110)

When I look at section 84 that deals with transportation of grain I see that it is to be deregulated. It will now require not only an export permit from the wheat board to move grain from province to province. It will also require documentation from the Canadian Grain Commission allowing farmers to transport their own grain. Does it make sense? To me it is more regulation, not deregulation.

As a farmer and a new politician I did not think I would see democracy at the point I see it this morning. When I am told as a member of the House that I must accept what the government wants to do and I had better like it or else I will have nothing to say, I get very upset.

I remind hon. members on the other side that come the next election this farmer–politician will not forget those kinds of actions. He will continually remind western farmers that this was how we were treated by hon. members across the way.

We are going to go to our graves physically healthy. We can spend millions and millions in building pools and supporting hockey rinks, but we cannot support a grain transportation system; we do not have the funds.

The other day I saw a news release stating that $4 million was to be spent in the city of Winnipeg for recreation by the government, but we cannot afford to upgrade the line to Churchill. We are going to starve healthy.

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Prince Albert—Churchill River.

I wish to add my voice to those supporting Bill C–51, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act. I do so for many reasons. As colleagues have noted, these amendments offer a multitude of benefits in terms of enhanced competitiveness for Canadian grain in world markets, better service to the industry, and protection for grain producers and taxpayers.

I congratulate all involved for putting together such a comprehensive and useful package of legislation. I am impressed with the ways in which the bill reinforces and fulfils the original intent of the Canada Grain Act, 1912, while at the same time it adapts to many challenges posed by the international grain markets of the 1990s.

Its original intent was and remains, to act in the interests of producers. It is on behalf of grain producers I wish to address my remarks today. To act on behalf of the grain producers it is first necessary to understand what they are. The process that led up to the drafting of the legislative amendments was one of lengthy, in–depth consultations with representatives of all facets of the grain industry.

Prominent among those were grains producer organizations. These organizations through their representatives told the Canadian Grain Commission to continue to protect the integrity of the Canadian grain handling system, to strengthen and to maintain the system that has given Canada the enviable reputation enjoyed worldwide for top quality grain.

At the same time they said they needed flexibility to meet the new markets and challenges, to pursue new opportunities, and to adapt to rapidly changing conditions. While on the one hand we are maintaining and strengthening Canada's grain quality system, on the other hand we are removing restrictions which have become burdensome and counterproductive. With the foregoing in mind I will now outline the features of this bill which I feel most effectively accomplish these objectives from a producer's point of view.

• (1115)

To protect the integrity of Canada's grading system which producers understand enhances the marketability of their grain, the act will amend to strengthen the concept that quality meeting the needs of the end users is central to Canada's grain handling system.

This will help to reinforce the many unique things we do in Canada which ensure that only the best grain varieties are developed, marketed and transported through our bulk handling system.

As Canada's grain system evolves over time this amendment will affirm that quality will continue to be the foundation of Canada's grain marketing strategy.

Canada's commitment to grain quality will be strengthened in other ways. For example, the definition of contaminated grain will be clarified and the responsibility of elevator operators for safe handling of hazardous compounds and safe disposal of contaminated grain will be clearly spelled out. This works to the obvious benefit of the producers who will understand the ethical concerns and the marketing advantages of delivering a safe, wholesome product.

As well, an amendment will confirm the authority of the commission to set standards for the drying of grain. This is more important because improperly dried grain often cannot be detected until it is processed. The first indication of concern would be a dissatisfied customer.

This very point was brought up on September 22 at an annual meeting of the Ontario Wheat Producers Marketing Board in my riding of Lambton—Middlesex. When its primary customers, American producers along the south shore of Lake Erie, are demanding wheat with 13.5 per cent moisture content, there had better be a means of ensuring this standard.

This amendment provides the commission with another means by which to maintain Canada's reputation for grain quality. It therefore contributes to enhancing the competitiveness of Canada's grain producers.

This bill will remove the requirement that only public carriers transport grain interprovincially. This will benefit producers, providing them with transportation options that may help them to reduce costs. This provision coupled with the June 8 announcement by the ministers of agriculture and transport to expedite changes to the Western Grain Transportation Act will ensure the foundation of a fair and effective delivery system for crops in all regions of Canada.

Several other proposed changes to the Canada Grain Act speak directly to the opinions expressed by grain producers that the CGC continue to maintain the integrity of grain transactions. These include granting authority to the commission to act against companies which illegally use Canada Grain Act grade names; requiring licensed grain deals to use Canada Grain Act grade names in all of the transactions with the producers; provisions to specify the way grade, dockage and moisture content are determined and recorded at the county elevator; provisions to allow the suspension of licences of primary elevators where over usages exceed allowable limits.

Over usages are discrepancies between the amount of grain an elevator has compared with what it should have based on records of shipment and receipts.

Also included are provisions which clarify the authority of the commission to refuse licences to companies which it deems to be unreliable.

These provisions fit well with others contained in the bill which require that grain producers take more responsibility for grain transactions. I believe this balanced approach reflects the basic value that is held by producers, the industry and this government, one that says we are all obligated to share in the risk and responsibilities. In doing so producers, the industry and all Canadians share in the benefits.

Taken together, these amendments to the Canada Grain Act offer producers a comprehensive package of measures that support their efforts to work and to prosper in an increasingly competitive global grain market. For this reason I most heartily encourage members of this House to support this bill.

• (1120)

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak today in favour of Bill C–51, which contains amendments to the Canada Grain Act. This is a government of action. I am very proud of this government, particularly the actions and successes of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food.

I would like to commend the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food for his important role in the successful completion of the Uruguay round of the GATT talks. For years the international community has been engaged in a grain subsidies war that has had a very negative effect on grain prices and therefore a very negative effect on Canadian farmers and the economy, particularly western Canada which is so dependent on grain.

Canada had a much more limited treasury than our friends in Europe or the United States. As such we could not compete with the subsidy levels offered by those countries. Therefore, our minister had to fight hard at the GATT talks to reduce these levels of subsidies around the world and was successful in the pursuit of that endeavour.

Over time we are going to see grain prices rise as these subsidies fall. We can all be very grateful for that. This is going to be good for farmers in my riding of Prince Albert—Churchill River and for all the farmers of Canada. That is something we can all be very happy about.

In addition, our Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food has shown negotiating skill and leadership in striking a good deal for Canadian farmers in the recent wheat export dispute with the United States. Limits on exports were obtained that are far above any levels of wheat export that we have seen in history.

Second, we obtained an agreement that repressive trade sanctions contained in American trade law would not be implemented for a year. This will allow the GATT to become effective, thereby blocking the use of these heavy handed trade tactics in the future.

These actions by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food typify the way this government deals with issues. The government identifies the problem. The government consults with all of the stakeholders who are affected by the issue and the government works hard with these stakeholders to fix the problem.

In spite of this heavy agenda, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food has not stopped there. Through the mechanism of actively seeking public input and the input of farmers and farm organizations, grain companies, all of the people involved in grain transportation and the grain industry, the minister has proposed effective amendments to the Canada Grain Act intended to improve the operating and administrative efficiencies of the Canadian Grain Commission and the grain industry.

The world is changing. Technology is improving. The international marketplace is increasingly competitive and the deficit of the federal government and the protection of our taxpayers are things we all need to be concerned with. These are problems we must deal with. Our taxpayers, our farmers, all of us must be protected and looked after.

Generally speaking the proposed amendments are quite varied but not insubstantial in consequence. Some of the changes are of a bookkeeping or tidying up nature, which change definitions contained in the act or change some of the translations to increasingly make the act more internally and externally consistent.

Other changes give the Canadian Grain Commission the authority to establish by regulation, subject to cabinet approval, what constitutes a hazardous substance, which financial documents licensees must submit, the types of insurance an elevator must hold and how elevators must dispose of contaminated grain.

New authority also has been given to the Canadian Grain Commission rather than the cabinet to establish allowances to be paid to members of grain appeals tribunals and grain standards committees. There is no doubt that Canada produces the best quality grain in the world. The international community recognizes this fact and when a choice is given it will pick our grains every time, provided we continue to be competitive and reliable suppliers.

Amendments to the Canada Grain Act reiterate and recognize Canada's longstanding commitment to grain quality. Quality is a very important factor in the marketability of our grain. We must continue to do all we can to maintain that.

• (1125)

The amendment also gives the Canadian Grain Commission the authority to establish by regulation, subject to cabinet approval, the time limit for realizing on security posted by licensees with the Canadian Grain Commission and provides a limit of 30 days to the time following the default on payments that a producer has to claim on CGC held security.

Also the amendments provide the authority to establish by the Canadian Grain Commission, subject to cabinet approval, a percentage limit on the value of the claim against the grain commission held security. The amendments make clear that the Canadian Grain Commission is only liable to producers who deal with Canadian Grain Commission licensees and who obtain the prescribed documents upon delivery of their grain only up to the amount of security posted.

These provisions among other things provide certainty and security for the taxpayers of Canada as well as the farmers of Canada. During the recent consultation held with all the stakeholders who have an interest in grain transportation it became apparent that in order to achieve reliability of supply and to keep intact Canada's well–deserved reputation as a reliable supplier of grain products, the Canadian Grain Commission requires the flexibility to eliminate the requirement of establishing maximum elevator tariffs.

In all probability these amendments will ensure that grain will keep moving through our ports and on to our ships and will save the payment of demurrage fees that have been paid in the past when we have seen a lot of ships sitting in harbour empty and not moving our grain.

We all want to have payments made to keep the grain moving. This is a very progressive action. In addition to this we have the safety valve that the commission still maintains the authority to impose maximum tariffs if necessary.

Other amendments to ensure balanced enhanced competitiveness, better financial security, more protection for taxpayers and greater operational flexibility for the Canadian Grain Commission are contained within the legislation.

I wish to commend our minister of agriculture for bringing forward these amendments to ensure the continued success of the Canadian agricultural industry. I think the hallmark of this government and our minister of agriculture is that when there is a problem we move to fix it and our government will continue to support our farmers and our taxpayers by sensible regulation, of which this is a fine example.

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed that speech very much. It sure makes me feel better to know how good things are on the farm.

I would ask the hon. member whether he is aware that under the free trade agreement article 705(5) clearly stipulates that there cannot be a cap put on imports unless there is excessive production by new farm programs. This was very well known by the Liberal government in the free trade agreement it signed.

About a week before this wheat deal was signed I heard someone on that side say, I think it was the hon. minister of agriculture, that no deal is badder than a bad deal. I wonder if he would comment on those statements.

Also, could he give us an indication on the action taken on the transportation problems, such as back–tracking, if that is the rate of movement we will see from this government, whether it is going to resolve problems as fast as it has up to now because it is sure encouraging?

Mr. Kirkby: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for his questions.

The deal reached by the minister of agriculture concerning the wheat dispute with the Americans is an excellent deal for Canada. If we look back at the historic relationship and the historic levels of wheat exports to the United States Canada came out of this negotiation very successfully.

• (1130)

First, the minister ensured this very high level of continued export, well above the historic levels. However, in addition to this, and most significantly, the minister of agriculture achieved a moratorium from both countries in future trade action which could have very detrimental effects on the grains industry in western Canada. This delay allows the GATT provisions to come into force and prevents the American government from implementing these very draconian, heavy–handed trade provisions in the future. As an interim step this was an excellent result

obtained by the minister of agriculture and he should be commended.

With respect to the hon. member, the minister of agriculture is doing a lot of things to ensure that the grain transportation system is improved. Some of the examples of this are in this bill. The government is going to continue to support the farmers of western Canada. When we hear statements from the leader of the hon. member's party saying there are too many farmers in western Canada, let me say that the Liberal Party does not agree with that. We ask that hon. member to retract the statement he made about two years ago in Halifax. That is the kind of support they get from across the House.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the member for Prince Albert—Churchill River still believes that his government is acting on behalf of farmers.

It seems to me that this bill and its two companions which were introduced this fall have made a fairly sizeable shift toward dealing with the agri–food and the agri–business side of agriculture in providing protections and provisions for their needs sometimes at the expense of the farmer.

Just as a brief illustration of that, I wonder if he would explain to us, since he raised it in his speech, how open–ended fees being set by elevators in terminals are a help to farmers. How is it a help to a farmer to deliver grain to an elevator for use at the terminal and find out that the fees have been changed after he gets the product into the system?

Mr. Kirkby: Madam Speaker, with respect to the fees that will be charged, first, open competition at the ports for different shippers is going to ensure that the rates charged are reasonable. However the grain commission retains the ability to regulate this issue.

Does the hon. member believe that it is wise for farmers to pay for ships to sit empty and have grain not move or does he believe it is wise to pay and have the grain move so that we continue to be a reliable supplier of grain to all our world markets?

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C–51 because this bill impacts directly on an industry that is very dear to myself and my family, having been part of this industry all of my life.

After studying this legislation, generally, with only a few exceptions, there is little about it that I would not support. This is not because it is outstanding or comprehensive legislation. Far from it. My first impression from reading the bill would be that the minister instructed his bureaucrats to introduce some kind of legislation that would demonstrate the government's commitment to agriculture, but certainly not to introduce anything that might be controversial or innovative or new, but something that could be demonstrated to Canadians as their commitment to our industry.

• (1135)

This bill ratifies for the most part what already exists and makes a few minor procedural changes, in spite of the fact that the grain producing sector of this industry has been in crisis and has been struggling to undergo a very basic restructuring for the last number of years because of extremely depressed prices caused by an American–European trade war and a severe world recession.

This fundamental restructuring has taken a terrible toll on countless families that were involved in the production of grains and oilseeds, particularly those producing for the export market. Many of my neighbours have lost their homes, their families and lifetimes or even in some cases, several lifetimes of work.

Those who have managed to stay in the industry by consolidation, refinancing or off–farm income have been asking government for some time to provide the same kind of basic, fundamental restructuring of the regulations and services governments provide to the industry.

Regulations are needed governing the transport and marketing of their crops to provide more flexibility and choices to meet the needs of this new high volume, low margin market environment of today. What does the government offer this new generation of farmers? Nothing but do–nothing status quo tinkering with the obsolete ideas of yesterday.

Bill C–51 moves to remove the onus of responsibility from the government to the seller to investigate the integrity of those buying and selling grain. That in itself could be the proper direction to move but only if those regulations are followed and adhered to strictly and not as was done by the former agriculture minister when a number of producers with close connections to him got in trouble and the minister quickly moved to bail them out at great cost to taxpayers.

If that is how these regulations and procedures count then it really makes little difference whether they are there or not. It also deregulates the elevator industry to operate in an open market environment.

These initiatives would be acceptable also if at the same time, farmers were free to sell their crops where and how they chose to. Twenty years ago there would have been substantive benefit in the deregulation of elevator tariffs when almost all of the crops moved through the primary elevator system to market. This certainly is no longer the case now.

Another disturbing trend we see in legislation coming from the government dealing with agriculture, as dealing with all other sectors in our economy, is the movement to consolidate decision making authority in the cabinet. This trend is obvious in the bill in clauses 2, 4, 9, 15, 33 and 35 and is an affront to this House which was elected to represent the interests of all Canadians.

This trend should be of concern to all Canadians in all sectors but it should especially be troubling in this particular sector, the grain industry. I remember well an earlier Liberal Prime Minister referred to just yesterday by a member of the government as the greatest prime minister in Canadian history.

Many of those sitting in the benches opposite were also members of this earlier government. This Prime Minister in my opinion did more to destroy Canadian unity than anyone has before or since. As I said, I well remember the arrogant disdain that this Prime Minister had for Canadian grain farmers. We all remember the infamous Trudeau salute to western grain farmers.

The present Liberal government shows more and more of the same arrogant disdain toward those who are asking for real change and an open response of government. While there was little reference to the concerns of agriculture in the red book, there was a commitment to open, effective government.

If there really is a commitment to Canadians, why do we continually have to deal with these do–nothing, go–nowhere bureaucratic tinkering pieces of legislation? Why are we not dealing with these minor adjustments as part of a comprehensive plan to restructure regulations dealing with the licensing of new crop varieties, the bottlenecks in the grain transportation sector, the restrictive marketing policies of the Canadian Wheat Board and the free flow of agricultural products anywhere in Canada?

• (1140)

To demonstrate briefly some of the things that I have tried to talk about and tried to demonstrate, earlier this year, back in April, a group of producers in my area were attempting to receive an experimental licence to grow a variety of hemp used to produce industrial fibre. These varieties have been long grown in France and Britain and to some degree in the United States because the hallucinogenic quality of this particular product no longer exists and has been removed from the product.

I believe we have an opportunity to get in on the ground floor of the development of a new crop with terrific potential for the production of industrial fibre. One acre of hemp is capable of producing as much fibre as four acres of trees and this one acre can do it on a yearly basis where it takes some 70 or 80 years to produce the kind of growth in our forests to produce that kind of fibre.

In an attempt to assist this group I approached the minister and he responded to me in a letter received some two and a half months after my initial approach on the subject. In his letter he says: "The information you provided presents a strong case for the exploration of the commercial production of hemp as a source of industrial fibre". Further on he says: "The legislation currently before Parliament would have enabled the minister of health to license growers of hemp for industrial purposes". Further on he says: "Bill C–7 would provide the foundation for the legal framework that would allow for the exploration of hemp as a source of industrial fibre".

Not having realized there was this huge potential in Bill C–7 I went to the bill and examined it very carefully to see where this provision could be. I failed to find any implication that would show me where this might happen. Being confused I contacted the offices of the Minister of Health who was sponsoring the bill. I contacted the Solicitor General's department and the justice department. All three departments assured me there was absolutely no provision in Bill C–7 that would deal at any level with the production of industrial fibre from hemp.

We are at a stalemate and seem to be at a dead end in our efforts to get Canadian agriculture involved in the development of a crop with huge potential for income and a crop that could displace some of the lower income producing crops that have traditionally been grown on the prairies.

Not only was the minister not prepared to help this group he did not understand the issue or in fact western Canadian farmers at all in their mission here. This is so typical of what we get time and time again. If the government, as we heard a few minutes ago, is going to be the protector of Canadian agriculture and to try and bring back some of the strength and financial equity to our industry which is so important to Canadians, we certainly have not seen any demonstration of that, at least to this point with the legislation we have been dealing with.

I encourage the government, as a new government in the first year of its mandate to bring forward some new initiatives, some real changes, and to listen to the industry that has been asking for these changes instead of this tinkering and do–nothing stuff we have seen to this point.

Mr. Boudria: Point of order, Madam Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 43(2) I wish to indicate to the House that members of the government party will from here to the end of the debate on this particular item be dividing their time.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food): Madam Speaker, first of all to the members of the Bloc Quebecois and Reform I would like on

behalf of the minister to extend apologies that he could not remain for the debate on this bill because of cabinet duties. He assured me he will be reading your comments.

• (1145)

I would like to clarify a couple of things for the Reform Party today. The member for Lisgar—Marquette made some comments. Since we could not comment at that time I would like to do so now. The member made reference to Grandin wheat. I would point out to the member that soon after taking office this government consulted with the industry. It felt that Grandin wheat was not going to improve the quality of the great Canadian product we sell. It did not grant a licence to that variety of wheat.

There was reference to an assistant commissioner who had some dealings with that. I would clarify for the member that that person is no longer an assistant commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission.

I find this passing strange and I would like to have some comments from the member for Athabasca at this time. As the great free enterpriser that the Reform Party sees itself, I find it interesting that it has some concern that we as a government want anyone who is dealing with it, people who are buying grains from Canadian farmers to have licences and the support or the bonding or whatever term should be applied to it in order to protect Canadian farmers.

That is one of the duties we have. If it was a producer in one of their ridings who was found to be dealing with someone who was not bonded, I wonder what their feeling would be on that.

In closing, I would make one further clarification for the Reform Party members. The member for Lisgar—Marquette said that commissioners are appointed for life. That is not the case. They are seven year appointments. Assistant commissioners are five year appointments. I just wanted to put that clarification on the record.

Mr. Chatters: Madam Speaker, I will respond briefly to the point about the requirement for licensing and bonding through the Canadian Grain Commission. Certainly I support those initiatives. They are more important now than ever before in our industry. Some years back when most of the grain produced in the industry went to the primary elevator system and most of that primary elevator system was owned and operated by producer managed or controlled elevator companies, those regulations were less important.

Today with a proliferation of grain dealers popping up around the world every day that protection is more important now than ever before.

I do have some concerns as to why now when it is so much more important than ever before the government moves to put the onus on the farmer rather than on the Canadian Grain Commission to identify those who are licensed and bonded properly. Certainly I support that particular initiative and I think most producers would.

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Madam Speaker, I wish to speak in support of Bill C–51, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act.

Bill C–51 contains a variety of necessary changes to the Canada Grain Act. I believe that producers, the grain industry and Canadians in general will find measures to address their specific concerns.

The aspects of Bill C–51 that I wish to comment on are those which enhance the international competitiveness of Canada's grain industry. Canada is a trading nation and competitiveness is essential.

In the world of free trade that we see before us, our ability to compete will directly affect our capacity to sustain and improve the living standards of Canadians. Few Canadian industries depend on international trade more than our grain industry. Every year we export 25 million to 30 million tonnes of grain, more than half our annual production. In wheat and barley we rank second among the world's top exporters. In other grains, canola and flaxseed for example, we are world leaders. There is no question that we depend on our trade for continued help to our grain industry. Our grain industry's success is central to the health and well–being of rural communities throughout western Canada especially.

• (1150)

Part of the role of government in this regard is to create a regulatory environment that adds value to the efforts of Canadians to create, to produce and to compete. This includes developing new laws that support our shared interest and also includes removing laws which no longer are useful or purposeful.

An important initiative contained in Bill C–51 concerns the deregulation of maximum elevator tariffs. Elevator tariffs are the fees that grain elevator companies charge for their services. They cover the cost of handling, storage, cleaning and the drying of grain. Under the current Canada Grain Act, the Canadian Grain Commission is required to regulate elevator tariffs by establishing maximum allowable levels. As well, companies are required to provide 14 days notice of any change they wish to make to these tariffs.

Bill C–51 will remove the requirement that the CGC place a ceiling on tariffs. Companies will be allowed to adjust their tariffs without giving prior notice to the CGC.

Critics of this legislation may charge that the government is abandoning producers, exposing them to excessive charges by elevator companies. However, a close examination will demonstrate that regulation of tariff maximums is no longer needed and that ample safeguards exist to protect producers from

excessive charges. Government regulation of tariffs dates back in time to when producers were less able to protect themselves from the setting of unfair prices. However, because producer owned or controlled companies now control the majority of elevator capacity in Canada, we believe that there is less need for government to regulate tariffs on behalf of producers.

On the west coast, producer owned or controlled companies own 54 per cent of terminal capacity. At Thunder Bay the figure is 75 per cent. It stands to reason that these companies will act in the interests of producer owners by offering competitive prices. With no competition there will be no need for government to set prices.

Even though we are confident that elevator companies will behave responsibly, Bill C–51 contains numerous safeguards for producers. Deregulation of maximum tariffs will proceed in stages. Initially, the commission will retain the authority to set tariff ceilings by order of a two–year transition period. After this transition period, the commission will continue to have authority to set maximum tariffs by regulation if needed. During and after the transition period the CGC will perform a mediation role responding to complaints and seeking remedies.

Based on the responsible behaviour of the companies involved, we have reason to be optimistic in the current crop year as terminal elevator operators receive power by commission order to set their own elevator tariffs. For the most part their increases were minor and on the whole, very fair. This augurs well for the future. I am confident that allowing the market to function more freely will provide more benefits for all. These benefits will include more capital investment by elevator companies and a more flexible, competitive elevator industry.

I should note that regulation has not prevented a high tariff system. For example, for a variety of reasons, U.S. rates which are less regulated are lower than Canada's.

This amendment arises from our commitment to removing regulations which restrict the competitiveness of Canadian industry. Bill C–51 contains other similar initiatives. For example, process elevators will no longer be required to undergo weighovers. A weighover is an audit conducted to verify that the weight and grade of grain stored by an elevator corresponds with what is recorded. Weighovers help maintain the integrity of grain transactions when conducted at a terminal and transfer elevators because in those instances the elevators are often handling grain they do not own. However, process elevators own the grain they have in stock. Therefore weighovers saddle them with an unnecessary cost and thus hamper their competitiveness.

• (1155)

Earlier I spoke of the need for laws which add value to the efforts of Canadians. I said that this involves removing unnecessary obstacles such as maximum tariffs and weighovers at process elevators. It also means that new laws are required from time to time.

In the context of Bill C–51, there are provisions which strengthen the role equality plays in Canada's grain industry. As well, Bill C–51 sets out the responsibility of elevator operators for the safe handling of hazardous compounds and the safe disposal of contaminated grain. It confirms the CGC's authority to set standards for the drying of grain. All of these measures add value to Canadian grain and serve to enhance our competitiveness in the world.

In conclusion, Bill C–51 is the product of lengthy, detailed discussion with stakeholders throughout the grain industry. Producer organizations played a major role in these consultations as did elevator companies, processors and marketers. Because Bill C–51 reflects a broad industry consensus I believe it deserves the support of all members of this House.

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris): Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support for Bill C–51, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act.

Bill C–51 has much to commend it. It addresses the need for regulatory reform. It introduces necessary protections for producers and taxpayers and it gives the Canadian Grain Commission more of the tools it needs to do the job on behalf of producers, the grain industry and Canadians in general.

There are many aspects of Bill C–51 worth commenting on. The one I wish to speak on however is the strengthened emphasis on grain quality.

We depend very heavily on international trade. As my colleague has mentioned, we export from 25 million to 30 million tonnes of grain per year, more than half of our annual grain production. It is difficult to overstate how crucial grain quality is to our success in international markets. No other factor is as central to Canada's impressive international marketing record.

When we consider some of the disadvantages Canadian producers face it is easy to see why quality has emerged as our marketing edge. Our producers must move grain farther to export locations than any of our competitors in other countries. Our harsh climate works against high yields. Our tax base is smaller than those of competing countries and we cannot play the export subsidy game and win. We are left with the quality of our product, a card that Canada plays with great effectiveness.

With approximately 20 per cent of the global market, we are on average the world's second largest wheat exporter, ahead of the European Community, Australia, Argentina and everyone

else. We are surpassed only by the United States. We are second in barley, accounting for over 30 per cent of the world market. We command over 40 per cent of the world's canola markets, almost as much as is exported by all the countries of western Europe combined. We are unique in that we are the only major exporter of that product.

We lead the world in flaxseed exports that account for over 70 per cent of the market. Canada's refusal to compromise on delivering cargoes of uniform consistent quality has served us well. As the CGC plays a pivotal role in Canada's grain hauling system, I am pleased to see provisions in Bill C–51 that reinforce this marketing strategy.

For example, there is a provision allowing the CGC to set out methods, visual or otherwise, for determining the characteristics of the grain for purposes of meeting the quality requirements of purchasers of grain. The significance of this amendment is that it gives the commission the authority to specify procedures for determining the quality of grain so that the industry can deliver the quality desired by the end users.

• (1200)

With the commission's considerable expertise in grain quality assessment this amendment positions the CGC to ensure that emerging procedures and technologies meet end user needs and increase returns to producers.

Another provision of Bill C–51 confirms the CGC's authority to specify the correct handling and treatment of grain and hazardous substances in grain elevators. This provision strengthens Canada's commitment for safe, wholesome food and to environmentally sustainable practices.

Finally, Bill C–51 confirms CGC's authority to set grain drying standards. The commission has paid careful attention to this issue over the years because improper drying seriously harms grain quality. Often the damage is not visually apparent and problems are only detected when the grain is processed. The commission has worked hard to educate producers and others on the proper techniques. This provision will give the CGC more authority to move in this area.

There are some who believe that Canada over emphasizes grain quality. In a hungry world they argue Canada need not place as much emphasis or effort as it does on ensuring that Canadian grain meets the high standards it is known for.

I believe quality will become more important than ever before. With the ratification of the GATT tariff walls will soon be falling around the world and subsidies will melt away. To maintain their position our wealthier competitors in Europe and the United States will have to become more quality conscious, more like Canada if they want to compete. Already we are seeing signs they are beginning to understand this.

I will conclude with the words of one of Canada's grain customers spoken at Grain Vision'93, an international symposium that the Canadian Grain Commission held last year: "The current Canadian system of utilizing quality to link all aspects of business to achieve the marketing strategy of exporting at a premium 80 to 90 per cent of total wheat crop is now unique in the world. If you begin to implement changes for short term volume goals the end result will all too quickly be a situation where you become just another 'me too' supplier of which the world has all too many at present".

This sentiment was echoed by speaker after speaker at this conference. More tellingly, their appreciation of Canada's quality system is illustrated by their continued purchases of Canadian grain.

Bill C–51 strengthens Canada's grain quality system. For this reason alone it deserves our support.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, it certainly gives me pleasure to enter into the debate on the Canada Grain Act, Bill C–51.

It is the second opportunity I have had in this assembly to speak on one of the agricultural bills, the former being Bill C–50 which we debated last week.

In Bill C–50 we took in this House steps that would increase producer control over agricultural research. When we look at Bill C–51 in comparison it is a bill that grants the Canada Grain Commission greater operational flexibility and promotes enhanced competitiveness in the grain industry. Those are certainly both worthy objectives to support for an entity that is responsible for a very important aspect of our grain industry in this country. It is important to give it those kinds of responsibilities.

We in the Reform Party will be supporting this bill today as we did with Bill C–50. We will also take the opportunity in these debates to outline some of our broader concerns about where agriculture is headed in Canada. In particular, we would like to emphasize that government created boards and agencies like the Canadian Wheat Board, which were originally designed to assist and help the Canadian farmer, are becoming an entity, increasingly becoming an impediment to the free market system. They should come under scrutiny and review at this time.

• (1205)

Since the details of Bill C–51 have already been discussed and thoroughly enumerated in this House, I will make one or two quick points about one feature of the legislation before taking this opportunity to broaden my focus on other subjects relative to agriculture in Canada.

The aspect of Bill C–51 that I wanted to comment on was the provision which removes some of the interprovincial trade restrictions faced by farmers. Clause 25 repeals the restriction

of transporting grain from one province to another and repeals the restrictions on transport of grain by public carriers.

The measure is a step in the right direction, but one has to ask a very important question at this time: Why should there be any restrictions on trade within Canada at all at this point? Why can we not have open boundaries and free movement in this country where all Canadians should share and have equal opportunity? That is an important issue that must be addressed not only by this federal government but by each of the provinces as we work together to enhance the agricultural industry.

There are more barriers to interprovincial trade in Canada than there are barriers to trade between the nations of the European Community. That has already been mentioned by one of my colleagues. What is the rationale for the Canada Grains Commission to have any restrictions for grain movement to and from Canada enshrined in this legislation?

For that matter, why are Canadian farmers being prevented by the Canadian Wheat Board from taking full advantage of the international trade opportunities created by the signing of GATT or NAFTA? Should the Canadian Wheat Board not also be forced to eliminate some of the restrictions that it is placing now on farmers?

I said in the House the other day that we should raise some of those restrictions for the farmers so they can enter into a freer trade market or determine their own markets. There should be certain restrictions or a certain framework placed on the farmers if and when they wish to deal through the Canadian Wheat Board on some certain aspects at a future time.

As farmers we cannot have our cake and eat it both with a board that is created by government and also by utilizing the free market. There must be a trade off when we have that kind of opportunity.

Reformers have already made it clear that there is a need to reform the Canadian Wheat Board. However, this is just one example of the agricultural issues that need to be addressed in this assembly.

When considering the agricultural sector, it is important to note that on the major questions of the day, it is the farmers who are leading. We heard that very clearly from the minister in his presentation earlier to this assembly. The legislation before us has been farmer directed, farm organization directed and I certainly appreciate that.

We often find in this circumstance that we as government scramble to keep up with some of the farm attitudes. This is certainly very typical in the discussion regarding the Canadian Wheat Board at the present time.

I looked at an article in the *Financial Post* that talked about the direct sales of grain to American markets that are classed as illegal under the Canadian Wheat Board at the present time. Those sales to the American markets now represent about 20 per cent of the total volume of Canada's grain exports to the U.S.

We can only hope that this massive display of somewhat civil disobedience on the part of Canadian wheat farmers will convince the government that changes must be made to the practices of the Canadian Wheat Board. Again, it is a situation in which farmers are leading, finding markets, maintaining their economic stability as farmer but we as government have not looked at the circumstances and reacted in a positive way.

• (1210)

The trend is similar with the restrictions on the movement of grain from east to west and on the government's reluctance to create a continental barley market. In both instances, fed up farmers have decided not to wait around for the government to make changes. They are going ahead and doing it themselves. Then, as a government, we are reacting. As an assembly here we must get ahead of the circumstances and be able to respond to the farmers when they see that there is a need.

In this latest example, I read with interest that the minister of agriculture has now promised the Canadian grain farmers a chance to debate the future of the Canadian Wheat Board at a special forum to be held this fall. I commend him for that.

I also encourage him to go one step further and hold a referendum on the issue of the Canadian Wheat Board's selling monopoly. It is clear that Canadian agriculture has changed a great deal since 1912 when the Canadian Grain Commission was established.

This next decade will be a crucial time for the agricultural sector. As farmers prepare to make the adjustments required by GATT and free trade, they need a government prepared to assist them and help them gain the competitive edge to compete in an increasingly global marketplace. That is the environment in which we must prepare ourselves, the global marketplace. It is not just Canada. It is not just the United States. It is the global marketplace in which we work as farmers today.

Reform has worked hard to create a comprehensive and balanced agricultural strategy capable of supporting the needs and challenges of the 21st century. We intend to elaborate on those in this assembly.

The Liberal government on the other hand—I look at this with some disappointment—seems to be moving from one crisis to another and legislation that comes before this House seems to be motivated through the public service, albeit a point of view by the farmers or farm organizations rather, than from the legislators of this assembly.

I look at Bill C–50 and Bill C–51 and they are good pieces of legislation in their own right but not in the broader context of what we have to do as leaders in the agricultural field. They are

modest pieces of legislation which only seek to fine tune and present some of the parts of an agricultural regime.

When will the government respond to growing pressures originating both within and outside Canada and bring forth the major broader legislative initiatives that are necessary for the farmers of this country?

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member opposite. I commend him for having the wisdom to support Bill C–50 and in supporting Bill C–51.

As he went through his presentation we came to a summary. In the summary on one hand he wants to allow the farming industry and farmers in general to have some input into the direction that we are to go and we are committed within the red book to maintain the process that we support the Canadian Wheat Board.

We have here an opportunity on behalf of the member to say why does the government not just go through and hold a referendum. What I would like to know from the hon. member opposite is would he not sooner have that total input from the farming community and say: "In our opinion there should be a referendum and we would like you to move in that direction"?

As it is now, he is saying government, back off. I support that. We have to. Some of our comments in Bill C–51 are directed in that response. I would like to know how we can as a government move through and hold a referendum when we are at this point allowing the opportunity for the farming community through the minister of agriculture to have it place its input before us before we would start with the legislation.

• (1215)

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, in short, the minister of agriculture has not made it clear to farmers, particularly western farmers and those under the Canadian Wheat Board, that a referendum is a possibility and an option. It is not clear that it is there.

It would be good if the government made a statement that there would be a referendum, that in the preamble or in preparation for the referendum there would be major hearings and major submissions to the standing committee on agriculture of the House to determine what the question would be, the content of the question, and what the implications of the answers would be following the referendum.

At the present time we are unsure of the sequence and the pattern of commitment of the government. If it would make the commitment we could move ahead.

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in support of Bill C–51, a bill to amend the Canada Grain Act. The bill has many positive measures that will contribute to the prosperity and competitive advantage of farmers and indeed all Canadians.

The aspects of the bill I intend to address are the amendments that will remove the obligation of government to establish maximum tariffs for services performed by primary transfer and terminal elevator operators.

For the benefit of members who are unfamiliar with the grain industry, a tariff is a charge assessed by an elevator company for services such as handling, cleaning of grain, storage and drying of grain. As the Canada Grain Act is now written, the Canadian Grain Commission is required to establish by regulation the maximum allowable tariff for each elevator service. If an elevator company wishes to change its tariff, it must give the commission 14 days of notice. If it wishes to offer a new service it cannot provide it until the commission has established a maximum tariff for the new service.

These laws date from an era when farmers had few marketing choices and farmer organizations were relatively weak. In the early decades of this century these provisions made sense because elevator companies were not always as scrupulous as they should have been. Farmers were vulnerable so these changes were brought in at an appropriate time for protection. I know all members of the House continue to support them.

In the grain industry of the nineties however this kind of government intervention, as I know the Reform Party would agree, provides no measurable benefit for producers as it places unnecessary obstacles in the path of grain companies.

These are not merely my opinions. They reflect the advice the commission received from the grain industry and producer groups during the 1992 grains and oilseeds regulatory review. As the minister said this morning 57 groups were consulted. In addition we received written responses. The government shares the perspective of those representative groups.

If the key participants want this change who are we to deny them? We will go along with it. We have concluded that regulating elevator tariff maximums is not in the best interest of the grain industry. We believe that removing maximums will encourage increased urgently needed capital investment by elevator companies. We are therefore confident the measures we are proposing today would result in a flexible, more competitive elevator industry.

What are the changes we are proposing? First, the obligation that the Canadian Grain Commission set maximum elevator tariffs will be eliminated. Elevator operators will be able to decide for themselves how much they will charge for their services. As well, while we will still require elevator companies to file their tariffs with the commission, the requirement to give 14 days notice of the change they wish to make in their tariffs will be removed. This will allow elevator companies the same freedom enjoyed by other businesses, other farm groups and

agri–groups, namely the freedom to adjust their prices quickly to respond to local market conditions.

We have discussed these notions with respect to the wheat board and other kinds of institutions in place for the Canadian grain farmers. This is the way to respond to those niche market needs. We have that in the particular bill. As well, operators will no longer be required to charge the same tariff at all of their elevators. This will allow them more flexibility in rate setting.

• (1220)

We will not be making these changes overnight. Again, on the advice of producers and acting with due prudence with the grain companies, we recognized the need for a transition period. For a two–year period, the Canadian Grain Commission will retain the power to set maximum tariffs by order, if situations arise where the tariff charged is excessive. Those checks and balances are there. Those protections are there for members of the House representing grain farmers in their areas who are concerned about drastic changes that may not have the policy outcomes we intend.

When the two–year transition period has concluded, the commission will still exercise its power to investigate complaints. It is hoped that problems which may arise after the two–year transition period has ended will be resolved through discussion and moral suasion. We want to bring the people back to the table again to discuss any concerns and glitches that may still be evident in the policy.

Nevertheless government will retain the power to intervene if intervention is required. The commission will continue to have the authority to reimpose maximum tariffs subject to the approval of the governor in council if circumstances so warrant.

Inevitably in a situation like this one the first question to be asked will be: How will the measure affect the producer? All of us in the House today engaging in this debate have those interests firsthand.

Protection of the interests of grain producers remains one of the most primary purposes of the act. The government has introduced numerous amendments to the act which will benefit producers. This particular amendment is no different.

How are producers protected in a deregulated tariff environment? First an important point I want to stress particularly for the members of the Reform Party, and I speak in terms of Manitoba. They have their own producer owned or controlled elevator companies to protect their own interests. I am referring to such companies as the United Grain Growers. Manitoba Pool Elevators with 18,000 members in that province own the elevators. The interests of elevator owners and the interests of farmers are one and the same. We are not going to have the kind of subjugations and conflicts of interest leading to taking advantage of producers bringing their products to the elevators if we have that kind of producer involvement at the elevator door.

It is the same for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the Alberta Wheat Pool. We do not believe for one moment that farmers will allow—and I have full confidence they will not—their own companies to take advantage of them. Producer owned co–operatives are formidable players in the grain industry. At Thunder Bay, for example, 75 per cent of the terminal capacity is operated by producer owned or controlled companies.

As my hon. colleague from Saskatchewan had mentioned earlier, on the west coast producers own 54 per cent of that capacity, the majority holders. In the interests of their producer owners these companies will maintain downward pressure on tariffs, forcing privately owned companies to compete. Moreover most producers will have choices they did not have in 1912 when the Canada Grain Act was passed. If they did not like what one company was charging they would take their grain to another. Allowing opportunities is the secret to that competitive advantage and open market competition. Competition will keep the rates in line and in some cases, I am convinced, will reduce them.

If the grain producers' own companies in the competitive marketplace are not able to set fair prices, the Canadian Grain Commission is still there to investigate. The commission will be able to limit tariffs and will retain the right to set maximum tariffs by regulation. This right will only be exercised, however, in extreme situations.

Members can rest assured that even in a deregulated tariff environment the Canadian Grain Commission will have the legal tools to defend the interest of grain producers whether in Lisgar—Marquette, Provencher or Brandon—Souris, important Manitoba ridings with grain producers.

In conclusion, I encourage members to support the legislation and I thank those who support it. It offers significant opportunities for grain farmers to become more competitive. At the same time it retains appropriate means to protect the fair interests of grain producers should these interests be threatened.

• (1225)

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member. I have two questions on the many arguments he made.

He said that the problem of the grain companies having difficulty setting tariffs for new services was now to be resolved by simply not having them report these services to the grain commission and that it would be completely deregulated. I wonder if he would give the House some idea of what the new services might be that would require charges that are not being made now.

The second matter that got my attention was his argument that unlike at the turn of the century grain companies are now quite scrupulous in their dealings with their customers and their farm deliverers. I remind him that a number of grain companies operate internationally. Those operating in both Canada and the United States, as an example, each year have been found to be shorting customers on weight, delivering the wrong grades, shorting farmers on payments and so on.

His faith in the modern day elevator company is really one of having faith in a very good policeman, namely the Canadian Grain Commission which will be backing off and not be patrolling the neighbourhood so fully. Many grain companies may find it much easier to revert to the practices they engage in outside Canada as soon as the grain commission backs off. Would the member comment on those two items?

Mr. Iftody: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for those helpful comments.

I would like to respond as quickly as I can to the second one first. On his question of companies shortchanging producers, I do not have any facts to that effect. I have never seen any documents or heard any representations from farmers in Provencher in support of those rather surprising statements.

I refer the hon. member to a phone call I made this morning to the Manitoba Pool Elevator. I asked: "How many members do you have? What kind of support do you have in Manitoba?" They have 18,000 members. I assure the hon. member that I have faith in the good judgment of those members to make decisions and to keep an eye on those institutions which respect their best interests.

In terms of the service charges I would say the same. In terms of new service charges and outcomes from these policy changes which will be reviewed in two years, I believe the members will have that input. I assure the hon. member we will not allow grain companies to run away unchecked, at a complete arm's length from their producers.

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the hon. member for Provencher would comment on the pools going toward public companies or corporations. UGG is finished with them. They are public corporations now. The shareholders do the voting and the directing.

It is of interest to me that one director of the Manitoba pool was very upset that the Canadian Grain Commission lacked the support of an independent inquiry into the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, the commodity markets. The Canadian Grain Commission is supposed to regulate the commodity exchange. Why has the government not supported an independent inquiry into the operation of the commodity exchange?

• (1230)

Mr. Iftody: Madam Speaker, again, if there was a question of impropriety with respect to those responsible in either the handling of grain or trading in this commodity, I find these suggestions a bit surprising.

I just want to say to the hon. member for Lisgar—Marquette that I am sure the crown and the minister represent the interests of farmers. If there is any impropriety or any evidence of it, if this member has received any facts or actual information to support that from this particular gentleman, I would be pleased to pass it on to the minister of agriculture and conduct an investigation.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C–51. The purpose of Bill C–51 is to update and modernize the Canada Grain Act as outlined by the hon. minister of agriculture.

These amendments will put more responsibility on the shoulders of the users of the grain system, the producers, the grain dealers and the elevator operators.

We in the government know that we must learn where to regulate and where not to regulate. It is shown that in this bill we will regulate to improve the quality and protection of the producers, but we do not wish to regulate the exact pricing of services or in any way restrict the marketing of grain.

Part of this legislation is designed to renew and enhance our commitment to a quality product. Canada has built a reputation as a supplier of consistent and uniform quality grains. This reputation has served us well in our marketing of grain around the world. Buyers expect top quality when dealing with Canadian grains. We should give them no less.

The bill clearly defines the commission's role in setting grades and grade names as well as methods of determining such grades. This gives the commission the solid ground to actively improve the consistency of Canada's grain grades.

The legislation also removes the requirement for the Canadian Grain Commission to set maximum elevator tariffs. This will allow market pricing of those services that the commission feels will benefit from market pressure. Also removed from legislation is the requirement that an elevator operator give the commission 14 days' notice of a change of tariffs. This will allow operators more flexibility in dealing with the changing pressures of the market.

To address concerns about excessive charges, the Canadian Grain Commission will have the right to establish maximum tariffs by order for the next two years. If an investigation of a complaint from an elevator user finds that a particular tariff is not justified, the commission may set maximums. The Canadian Grain Commission also has the ability to set tariff maximums

through regulation if elevator operators set tariffs at excessive levels.

The government notes as well that the majority of primary and terminal elevators are owned by the producers themselves through the various wheat pools. The government does not think it necessary to protect western grain farmers from themselves.

The legislation improves protection to grain producers by authorizing the commission to require additional security from dealers and elevators as is determined by the commission. This ability improves the protection to the growers to help ensure that they will be paid for their produce.

The legislation protects Canadian taxpayers from footing the bill when a grain dealer or elevator goes bankrupt and does not have enough security placed with the commission to cover amounts owed to producers. When the posted security is not enough to cover its debts, the creditors will be paid on a pro rata system, which is the fairest way of dealing with such a problem. The taxpayers of Canada should not be paying for the bad business practices of an operation.

The legislation improves the Canada Grain Act provisions to facilitate the movement of grain interprovincially and for export. The amendments simplify the regulations governing the transport of grains. It removes regulations controlling transport of grains wholly within the western or eastern divisions. Public carriers are required when shipping grain between divisions and in or out of the country.

I encourage our members to support this legislation. We wish to support our grain growers and facilitate the sale and disposition of their product. I think this legislation achieves that end.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Madam Speaker, it is good to again be able to talk about agriculture here in the House. We are dealing with Bill C–51. It is a bill to deal with the Canadian Grain Commission and its powers.

On the whole, Bill C–51 is a good starting point for improving the agriculture industry in Canada.

• (1235)

Parts of the bill give me cause for concern. I will outline those areas in more detail later. There are some positive aspects to this legislation and I would like to briefly touch on them.

First and perhaps more important, the bill places the onus on farmers to ensure that they are dealing with a duly licensed grain company. This bill makes it clear that the Canadian Grain Commission and therefore the Canadian taxpayer is only liable to cover claims from duly licensed companies.

This protection lets farmers know exactly where they stand as well as protecting taxpayers from unreasonable expenses. Canadians have paid up in the past for claims coming from unlicensed companies and I am glad to see that this protection will be included in the act.

There are those who would argue that the language in clause 13 of this bill may still leave some doubt as to which claims are to be paid. Therefore I would encourage and support any strengthening of the wording during the committee stage that would ensure taxpayer protection from unlicensed claims.

I had a case in my constituency prior to the election where a seed cleaning company ceased to do business and left many farmers out on a limb. It was a very messy situation. There were accusations of political involvement and patronage. Certainly we do not want to hear those horror stories repeated in the future.

Clause 12 of the bill allows the Canadian Grain Commission some latitude when deciding whether or not to close an elevator having financial or cash flow difficulties. This is a positive step for farmers. Many have been caught by an insolvent elevator company or seed cleaning company in the past.

The bill also provides for better financial protection for farmers by making them responsible for obtaining adequate security for grain shipped to an elevator and for ensuring that the grain name and amounts shipped is on the ticket.

The bill brings the protection offered to farmers more in line with security provisions common in other financial areas. Farmers have long been saying that they do not want special treatment, they only want a fair shake the same as other small businessmen. This bill moves, however slightly, in that direction.

Farmers will be pleased to see that there is some movement on the issue of interprovincial trade flexibility. Of course in good Liberal style, this is done as a half measure. The bill only allows for flexibility within the western wheat block and within the eastern wheat block. It does not go nearly far enough in removing interprovincial barriers to trade. Perhaps more important, the bill does not address the issue of trade with the United States at all, a bone of contention which the current Liberal government has not been prepared to deal with in a positive manner.

The bill would solidify and enforce the use of common grade names. This too is welcome news for producers. There will be much less confusion about the quality of grain shipped to an elevator.

As I stated at the outset of my remarks, the bill does have some positive aspects. However, there are some very serious problems with certain parts and clauses of the bill on some very important issues that are entirely ignored by this legislation.

In the bill an increasing amount of decision making is being placed in the hands of the governor in council. We are aware that this is a formalized constitutional body through which the cabinet exercises executive power.

If members would study the bill they would see that clauses 2, 4, 9, 15, 33 and 35 all move powers into the hands of the executive, into the hands of the cabinet. This extensive power grab on the part of the government directly contradicts the commitment to a more open and democratic government promised in the now infamous red ink book.

In taking so much power away from the legislators and producers and giving it to cabinet to exercise in the form of orders in council, the government is doing the opposite of what farmers want. Agricultural producers have been consistent in saying that farming boards and institutions should be democratized and accountable. Moving more power and decision making behind closed doors and off the public record is continuing to be counter to the will of Canadian farmers.

A good example of this power grab can be found in clause 34. This clause allows cabinet to approve and define all regulations not specifically contained in the act. This is tantamount to Parliament passing blank cheque legislation allowing the minister to fill in the blanks later.

This seems to be a mindset of the Liberal government. Do not deal with the issues, allow the bureaucrats and the cabinet to make up the rules as they go. History teaches us that we get into trouble when we follow this procedure. We should learn lessons from the previous Tory government that authorized the establishment of a continental barley market through an order in council rather than bringing it to Parliament as it should have for a decision in the House that is elected by the people. Had Parliament been able to deal with that issue the matter would have been resolved one way or the other and producers would not be struggling and demanding a plebiscite and action on the part of the government at this date.

• (1240)

The bill demonstrates once again that this minister of agriculture is a bureaucrats' minister, not a farmers' minister. Not only does cabinet take powers from Parliament but the bureaucracy also gets a whole raft of new authority.

For example, the Canadian Grain Commission would now have the power to set the salaries of the western and eastern standards committees and the grain appeal tribunal. I would suggest it is not a common practice for bureaucrats to set their own salaries, at least it should not be. Not only do these people have the power to set their own pay but they also are often patronage appointments as well.

The standards boards, while expensive and patronage filled, are only advisory. This means that the minister may ignore their recommendations in any case.

It will be interesting to see how the salaries of these advisory patronage committees change as a result of this bill. Of course, I suppose they are watching what happens in this House where MPs set their own pay and pensions. Perhaps they are saying that if parliamentarians are going to play that game we want to play it and we demand to be able to play it as well.

My concern is that one of these days Canadian taxpayers are going to start fighting back by saying that if MPs set their own salaries, if bureaucrats set their own pay, then perhaps we will decide how much we are going to pay in taxes whether the government demands it or not.

It would seem in many ways the bill is designed to protect the bureaucratic empire from the changes that are coming to the industry. I want to refer for a few moments to the special crops or pulse crop initiative that is changing the way the industry operates, particularly in my province of Saskatchewan.

As the minister knows many farmers have been diversifying crops over the past few years as a way of remaining viable and competitive. This diversification has been a boon to the agriculture industry. Many farmers have remained in a viable position because they have diversified and tried some non–traditional crops such as peas, lentils, canary seed, mustard seed, and many others. This industry has flourished and prospered without massive government intrusion, regulation and control. Perhaps it has prospered because of little government involvement. I know many farmers believe so.

An example of a crop being developed and becoming a major staple in the prairies is canola which was an experiment a few decades ago. This year canola is one of the main cash crops in the prairie region and we believe—I know I believe and I am sure my Reform colleagues believe—that these other crops can be expanded and provide much income to producers if again government does not interfere and place too many regulations and restrictions in the way of development of these new commodities.

Groups of farmers, in consultation with all the players in the industry from the pools, the wheat board, and everyone else have spent years developing pulse crop initiatives.

The minister has had a copy of that initiative for quite some time and even so he has chosen not to include the speciality of pulse crops in this legislation. It is expected, and rumour has it, that some legislation dealing with these crops will be introduced a year or year and a half from now.

In light of the enforcement provisions of Bill C–51, what does the minister expect will happen to this vital industry in the interim? A lack of legislation for special crops, combined with the witch hunt under way by the Canadian Grain Commission to licence and control the special seed cleaning and distribution

sector will potentially have a devastating effect on agriculture as a whole.

With the provisions of Bill C–51 only to pay claims from duly licensed companies, the current push on the part of the Canadian Grain Commission to licence and audit pulse crop companies can only be interpreted as a move to push many of the small companies out of business. This would lead to a monopolized industry with the bureaucrats comfortably in control.

The farmers want the pulse crop sector left the way it is. The customers want the sector left the way it is. Everyone wants a free market pulse crop sector, apparently that is everyone except senior agriculture mandarins.

Because pulse crops are not grown in quantities comparable to grains such as wheat, barley or canola, the cleaners and handlers of these commodities are much smaller operations. The cost of Canadian Grain Commission licences, bonds, and audits can run anywhere from $20,000 to $30,000 every year. This would unnecessarily force most of the operators out of the specialty crops sector at a time when the sector should be expanding and should be strengthening.

• (1245)

I am very concerned that this legislation does not adequately protect those operators and the producers who deal with them. It is a serious flaw in this bill. I am concerned that a wait of 12 to 18 months or however long it takes the minister to bring in legislation to deal with that sector may be too late and drive many of them out of the industry.

The absence of this pulse crop legislation makes Bill C–51 a farmers versus the bureaucrats bill with regard to pulse crops.

I challenge the minister to show it ain't so. If he can do so, I would be one of the most pleased people in this House. I call on him to bring in the kind of legislation that works for farmers, not just measures that protect and enhance the jobs of his senior bureaucrats.

Although this bill contains some very positive aspects it is legitimate to ask why the minister would introduce legislation that makes the government mandarins more comfortable and secure while making the farmers wait at least another year before moving on issues that they really care about.

This bill is a good place to start but there is a lot of work that needs to be done at the committee level to make it good legislation.

I would hope that the minister can solve his in house power struggle soon so that farmers can get some movement and government action on the issues they care about.

It is quite interesting to note that in the life of this Parliament, now almost one year old, that not many steps or perhaps no steps have been taken by the minister or his government to put producers in the driver's seat in their own industry.

If there is one thing I know from being a producer it is that they are not afraid to take responsibility and they are not afraid to make decisions and by and large they make very good decisions. Often it is government through order in council decisions, through legislation that is incomplete such as Bill C–51 that has been a hindrance to the industry rather than an asset.

I encourage the minister to review his legislation with a view to seeing what he can do to put producers in charge of their own industry so that they can be adequately able to make decisions, to take steps to strengthen their industry without being hindered by the government that is supposed to represent and serve them.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C–51, amendments to the Canada Grain Act.

It is important at the beginning to put into perspective the role that the Canadian Grain Commission has played in terms of Canada being seen as the reliable supplier of high quality grains in the world.

The combination of the Canadian Wheat Board as the single desk selling agency for export wheat and barley and the quality control and inspection system and watchdog capacity of the Canadian Grain Commission has worked extremely well in Canada's interests and in the interests of Canada's primary grain producers.

The key selling point for grains out of Canada in the international marketplace has been certainly our quality control system. Millers around the world know that when they buy Canadian wheat they are going to get high quality grains that they can blend in with other countries' products and still have a reasonable quality of bread.

The Americans, on the other hand, the system that some of our colleagues in this House on the other side want to emulate, are looked upon by the world as a residual supplier of grain. They are used in terms of setting the price worldwide but they are a residual supplier, a supplier of last resort because they do not have the quality control system that we have in this country that is made possible because of some of the regulations of the Canadian Grain Commission that we have in this country.

This bill's objective is to maintain that support for quality grades and inspection. However, we have to be constantly aware

of the danger in terms of our legislative processes of knuckling under to those who believe that cost cutting should be all that matters.

The principal concern of the federal government on this issue of inspection and quality control are two elements key to the security of our export markets, quality and inspection.

• (1250)

When appearing before the agricultural committee, Dennis Wallace, executive director of the commission made the following comment: "We are looking at streamlining, weighing and inspection that will move at the pace the industry sets and our comfort that we can sustain the standard of quality in the process. In our view quality has not been affected by the steps we have taken to this point". That is an important point.

We must ensure on this side of the House and as the government that we maintain those standards that have been so true and beneficial to the Canadian grain industry.

I had hoped that I would have time to indicate to the House some of the dangers within the system because several of the groups that have come before the Standing Committee on Agriculture, the Public Service Alliance of Canada for one, outlined some of the problems that have happened at Thunder Bay. They provide a good example of the dangers that can happen to quality control in the grain system if we do not have a strong, dedicated agency like the Canadian Grain Commission with strong regulations behind it to protect the interests of producers and the interests of the grain industry.

I do not have time to quote that evidence but I would refer members of the House to the April 26, 1994 submission of the Public Service Alliance outlining some of the dangers of quality control.

We must ensure as a government that the security of a regulatory and inspection system is maintained, that the future of either downsizing or efforts to promote competitiveness do not result in a loss of our competitive position which is based upon production and exports of the highest quality standards of grain in the world.

There has been a lot of talk by members on both sides of this House on the questions regarding clause 14. Under clause 14 the Canadian Grain Commission will no longer be required to set maximum tariffs charged by grain elevators.

This is a point that, to be honest, is open to question for me. We will certainly have an interesting debate at the agricultural committee on this point. There are a number of questions that need to be raised.

I do not believe for a moment that we can depend on the co–operative movement or the pools to protect producers' interests. I have been involved in that industry out west for a number of years and the co–operative movement, the pools, when they are making decisions in the kind of international arena we now face have to weigh in their own minds whether they are making a decision in terms of their corporate business interests and the bottom line as a corporation or making a decision in their membership's interests as a co–operative. Therefore, I believe there need to be some government safeguards in terms of protecting primary producers' interests, and certainly we will debate that at committee level.

Other questions need to be raised. Some clarification is needed of the ombudsman like role the commission will perform. Under what circumstances will it be able to intervene, what powers will the commission have to act upon complaints, and under what authority? Under what circumstances will the commission be able to set maximum tariffs by regulation if needed?

An important point in the bill and one I strongly support is that if there is a danger there the Canadian Grain Commission can step in and impose maximum tariffs if the grain industries, the companies or the trade is abusing the system set in place.

• (1255)

I raise those points because I think this is the place, the House of Commons, in this arena and at the committee level, for good, strong, informed debate on the facts so that we can come up with better decisions in the end.

I recognize that my time is getting short. I have heard from members opposite talking about competition. We have to look at that infrastructure in western Canada where the Canadian Grain Commission operates and recognize that more and more in those small community towns with elevators that there is less and less competition between grain companies.

Grain companies are now consolidating their system. Because you are going to gain a lower tariff rate at one elevator does not necessarily mean that you are going to haul to that elevator because it may be 50 or 100 miles away and you would lose all you had saved or more by hauling that distance.

We have to be very careful in making these decisions to ensure the kind of international arena we are entering into, the kind of consolidation that is happening, especially in western Canada, and the impact that may have on primary producers if there is not a very strong Canadian Grain Commission in place to protect the interests of primary producers and the interests of the country in terms of the grains we sell.

Let me conclude by saying that the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission have served this country well in the past. I believe they can in the future. I look forward to maintaining those kinds of standards and see that Canada remains the kind of reliable supplier of grains that we have been in the past.

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette): Madam Speaker, I must thank the hon. member for that speech. I do agree with him once in a while on certain areas.

I know he is a very good and efficient operator and does probably employ people and pay their wages. Does he not think that when I as a farmer pay 92 per cent of the grain commission's wages I should have some input into who these people are? I would feel a lot more comfortable if I as a farmer had some input into who these people were and how they were working. The people employed on an operation are really the backbone of the operation because management depends on them. I wonder whether the hon. member would respond to that.

Mr. Easter: Madam Speaker, I did have some figures. I believe you are correct, Mr. Hoeppner, in the figure you indicate in terms of how much—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): May I remind the hon. member that we do not address members as mister, we use the riding, which is Lisgar—Marquette.

Mr. Easter: My apologies, Madam Speaker. I believe the figures by the hon. member are correct. Members opposite often talk about user pay on that side of the House. Canadian society as a whole gains from many of these institutions, the Canadian Grain Commission, some of our inspection standards in the meat and horticultural industries as well. I do not believe producers should pay the full shot.

To the member opposite, in terms of farmers having a say in the Canadian Grain Commission, they do through their primary producers as well as through the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee which is an elected body in 11 districts in western Canada. They advise the wheat board, they should advise and I am certain they do, at least the ones I talk to, advise the minister in all matters related to grain including this issue in terms of grades, standards and regulatory controls.

There is input at the moment through the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee and through members elected in this House directly to the minister who is responsible for the Canadian Grain Commission.

• (1300)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I see no one rising on debate. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ACT

Hon. Herb Gray (for the Minister of Foreign Affairs) moved that Bill C–47, an act to amend the Department of External Affairs Act and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today in support of Bill C–47, an act to amend the Department of External Affairs Act.

Our government made a commitment when we were sworn into office to change the name of the Department of External Affairs to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. This change in title is a recognition of the changes of the department's mandate that have occurred over the 85 years since its inception.

The Department of External Affairs was created in 1909 by Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier to conduct Canada's foreign policy. Since then the mission of the department has adapted to reflect Canada's growing role on the international stage.

During World War I for example, Canada played an important role internationally as part of the allied forces and a member of the imperial war cabinet. By the end of the war, Canada was emerging as a fully independent nation. This maturation was reflected in changes to the fledgling department.

In the 1920s under the leadership of Dr. O. D. Skelton, the Under–Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Counsellor Loring Christie, the department began to evolve into its current structure and the Canadian diplomatic corps was formed.

The second world war contributed further to the growth of the department. Canada became an active world player. We were a founding member of the United Nations and a full participant in such other international organizations as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO; the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT; the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and, of course, the Commonwealth.

In more recent years, Canada has steadily increased its role in world affairs and joined additional organizations such as the G–7, the group of seven major industrialized nations, La Francophonie, and the Organization of American States, the OAS.

The department contributes significantly to this role, fulfilling its mission to portray, promote and defend the interests of Canada, to improve Canadians' awareness and understanding of the world and to serve Canadians at home and abroad.

Bill C–47 will amend the External Affairs Act to change the legal name of the department and the titles of its ministers and senior officials. Under this act, the Secretary of State for External Affairs becomes the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The title of the Minister for International Trade remains unchanged. The title of the junior minister, the Minister for External

Relations, will change to become the Minister for International Co–operation.

• (1305)

Senior official titles currently including the term under–secretary will reflect ministerial changes, thus the Under–Secretary of State for External Affairs will become the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, referred to as the DM for foreign affairs.

Bill C–47 makes no substantive changes to the structure of the department. Rather the change in name affected by this legislation reflects the current mandate of the department.

I would like to add a few words about the roles of the two new positions not written into the act but important to the development of Canadian foreign policy. These are the positions of Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, and I see the secretary of state listening very attentively to what I am saying, and of course the Secretary of State for Asia Pacific.

The secretaries of state have proven to be invaluable contributors to Canada's foreign policy. They travel and meet widely with leaders in many countries where Canadian foreign policy interests are being pursued. I know how active they are in liaising with the diplomatic corps here in Canada. They complement the work of the minister very effectively.

Let us not forget the role of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a position also not incorporated in this act but a very important role to represent the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his absence when he is out representing Canada in his many, many duties. I know personally what a heavy role that minister plays. Therefore the roles of secretaries of state and parliamentary secretary are very helpful to the minister and to the department.

[*Translation*]

To conclude, I say that the object of the bill is very clear. It is simply to make sure that our presence abroad and in international organizations reflects today's reality.

In our history, we went from colony to dominion and finally independent nation. The new title of Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade makes this evolution official.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on Bill C–47, an Act to amend the Department of External Affairs Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for his excellent remarks. As he pointed out, the purpose of Bill C–47 is to change the name of the department from the Department of External Affairs and International Trade to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In fact, the purpose of the Bill is to update the name of the department and of some of its officers with respect to the existing administrative structure.

With your permission, I would like to recall a number of historic reasons for making what we feel is an appropriate change of name.

From 1867 to 1909, Great Britain retained overall responsibility for Canada's external relations, and it was Great Britain, as it were, that declared war on behalf of Canada in 1914, as Canada did not have its own ambassadors at that time.

In 1909, as the parliamentary secretary pointed out, Canada's own Department of External Affairs was created. It was headed by a secretary of state for external affairs, a position that had already been created in 1868. But actually, the prime minister continued to be largely responsible for this department. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that when it was created the department had five employees and, in 1911, no more than 15.

On April 1, 1912, the Department of External Affairs was placed under the direct jurisdiction of the prime minister; it concerned itself essentially with the Canadian government's relations with other dominions of the British Crown, whence the use of the term "external" to describe something that was not completely foreign. And this is the term that has remained.

• (1310)

Just before the outbreak of World War I, Canada was represented abroad, outside British dominions, by one office in Washington, with a staff of nine, one high commission in London, with a staff of eleven, and one general commission in Paris, with a staff of eight.

After the war, Canada's international status gained recognition through battle exploits of Canadian troops at Vimy for example. In 1923, Canada signed its first treaty as an independent state, the Halibut Treaty, and sent diplomatic representatives abroad. In 1931, as we know, Canada officially became an independent state under the Treaty of Westminster, which conferred complete independence to Canada.

The 1935–39 period is considered as a period of growth for the Canadian foreign service and one during which several countries established diplomatic representation here in Ottawa. In 1939, it is as an independent state that Canada declared war upon Germany and other Axis powers.

The foreign policy of Canada, one of the founding members of the United Nations, enjoyed new growth after the Second World War, particularly in 1946, with the appointment of the first truly independent secretary of State, and the passage of the Canadian Department of External Affairs Act. The same legislation is still

in effect today, except for minor amendments made from time to time since then.

During the 1960s, efforts started to be made to bring the various programs relating to trade and commerce under the purview of External Affairs. In 1983, the position of Minister for International Trade was created as well as that of Minister for External Relations. Over the years, various programs such as that of the export market development board came under the jurisdiction of the Department of External Affairs, while others, like that of the Grain Marketing Office, were transferred to other departments.

Today, we have before us in this House Bill C–47, a bill which, as I mentioned earlier, changes the name of the Department of External Affairs for that of Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

As we speak, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade employs over 4,000 Canadians and nearly 5,000 locally–engaged staff around the world. Thinking back to the rather modest beginnings of the department that I described earlier, we can see that it has come a long way.

Naturally, we intend to support this bill because, as the hon. parliamentary indicated, we believe the time has come to update the name of this department because, in its present form, it evokes the dominion status Canada had for so many years. The wish could also be expressed to see the government go ahead and eliminate the last traces of this colonial era by abolishing plainly and simply the other place, an institution which is a glaring anachronism and does not suit the Canadian reality at all. The government of Canada could also have used this opportunity to make progress on the political and constitutional status of Canada.

I think that this bill is also appropriate, given the foreign policy review aimed at updating Canada's present one. We, however, have three reservations about this bill which are far from trivial, to say the least.

First of all, we deplore the fact that the minister did not take this opportunity to put some order into all the positions that have not been filled since the Liberals came to office. I am referring specifically to clauses 4, 8(2) and 9 of the bill, under which the government may appoint—again, since the Liberals came to office, and even before in some cases—a Minister for International Co–operation, Associate Deputy Ministers as well as a Co–ordinator, International Economic Relations when these positions are vacant.

In fact, the positions that remain unfilled would allow the government to distribute them as it sees fit. If these positions are useless, they should simply be abolished. Such is the case with the position of Minister for International Co–operation, formerly the Minister for External Relations, which is now vacant. If the government does not find any use for it, it should simply abolish it instead of putting it aside for highly partisan appointments.

• (1315)

We also think that CIDA, whose mandate is rather vague, should have its own constituent act governing its activities as an independent body. Such an act would give the minister responsible for CIDA a clear and unequivocal mandate. It would, of course, also prevent financial and human resources from being wasted.

My third reservation concerns clause 7, subsection (3). If I may, Mr. Speaker, I will now read this clause: "The Minister may develop and carry out programs related to his powers, duties and functions for the promotion of Canada's interests abroad, including the fostering of the expansion of Canada's international trade and commerce and the provision of assistance for developing countries". We think it is inappropriate for the minister to link Canada's commercial interests with development assistance so explicitly and so directly in the same clause.

We recognize, of course, that development assistance provided by Canada works in favour of Canada's political interests at the international level. But keeping development assistance together with international trade in the same clause can be confusing and suggest that the government again intends to continue to favour tied aid. In this regard, I think that we cannot allow these two items to be together in the same clause of the bill.

In conclusion, of course we will support this bill, bearing in mind that we have these three very serious reservations which we would like the government to take into consideration in the process leading to the adoption of this bill. As I just said, this bill is part of a historical process which unfortunately has taken too many years.

I think it was high time for the Canadian government to update the name of the Department of External Affairs and the Department of International Trade to make it a real Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Unfortunately, as I just said when I was talking about our reservations, we regret that the minister did not take this opportunity to make some adjustments that would have made the department even more up to date.

I think that the goal which the government is pursuing with this bill is bringing this department up to date. So it is rather disturbing and surprising to see that the government wants to keep in this bill some positions of questionable usefulness, given that they are still vacant even as we speak.

I end my remarks here. We will certainly have the opportunity to talk about them again in subsequent debates.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, as the Reform Party's international trade critic it is a pleasure for me to speak today on Bill C–47 and its implications for a modernized and revitalized Department of Foreign Affairs.

This bill does not make any huge changes. It changes the name of the Department of External Affairs to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and it changes the titles of ministers and the deputy ministers to reflect the new name of the department.

I suppose the name change is intended to ensure that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade reflects the needs and values of Canadians in the 1990s. However I wonder whether changing the name of the department is necessary and whether the cost of doing so can be justified. I know that printing 4,000 new sets of business cards and redoing all the stationery does not amount to a monumental cost in the larger scheme of things, but the taxpayer expects a new standard of efficiency in government and this does seem to be frivolous.

• (1320)

The Department of External Affairs has operated for some 10 years with international trade as one of its components. It is suddenly necessary to add the long phrase of international trade to the name of the department. Why is this?

Why after so many years of operating just fine as external affairs do we now need the title of foreign affairs and international trade? What if in its wisdom some future government decides to move the international trade component back to the industry department? What if one day a crown corporation is formed to take over the trade promotion? What if that function is privatized altogether? Do we then have to go through this exercise all over again?

Changing the way trade promotion is handled is not inconceivable. Just this morning the *Globe and Mail* carried an article stating that a group of business people says Ottawa could save nearly $117 million a year by concentrating its trade promotion efforts on smaller companies ending duplication and tying trade to aid. The article goes on to quote the chairman of the International Business Development Review to say that it would require courageous decisions to wean business off trade support initiatives but the federal government would be surprised by the positive response from an overtaxed population. I encourage the minister to look at these options and explore this further.

Let us talk a bit about what Canadians do want from their department of foreign affairs as it is now going to be known. The foreign policy joint review committee heard many representations from Canadians. The resulting report will guide the department to restructure as necessary and to address those concerns and set Canada's future foreign policy.

Specifically Canadians told us of the need to restructure CIDA and to make it more accountable and more focused in its approach to development assistance. They told us of the need to more clearly define the criteria for Canada's participation in future peacekeeping operations. They told us that non–government agencies, NGOs, can play a larger role in Canada's foreign aid delivery and development. They told us that the need for Canada is to aggressively seek to develop the fast growing Asia–Pacific area for trade. There were many other suggestions and recommendations but we will have to wait for the report to hear them all.

We know for certain however that Canadians want economic security and that over two million Canadians depend on international trade for their jobs. For every $1 billion in new exports 11,000 new jobs will be created. Therefore the Department of Foreign Affairs must do its utmost to make sure that Canadian business succeeds in the international marketplace.

In 1993 Canada exported $181 billion worth of goods and services totalling 30 per cent of our GDP. To see this number increase Reform would like to see Canada be a strong advocate for free trade or freer trade worldwide. We have made some important steps in this direction and I give this government credit for that.

One of the most important vehicles for this will be the world trade organization which will soon be in place as a result of the GATT negotiations. It is vital that Canada help this organization to be successful. Canada must take a leadership role in the new WTO in making this rules based organization work. We must continue to strive for further trade liberalization in the second round of negotiations in agriculture at the GATT or WTO in six years time. Canada must actively pursue new free trade agreements which could enhance our international trade position.

Of special interest to Canada would be the rapid and successful expansion of NAFTA. When reviewing potential new members Canada should encourage our current partners, the U.S. and Mexico, not to drag their feet in these negotiations. In the long term the expansion of NAFTA will help us all. Canada is a trading nation. We need to develop this further.

Of principal interest to Canada however will always be our trading relationship with the United States which currently accounts for about 75 to 80 per cent of Canada's two way trade. This strong relationship with the United States has allowed Canada to become the seventh largest trading nation in the world, even though we are only 31st in terms of population size.

While Canada must always strive to diversify in the area of trade so that we do not remain dependent on our neighbour to the south for our prosperity, we must recognize that the Canada–

U.S. trade relationship is something which needs to be encouraged and promoted to the fullest.

• (1325)

Beyond nurturing our trade relationship with the United States, the Department of Foreign Affairs must always strive to carve out new markets for Canadian international trade. Its job is to tap into emerging growth markets throughout the world and make sure Canadian business can get its foot in the door and go on to develop a comparative advantage over our competitors.

One of the most exciting new growth markets for Canadian trade, as I have said, is the Pacific rim which within five years could represent 40 per cent of total global consumption of exports. Obviously the Department of Foreign Affairs should do its utmost to make sure that Canada remains an active and successful player in the region.

To date we have had some success. Japan is already our second biggest trading partner and purchases more Canadian exports than the U.K., Germany and France combined. In addition, China has the fastest growing economy in the world. With its huge population it is predicted that by early in the next century China could be the second largest economy in the world.

As has already been mentioned, Canada has a significant stake in expanding trade within our hemisphere, preferably through the NAFTA. It has already given Canada unprecedented and preferential access to Mexico's growing market of over 85 million consumers. Other countries such as Chile have demonstrated a very real desire to join this agreement. Canada must ensure that we are a leader in the area of NAFTA accession otherwise the Americans will take this leadership role and will dominate the agenda and look after their own trade interests.

The Department of Foreign Affairs should make sure Canadians remain well represented by acting as a leading force in defending Canadian interests and values. In order to successfully fulfil this task, foreign affairs should seriously consider reallocating its resources in order to optimize this important trade promotion task. This will require some tough decisions, including the withdrawal of resources from regions that do not represent growth markets for Canadian trade. Also in these countries where we have primary diplomatic and consular missions we should investigate cost cutting measures.

Our dealings with other countries of course must be on many levels and not just on those involving trade. Canada has a very special role to play in the area of international affairs because of our proud tradition of acting as an honest broker for dispute resolution and effective multinationalism. Canada must build upon this tradition and promote our position as a respected and effective middle power. With our capabilities, record of innovation and energetic use of diplomacy, many countries expect a special contribution from Canada in the area of international affairs. We should be proud to provide this service.

While Canadians will always want us to promote this positive middle power image, they also want us to live within our means. Therefore, Canada must aim for a foreign policy which is proactive, effective and fiscally responsible. This means that we must get our own fiscal house in order. We must concentrate on reducing internal trade barriers and generally reduce the cost of doing business here at home so that our companies can be more competitive in the world marketplace.

Whether acting as a catalyst for positive international change, a facilitator working to bring parties to an agreement, or mediators to defuse international conflict, the Department of Foreign Affairs must also strive to be a world leader in everything it does.

One area where Canada is already a leader is in our dealings with the United Nations which turns 50 years old this year. Improving the success of the UN is an important task for Canada. There are many ways to improve and overhaul it in the 21st century. I suggest there are several areas Canada should be looking at which would improve the efficiency, accountability and effectiveness of the United Nations.

First, rules that force countries to pay their UN dues must be enforced. Otherwise the UN will always be ineffective and all other reform will go for naught.

Second, the newly appointed UN inspector general must be given a wide mandate to rein in overspending, duplication and waste.

Third, an early warning system should be set up to pre–empt disastrous international conflicts and environmental degradation.

Fourth, an international court should be established through the UN to punish international criminals who currently use national borders and weak international co–ordination to avoid being punished.

• (1330)

Fifth, the structure of the UN Security Council and the veto powers of its permanent membership should be reviewed. During the review Canada should be considered for permanent membership because of its longstanding service and dedication to the United Nations and peacekeeping.

For any of these reforms to work it is necessary that the Department of Foreign Affairs play an effective role both behind the scenes and by publicly setting the agenda for change.

In conclusion, while the Reform Party was elected on a domestic agenda we realize we must be able to present a credible foreign policy and develop a good working relationship with the Department of Foreign Affairs. I would therefore like to express my support for the bill, not as a housekeeping measure to be dealt with quickly but as a sign of a new dynamic and efficient

Department of Foreign Affairs. There will be support for Canadian interests and values into the next century.

While the Reform will have plenty more to say in the area of foreign policy in the coming session, I hope I have illustrated some of the points we think are important for the department.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed from September 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C–52, known as the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act. It serves the purpose of bringing together or consolidating four former common service agencies of the federal government.

[*Translation*]

These are the former departments of Public Works and Supply and Services, as well as the Government Telecommunications Agency.

The new department will play an essential role in that it will allow the federal government to effectively increase the efficiency of its operations. This grouping of important services under a single authority with consistent policies and a co–ordinated long–term approach will allow us to provide better service to the federal administration as a whole and, consequently, to Canadian taxpayers.

The government is firmly committed to offer all Canadians a fair, efficient, innovative and accessible administration.

[*English*]

Canadians are aware that overlap, duplication and poor co–ordination have contributed to the tax burden they must all bear. Canadians expect and demand that we take every measure possible to streamline our operations, reduce administrative costs, cut out red tape and improve our service delivery in implementing government programs.

The creation of a new Department of Public Works and Government Services responds directly to that challenge. It will provide more effectively than ever before a central focus for the provision of a wide range of services that contribute in a vital way to the efficient operation of some 150 government departments and agencies.

[*Translation*]

The purpose of this bill is not to table new policies but to set up a structure which, thanks to the synergy and dynamics generated by the new organization, will help us streamline government services to Canadians and improve their effectiveness.

[*English*]

The new department is a major service element of the federal government. At the time of amalgamation it was comprised of 18,000 employees based in 200 locations across Canada and with an annual budget of approximately $4 billion. The range of services is extensive, including providing telecommunications and professional and technical informatic services to departments and agencies; acting as the chief contracting agent of the federal government; ensuring value for money through a procurement process that is open, fair and competitive; issuing some 200 million payments annually by cheque and direct deposit as part of the receiver general's responsibility; giving the government a full range of communication services, including publication of thousands of titles annually; providing consulting and auditing services on a fee for service basis; handling most of the architectural and engineering services needed by the government as well as providing a wide variety of realty services; and, my personal favourite, providing translation services for the Parliament and the public service for which we in the House are grateful. It also provides for the disposal and sale of crown assets. These are just the highlights of the many and varied services offered and provided by the department.

• (1335)

To fulfil its mandate effectively, Public Works and Government Services has to establish close and productive working relationships with a number of varied interests, most notably those who do business with the Government of Canada, the many departments and agencies of government that depend on

Public Works and Government Services for its services, and the Canadian public that wants and expects fast efficient delivery of government services.

We must remember the federal government is by far the largest purchaser of goods and services in the country. Annual federal procurement, exclusive of crown corporations, is in the order of $16 billion. Public Works and Government Services is responsible for the orderly processing of about 65 per cent of the total or $10 billion.

[*Translation*]

There is no doubt that this more global approach regarding government procurement will benefit all Canadians concerned.

Indeed, it will allow us to implement better co–ordinated and standardized methods and policies, to use state–of–the–art technologies enabling us to streamline existing procedures, and to give eventual suppliers a more precise idea of who they are dealing with.

Initial reaction to this amalgamation process has been positive. It will be even more so once legislation is passed and the new department's structure is farther advanced.

[*English*]

Our government has stressed again and again that the operations of government must be responsive and geared to action and results rather than to the bureaucratic process to which some members on the opposite side often refer.

This is very true of the central services provided by the new department. I believe it will be better equipped to develop stronger, more responsive relationships with its client departments in its new formation.

[*Translation*]

Direct benefits of this amalgamation, for the government but particularly taxpayers, are quite remarkable. Already, overlapping, which the Bloc Quebecois constantly talks about, and duplication have been significantly reduced everywhere in the department, and the streamlining of operations is well underway.

Taking into account operational reviews and related recommendations, as well as the new systems to be implemented and the amalgamation itself, the estimated savings over five years should total approximately $180 million.

[*English*]

The overall staff requirement will be reduced by more than 20 per cent, from 18,000 at the time of amalgamation to about 14,000 at century's end. Specifically the administrative services of the component groups in the new departments have already been consolidated and this will result in savings of some 500 full time positions.

[*Translation*]

I want to point out that all these savings will be made by eliminating duplication, streamlining systems and making increased use of state–of–the–art technologies such as infometrics.

I can assure you that these savings will in no way diminish the quality of service currently provided to the department's clients and to Canadians in general.

• (1340)

Regardless of the structure of joint services, efficiency will always be the key to success. In that regard, we must reduce overlapping and duplication everywhere in government operations and we must become a centre of excellence striving to develop new methods and technologies to deliver services.

The net result will be savings to taxpayers, a one–stop service centre for existing departments, a special expertise accessible from anywhere within the government, a single–window service for suppliers and entrepreneurs dealing with the government—this single–window concept is important, because that is all the opposition talks about these days—and, more importantly, an improved ability on the government's part to serve Canadians.

[*English*]

In the current climate of fiscal restraint the pursuit of efficiency and economy in government operations is clearly not a luxury. It is an absolute necessity. Bill C–52 which will integrate the majority of all common services into one department will help us operate more efficiently and deliver the best we can to our clients.

I hope all members will join me and this side of the House in supporting this innovative legislation. Much has already been achieved, and with the passage of the bill we could move forward with confidence in further streamlining and improving the operations of the federal government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérald Asselin (Charlevoix): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak on Bill C–52. Perhaps I may mention that during my 14 years as a municipal councillor in Baie–Comeau, I was Chairman of the Public Works Commission.

The responsibilities of a municipal councillor are similar to those of a member in this House. A councillor is expected to administer taxpayers' money, and the same applies in the federal government. Members of this House have to make sure that government revenues raised through taxes are properly administered, in the name of openness.

Increasingly, politicians are losing their credibility, and they are finding it harder to field questions from their constituents about contracting out, privatization, transparency and a host of similar questions.

In my speech I intend to discuss Bill C–52, but mainly as it concerns contracting out, privatization and how the government should take advantage of this opportunity. Bill C–52 is an Act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services, which will also include communications and translation.

In fact, this legislation goes back to the 1870s, and it does not give the government or the minister any additional powers. However, we in the Bloc Quebecois would have expected this bill to give the minister additional monitoring and administrative powers, and that the Liberal government, as it promised in the red book, should at least have tried to provide some transparency in this bill by legislating structured parameters for administration and control, thus enabling it to make future decisions based on the principle of openness and a clear knowledge of the facts.

• (1345)

As the old saying goes, if you want something done, you are better off doing it yourself. I wish the government would tell us how much it saves by contracting out, and by privatizing federal services. If the past is any indication, I think there is some cause for concern about the future, when we consider the disgusting case of Pearson Airport, the only profitable federal airport in Canada.

Of course, the federal government wants to get rid of some of its facilities that no longer make a profit, mainly in Quebec. However, if the federal government cannot turn a profit with them, it is doubtful whether municipalities, regional municipalities or regional economic partners would be more successful.

There are plenty of federal facilities in my riding. We have airports in Baie–Comeau, Forestville and Charlevoix. There are about 20 federal wharfs in my riding. Some wharfs are still operational, but many have been declared redundant by Fisheries and Oceans, Transport Canada and Public Works.

I am also concerned about contracting out, and by the Department of Transport's plans for privatizing railway and marine transportation, as well as airport facilities. In my riding, there is a company called Sopor, that carries goods for Reynolds and Quno to the South Shore. Sopor plays an important role in the region's economic development and is particularly useful as a carrier, shipping Reynolds aluminum products and Quno newsprint throughout the world.

Also, in the transportation industry, contracting out or privatization means we are not in a position to develop the railway line between Quebec and Pointe–au–Pic, because the line will be transferred very shortly to the private sector. It is taking forever to settle this matter. Furthermore, we are still waiting for the tourist train from the central station in Quebec City to the Casino in Charlevoix to come through.

Contracting out should mean better quality and better services at a better price. I am not saying I am against contracting out, but what I want from the government, the department and the committee is some proof that contracting out or privatization is cost–effective for the government.

As you know, the government is obliged to call public tenders for all contracts exceeding $25,000. In the case of contracts between $2,500 and $25,000, the department can award contracts, even by invitation. Of course, within the departments there is some flexibility for contracts up to $2,500.

In this House, the Bloc Quebecois has been blasted regularly by various ministers, who have claimed that it often criticizes but never proposes solutions. I can tell you that, in the context of Bill C–52, the Bloc does offer very substantial alternatives, so that greater control can be exercised and the government can demonstrate more transparency.

• (1350)

To ignore the solutions put forward by the Bloc Quebecois is to prevent reductions in program expenditures and the deficit as well as prevent finding ways of providing services to the Canadian public in an cost–effective and efficient fashion.

At a recent meeting of the government operations committee, I asked the minister responsible: "Do you undertake, before this committee, to identify clearly the needs for a department, develop solid specifications and estimates, launch a fair public tendering process, call for public tenders and have a bidders report produced, evaluate tenders openly, receive a recommendation through the deputy minister and, following this process, accept the lowest bid that complies with the specifications established by the department?" And the answer I got was "no".

How can a department or a minister claim to be transparent while refusing to accept the lowest bid, that meets all requirements? The minister is setting himself up to be criticized, sometime down the road, for favouring a friend of the government or a person who attended at some point in time a dinner at $1,000 a setting.

The issue of transparency was raised in the government's red book and during the election campaign. Transparency must be more than just part of a campaign platform. It must last throughout the government's mandate. Every department is very interested in good management. Our job, as politicians, as members of this House, is to demonstrate our willingness to earn as much credibility as possible from our constituents in each of our ridings.

Does the current contracting–out policy save us money? If so, how much do we save and how are these savings achieved? What are the major pros and cons of contracting out? Some drawbacks, such as poor quality, have been revealed. Increasingly, there are concerns about the protection of the confidentiality of certain documents.

Other questions come to mind. What constitutes acceptable justification for contracting out? How many civil servants have

been put on a shelf? Will their numbers keep growing? In short, many questions remain unanswered.

It seems to us that contracting out is expensive. More and more contracts are let, while no one has been laid off in the Public Service. Job safety in the Public Service, the case of this Communications Canada Group that used up funds left over at the end of the year so that its budget would no be cut the following year, the privatization of Pearson International Airport, these are cases that should convince the government to support the amendment put forward by the Bloc Quebecois and to vote against the bill, if that amendment were not adopted.

In the National Capital Region, 79 per cent of federal government services are provided by temporary personnel. It is reported that, in the NCR alone, $64.4 million were devoted to temporary assistance in 1993, while thousands of full–time employees were declared surplus. This is a ridiculous approach as well as an exercise in squandering public funds.

• (1355)

In 1992–93, a full–time government secretary made $24,000 plus benefits, while a temporary personnel agency charges the government $36,000 per year or $20 an hour for secretarial services.

I wish to give a few examples of what the federal government used to pay versus today's contracting–out costs.

A government mechanic made $16 an hour, while the agency charges the government $26 an hour. A plumber working in maintenance for the federal government earned $18 an hour, while an agency charges $26 an hour. A carpenter working in maintenance for the federal government made $17 an hour, while an agency charges $25 an hour for the same services.

It is not true that contracting out saves on space and equipment. In the national capital, hundreds of contractors work in federal government offices and use the equipment and facilities paid for by Canadian and Quebec taxpayers.

It is time to stop this waste. In 1991, contracting out in the public service cost $5 billion. Between 1984 and 1985 and from 1992 to 1993, these costs rose by 7.5 per cent on average compared with 5.3 per cent for other government operating expenditures.

According to a recent report, contracting–out costs amounting to $2.9 billion in 1984–85 rose to $5 billion in 1992–93, about twice as much. I will resume my speech after Question Period.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments made by the hon. member and his colleagues. They always talk about duplication, waste and transparency.

In this respect, I think that the federal government has made a considerable effort to open up the process. In fact, we have an Open Bidding Service or OBS whereby even opposition members, small entrepreneurs and big businesses are invited to bid on federal government contracts, in order to provide services to businesses in your ridings.

I can even give some examples. In my riding of Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine, fishermen often submit tenders to provide various services to the federal government. For instance, bids have been solicited for providing CIDA with cases of herring. So I can tell you this: Because of the quality of their products and their competitive prices, Magdalen Islands fishermen got—

The Speaker: Order. It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

TERRY FOX RUNS FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, Terry Fox runs have now spread around the world but I am delighted that the runs are still thriving in parts of Canada like Peterborough that Terry visited on his own run.

This year more than $17,000 was raised by the city of Peterborough run organized by Doug Boden and his committee. Peterborough schools raised over $90,000. My thanks to everyone involved.

In the tiny village of Havelock, which had close personal ties with Terry during his run, more than $10,000 was raised through the amazing efforts of Ernie Hamilton. Our thanks to the village of Havelock, the townships of Belmont and Methuen, the Havelock Legion and all those involved in this remarkable effort.

Special thanks to the students of Havelock, Belmont and Methuen Public School for their $246.

Terry Fox is still raising money for cancer research.

[*Translation*]

FEDERALISM

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, leaks of the working discussion paper to be used by the Minister of Human Resources Development confirm for us that the ghosts of centralizing federalism are on the move again. These ghosts which we had hoped to see disappear forever are supposedly preparing to cut $2.3 billion in transfer payments to the provinces for post–secondary education so that the federal government can meddle further in this field of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

Why does this government want greater visibility for what it does in fields of exclusive provincial jurisdiction? Does the federal government want to give the impression that it is in a better position to solve the existing problems?

In both cases, the federal government is showing complete disregard for the provinces' ability to act and members of the Bloc Quebecois do not want to support that idea.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, on October 2 the Ottawa *Sun* reported that a man convicted of a savage murder in 1976 will be given a second chance at early parole because the Supreme Court ruled that the crown consistently and improperly appealed to the jury's passions during his first hearing.

The court has decided that this killer who stabbed his victim 132 times and used five different knives in the process deserves a second chance. What about his victim? What about her chances? What about her chances to live a full and happy life? She got no second chance.

It is time to give law abiding Canadians a second chance, a second chance to regain faith in our criminal justice system. It is time to close the loopholes and throw out the bleeding heart liberals who so frequently allow such dangerous offenders back into society.

For crimes as savage as this, Canadians demand that a life sentence must indeed mean life with no second chance.

* * *

PARLIAMENTARY PAGES

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce): Mr. Speaker, it is a particular honour for me to rise today in recognition of our parliamentary pages. Parliamentary pages have served parliamentarians since Confederation in 1867. Prime Ministers Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Lester B. Pearson, Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent were served by distinguished young Canadians.

Their many duties include carrying messages, Order Papers and *Hansard* to members' desks, even the occasional glass of water.

At one time the opportunity of participating in this program was a privilege only extended to young men. In 1974 this practice was changed to include young women who also serve us today.

There are 42 pages in the House of Commons program today. Each and every province of Canada is represented. These young students set an example for all young Canadians. One of them is Roger Label who comes from my riding of Huron—Bruce, more particularly Port Elgin.

The pages are hardworking and dedicated individuals. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members of Parliament to thank them for their work and their support.

* * *

NATIVE COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, September 30 I had the honour of attending the 20th Annual General Assembly of the Native Council of Nova Scotia. This three day conference offered an ideal opportunity for Nova Scotia's off reserve Mi'kmaq population to participate in discussions on how best to achieve aboriginal self–government.

In conjunction with this conference the province of Nova Scotia announced it has initiated a tripartite forum in order to examine major native issues. This is the first of its kind in Canada. I am proud of the role all parties are playing in order to find positive, proactive solutions.

I applaud the work being accomplished by this council in promoting positive change. We must now lend our support to the Mi'kmaq nation as it moves toward a more traditional role of governing itself.

* * *

CELIAC AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the House a disease that is not at all exciting or high profile but which is tragic all the same. The week of October 2 to 8 has been designated as Celiac Awareness Week by the Canadian Celiac Association.

Celiac disease is a medical condition in which the absorptive surface of the small intestine is damaged by gluten, a common substance found in all bread, wheat, rye and oat products. The result is an inability to absorb nutrients, proteins, vitamins and minerals vital to growth and normal health.

Celiac disease affects 20,000 Canadians. It is a lifelong condition whose treatment involves a gluten free diet. That means these people cannot eat pastas, breads, or any other baked goods containing any source of gluten whatsoever.

• (1405)

The Canadian Celiac Association promotes awareness of celiac disease. It offers services to alleviate problems faced by persons with celiac disease in obtaining expedient diagnosis and accurate information and support.

I wish to take this opportunity to salute the Canadian Celiac Association for its efforts on behalf of a disease which is not a high profile one.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BLOC QUEBECOIS FUNDRAISING

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, a headline in *La Presse* today suggests that the Bloc Quebecois is refusing to release its financial statements and the names of its contributors.

The Bloc Quebecois wants to clear up these inaccurate allegations. We are now barely halfway through its first fiscal year as a recognized political party; next spring, the Bloc will submit its first financial report containing the list of donors for the period from the 1993 election to the end of 1994.

The list of donors who have given over $100 to the Bloc Quebecois is now available on request from the party's Montreal office. The Bloc accepts donations only from individuals and limits their contributions to $5,000 a year. It respects the spirit of the Quebec law, which was the basis of a motion that the Liberals refused to pass last week.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT NEWS RELEASES

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, this month a news release from the Western Economic Diversification Fund crossed my desk announcing a grant of $39 million. The final line of the release said: "This announcement is an example of how this government is prioritizing its spending so that it can better serve Canadians by making efficient use of their tax dollars".

I inquired about that statement. I discovered that the Privy Council Office has ordered this sentence to be placed at the end of every government news release having to do with funding. Since when is this kind of partisan statement news? This is nothing more than political advertising. Decrees of this type insult the civil service, forcing it to ignore impartiality.

For the sake of the morale in the public service, I ask the government to rescind this order immediately, leave the political rhetoric where it belongs: in the dusty unread portions of its own little red book and not foisted upon our independent civil service.

Spending of this kind has brought our national debt now to $532,956,930,422.47.

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[*Translation*]

MERGER OF RADIO MUTUEL AND TÉLÉMÉDIA

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, after 40 years, five months and one week on the air, CJMS 1280, long known as Montreal's news leader, ceased operations. Along with it, six other stations of the Radio Mutuel network in Quebec City, Hull, Trois–Rivières, Chicoutimi and Sherbrooke went out of existence.

This loss deals a heavy blow to the regions, which thus lose some power and where it is increasingly important to strengthen and diversify the news available to the public instead of reducing it. This merger of Radio Mutuel and Télémédia seems to concentrate the news media too much, and the very security of democracy in the regions is at stake.

I therefore ask the CRTC to pay close attention to this issue before agreeing to this merger.

* * *

[*English*]

CHILD POVERTY

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, a new report by the Canadian Institute of Child Health details the unacceptable levels of child poverty in this country.

Poor children are more likely to die at birth and more likely to suffer from low birth weight, chronic health problems and psychiatric disorders.

I urge the Minister of Human Resources Development and the government to put Canadian children first when undertaking the upcoming social security reforms. Canadian children have been neglected. It is time to show real leadership and humanity. It is time to improve the lives of Canadian children and their families.

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, currently the environment committee is reviewing the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. One aspect of the review which has great potential is the consideration of the introduction of economic instruments.

Economic instruments can provide the incentive required for industry to adopt the philosophy of pollution prevention. They do offer the potential of changing behaviour and preserving the

environment for future generations. By providing the incentive to improve technology we not only prevent pollution in Canada but develop technologies that may be exported throughout the world.

• (1410)

Pollution knows no boundaries or jurisdictions. I call upon all levels of government to work together to address our environmental concerns and implement pollution prevention legislation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs compared the repayment of Quebec for the referendum costs to a fixed wrestling match. Defending Quebec taxpayers' interests is not a game. If there is a wrestling match, as claimed by the minister, it is because he himself tried to act like a bully.

It is not the first time that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs makes a blunder. After the disgraceful episode related to the telephone conversation between Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Parizeau, and the referendum episode, during which he arrogantly claimed that the federal owed nothing to Quebec, he now persists in demanding that Mr. Parizeau, and no one else, be Quebec's representative on the so–called Team Canada going to Asia.

* * *

[*English*]

"OCTOBRE"

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, the film "Octobre" is an example of extreme tolerance to protect the free expression of opinions in Canada. Tolerance in this country is being stretched to the limit with daily threats of separation.

"Octobre" is a separatist film, funded once again on the backs of Canadian taxpayers. The federal government spent $1.4 million to propagate a lie. The National Film Board gave $400,000 and Telefilm Canada gave a million dollars to fund this flimsy stab at accuracy.

The facts are simple: Pierre Laporte was murdered by separatist terrorists and now federal tax dollars are being used to glorify and distort this senseless murder by a separatist gang of murderers and thieves.

To reduce the cold–blooded murder of Pierre Laporte to something as intellectually fraudulent as "Octobre" is appalling and to provide Canadian tax dollars to accomplish it is scandalous. The pathos and emotions of his murderers are irrelevant.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FEDERALISM

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, the world is in constant evolution. Changes occur everywhere and people easily adapt.

However, we do not see that evolution with the government. Why insist on maintaining an uncompromising, static, hermetic and rigid, if not obsolete, federalism? The time has come to be more open and flexible. What is the government waiting for to end the status quo in its relations with the provinces? For goodness sake, try to be more modern in your federalist approach! The government should take heed of the legitimate claims made by provinces, including Quebec, because they reflect modernism and common sense.

The word "evolution" is not part of the vocabulary of mandarins and some elected representatives display a lack of thoughtfulness. Everywhere in this country there is a consensus in favour of decentralization. The time has come for the government to give back to Quebec and other provinces the powers which are theirs under the Constitution.

* * *

[*English*]

LIBERAL BACKBENCHERS

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, last week at a press conference in Toronto the leader of the Reform Party said that Liberal backbencher MPs from Ontario are not going to bat for their province because they do not want to do anything that could put them at odds with party policy.

The hon. member for Calgary Southwest and indeed all members of the Reform Party should realize that Ontario Liberal MPs are simply following the will of over 69 per cent of Ontarians who support the government in its policies.

The next time the leader of the Reform Party says that people in Ontario do not think the Liberals are working for them, he should take into consideration the opinion of over 69 per cent of Ontario residents who disagree with him.

Is the leader of the Reform Party really suggesting that Ontario Liberal MPs should solely represent the 7 per cent of Ontarians who support Reform Party ideology?

* * *

WORD ON THE STREET

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organizers, participants and sponsors of the fifth annual Word on the Street book and magazine fair which was held on Sunday, September

24 in my riding. It is a celebration of our culture and excellence in Canadian writing. More important, it draws to our attention the importance of literacy.

This year a crowd of over 100,000 filled Queen Street West to browse the many exhibits by merchants, publishing houses and the numerous groups promoting literacy and learning.

As we all know, if Canada is to grow and prosper all Canadians must have the tools to reach their potential. The ability to read and write is fundamental to allow us as a nation to succeed and compete internationally.

Next year, thanks to funding from the federal government and our commitment to the national literacy program, Word on the Street will expand nationally to Vancouver and Halifax where parallel festivals will make this a truly national event.

* * *

• (1415)

TRACADIE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the new MLA–elect to the New Brunswick riding of Tracadie on his truly decisive victory during the by–election on September 27.

The provincial riding of Tracadie resides in the federal riding of Acadie—Bathurst. This seat has traditionally been a Liberal stronghold for 82 years. The provincial Liberals have called the seat their rock of Gibraltar.

The margin of victory, 1,364 votes, is clearly an incredible win for the Conservative Party. The people defeated the provincial Liberals because they have not improved the economy, their policies are hurting our job creation and they are just not listening. The people have spoken and have said enough is enough.

The Conservative Party is alive and well in New Brunswick and the rock of Gibraltar has fallen.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, the government's review of social policy should be accompanied by a review of the policies which really caused the deficit. Social spending in Canada is not out of line with what is spent in other developed countries. It is how we finance that spending that needs a hard look.

On the revenue side, successive Canadian governments have given up billions of dollars in the form of tax breaks of one kind or another, starting with John Turner's budgets in the mid–1970s. On the monetary policy side, a policy of high interest rates combined with a diminishing of the role of the Bank of Canada in the financing of Canada's debt has led to a deplorable dependence on foreign lenders and bond holders.

Of course on the economic side, the so–called free trade and free market fetish has destroyed hundreds of thousands of jobs and stressed the social system designed for less stupid economic policies.

The government would do well to look at these things rather than blaming social programs and/or their recipients for our fiscal problems.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's refusal to compromise, in the case of the Team Canada trade mission to China, is leading straight to a useless confrontation between Ottawa and the new government in Quebec. Yesterday, the Prime Minister again stubbornly refused to let Mr. Parizeau send one of his ministers instead.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that Mr. Parizeau, who has just been elected with a mandate to put Quebec back on track, has more pressing priorities than spending 15 days with him in China?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, when we discussed these plans in December among first ministers, it was decided we would work together, and the Premiers said it was a very good idea for those who were able to do so to accompany me on this trip.

At the time, we thought about three or four would be coming along. Since then, there has been a lot of interest from the business community, and there will be a large number of people on this trip, including quite a few from Quebec.

During the summer, some Premiers who thought they would not be able to come had asked to be replaced. They were told that those who could would come along and as for the others, it was just too bad. In any case, this is a Canadian delegation that will include a large number of business people. There will be twice as many as we had planned. Canada, Quebec and the other provinces will be represented by the business people on the trip and by the Prime Minister of Canada, who also happens to be a Quebecer.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, if we look at this logically and ignore the politics, it is hard to explain the Prime Minister's stubborn attitude. Could it be that after being forced to pay the bill for Charlottetown, which he had refused to do, for no good reason, he is now trying to turn around and show English Canada that he can hold his own against Quebec's demands, even if they are legitimate?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should explain that the trip will involve only five or six days in China, not two weeks. After that, I am going to Hong Kong, then to the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation Council conference in Indonesia and, finally, to Vietnam. The business part of the trip is the visit to China, which will take three or four days. This is to create jobs. I am prepared to co–operate with all governments. As for the money we paid last week, we made sure that the promise made to Quebec was a genuine promise. I made that decision very carefully.

• (1420)

The Leader of the Opposition should have the courtesy to rise in the House and thank me for reversing the decision of the previous government, which did not want to pay. This was a case of Mr. Mulroney having said something in private but never having mentioned it, nor did Ms. Campbell, to the Conservative government at the time. I dealt with the problem. I am not afraid of how English Canada will react, on the contrary. All Canadian editorial writers approved what we did, with very few exceptions. The rest felt that we made the right decision. If people want to criticize me for being careful to avoid turning this into a controversy, I accept that criticism, but I can never be too careful with taxpayers money.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister better not think he can silence the Bloc just because he paid Quebec the money it was due, and very reluctantly at that.

[*English*]

Can the Prime Minister not see that his obstinacy will seriously undermine the credibility of Canada's commercial delegation to China by excluding the two governments of Ontario and Quebec which represent more than 60 per cent of the Canadian population?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are not excluding anybody. It is a federal initiative. I am leading the delegation. I have offered provincial premiers to come with me.

At the beginning there were very few who thought they could come along, but enthusiasm has developed over the months with a growing number of business people coming from all over Canada. There is a large delegation of Quebec business people coming who have confidence. They want to be with me to work and create jobs for the people of Quebec. I am sorry the premier of Quebec and the premier of Ontario cannot come. They are not obliged to be there because I am going there representing all Canadians.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): I would be delighted to represent the interests of the Bloc Quebecois as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's natural talent for generating conflict between the federal government and the government of Quebec has been in evidence for some time now. When he is not sticking his nose in someone else's jurisdiction, he is putting his foot in it.

Does the Prime Minister of Canada not realize that by choosing who must represent the governments of Quebec or Ontario, he is interfering directly in an area of responsibility exclusive to the heads of these governments, and that it is none of his business?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, last December the provincial premiers and myself reached an amicable agreement to work together. I invited them to come with me. Several of them said: "We would like to, but we cannot". Some of them called me to ask if they could send a representative and I told them they could not, because it had been agreed that the heads of each of these governments would be attending. So, I was not seeking confrontation. It is a Canadian delegation; the premiers have been invited and those who can are coming, and those who cannot are not.

I have been accused of provoking the provincial government, and yet the Minister of Finance, for example, is looking for ways to replace the GST and is seeking the co–operation of the provinces. But the government of Quebec has already said that it will not take part. When the Minister of Natural Resources, at the request of members of the Bloc Quebecois, attempts to do something for Canada's forestry development program, the Quebec Minister of Forestry refuses to attend the forestry ministers' conference in New Brunswick. Yet some very nice people show a willingness to work with the federal government. Last week, the premier of Quebec said that his sole objective in the months to come was to derail the federal machine.

• (1425)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about right now is the conduct of the Prime Minister of Canada.

My question is as follows: In requiring the premier of Quebec to bow to his diktat, does the Prime Minister not realize that he is heading towards an inevitable and pointless confrontation with the government of Quebec, given that the real objective, the unspoken objective is to isolate the sovereign government of Quebec and exclude it from his federal mission?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, frankly, this is an exaggeration. The decision not to allow substitutes was taken last December. There was a Liberal government in power at the time, and I wish this had not changed. I did not pick the election date, and if the premier of Quebec is unable to leave Quebec for a few days to come to China with us, then Quebecers should tell themselves that we will be ably represented by Quebec businessmen and by a

member from Quebec who also happens to be the Prime Minister of Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

THE DEFICIT

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting in this House that the government and the Bloc fight over who is going on a trip when the finances of this country are in grave difficulty.

The finance minister has indicated in this House that the savings from the social policy review would go toward reducing the deficit. The Deputy Prime Minister has said that the savings from the social policy review would not go toward reducing the deficit.

Will the Prime Minister indicate to this House whether the savings from the social policy review will go to reducing the deficit, yes or no?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the member will have his answer in reading the document.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, just last Thursday in this assembly the Minister of Finance said the savings from the social policy review would go to cut spending and indicated that to this assembly.

Would the Prime Minister indicate whether that is the policy of the government? If it is not it should be made clear to Canadians here today.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the avid interest of the hon. member in the matter of social reform.

I would say it comes about nine months too late because the fact of the matter is we set out very clearly the fiscal parameters as applied to the social reform program in the February budget.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, the government does not want to tell the Canadian people where it stands on this issue and whether it is ready to face its responsibilities.

Will the Minister of Finance indicate whether his economic statement which I understand is to be released in mid–October will advise the Canadian people that the government has enough courage to reduce spending in social policy areas to deal with the deficit of this nation?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec): Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of statements from the government. They have been very consistent on the fact that we regard social security reform as a means of making this a more cost effective and efficient country and of delivering services to Canadians in by far the most efficient way possible.

We also understand the pressures that are on us. I would quote, for instance, from the minister of human resources when he referred the other day to the massive debts that must be reduced.

• (1430)

Then he said that if we do not accept that reality we are going to have the bond dealers in New York dictating our social policy. The one difference between that side of the House and this is that we understand that our economic and social sovereignty is in doubt and we are not going to let anybody dictate to us the direction that this country ought to take.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The minister is preparing to table nothing more than a discussion paper tomorrow, while he had promised to come up by last April with a plan of action setting the course for government social program reform. In addition, because of objections raised by several provinces, this reform project is already far behind schedule.

Will the minister not recognize that tabling a mere discussion paper only confirms his failure to develop a real plan of action setting the course for government social program reform?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): No, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Mr. Speaker, are we to understand from this "no" that under the cover of broad consultation hides the minister's real objective, namely to cut $4 billion in transfer payments to the provinces and benefits paid to individuals?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it appears that the hon. member is suffering from a case of premature agitation.

I would suggest that the best solution to that ailment is to wait until tomorrow to see what the paper really says and what we really propose.

IMMIGRATION

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, the immigration minister's so–called public consultation process is now over.

I trust that in addition to special interest groups the minister has consulted with Dr. Don Devoretz, a leading immigration expert, who says that the family reunification policy has lowered the success of today's immigrants.

Is this minister committed to acting upon the will of Canadians as expressed in poll after poll as well as the findings of experts? Will he substantially reduce the level of immigration in Canada?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, not only was Don Devoretz an invited guest at our two–day conference, he was also a member of a working group. We looked very seriously at the work that he has been able to generate in British Columbia. He is certainly a leading advocate in terms of some of the economic ties with immigration.

It should also be noted that he said very clearly that immigration helps this country and that when one looks at the tax system, and these are his words, immigrants have paid more into the tax system than they have taken in social benefits.

When we reflect on some of the things that he has said, we can adjust this to everything he has said.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, if we look specifically at the report perhaps part of this was taken out of context.

The minister's own employees have called for lowering the numbers in two separate reports. So have his government backbenchers. Ontario's NDP government has sent a very strong message to either cut the numbers or double the integration grants.

Will this minister admit that he perhaps is not listening to anybody, not the experts, his backbenchers nor the civil servants or even other governments and certainly not to Canadians in general. His million dollar immigration consultations have been a farce.

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member should wait until the government announces the levels on or before November 1 and then perhaps accuse the government of not listening or not acting.

I would tell the hon. member that the consultation process has never ever been as open as the one that we have been engaged in for the last eight months. Never before have thousands of people been involved rather than 120. Never before have 30,000 information kits been distributed.

The process that we embarked upon was taken seriously and has yielded a lot of good results that will help this government and not hinder when we present those levels in this Chamber.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The government has not tried to stop speculation that RRSPs may be taxed starting with the next federal budget. The Minister of Finance himself fuels the uncertainty about this possibility that some observers call reactionary, outrageous and odious.

• (1435)

Does the Minister of Finance not agree that by fuelling the uncertainty about the future of RRSPs, he makes it much harder for thousands of middle–class taxpayers to make the extremely important retirement–planning decisions required at this time of year?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I said many times that I would not make specific comments or suggestions about the budget before tabling it. I think it is the fifth time the hon. member has asked the same question. I do not understand how he can accuse me of wanting to fuel the uncertainty.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance not realize that by thinking of taxing RRSPs, he gives a clear signal that he has chosen the option of raising taxes instead of doing what everyone expected of him, that is, cutting government expenditures?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I said very clearly that government spending must be cut and I can hardly wait for the hon. member, who is on the finance committee, to make very specific suggestions as to where we should cut.

* * *

[*English*]

REFUGEES

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, in 1985 the Supreme Court ruled that section 7 of the charter applies to everyone that is on Canadian soil. The Reform Party has argued that refugee claimants must be heard in a manner that is humanitarian and fair but which does not tie up the judicial system with endless legal wrangling.

Will the minister of immigration agree that it could be necessary to amend the Constitution in order to limit the ability of non–residents to endlessly tie up our refugee determination and legal systems with appeals?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): No, I do not, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): I have a supplemental, Mr. Speaker.

Taxpayers are tired of paying for endless legal aid appeals to support those ordered out of the country. The minister's negative reaction is especially ironic since in 1986 he went on record saying that in order to gain control of our refugee system refugee camps might have to be built in Canada to restrict the movement of refugee claimants.

An hon. member: What?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hanger: What section of the charter can the minister cite to defend that idea?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first question stands.

They talk about judicial wrangling. His colleague from Vancouver regularly asks about the Mendoza file. The federal government appealed to the Federal Court. Yesterday the Federal Court overturned the decision and ordered a new hearing.

The judicial system is working. He cannot have it both ways.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEFENCE INDUSTRY CONVERSION

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, extending the forestry sub–agreement has nothing to do with whether Quebec is present at a negotiating table; this government made a formal commitment to renew the sub–agreement and should respect it. If the Prime Minister has forgotten, he should ask his minister responsible for regional development in Quebec, to whom I address my question.

Following the closure of military bases, the Maritimes received $20 million in compensation, Ontario $8 million, the western provinces $5 million and Quebec only received a meagre $200,000 for the loss of 1,000 jobs.

How can the minister responsible for regional development in Quebec justify the fact that Quebec got only crumbs as compensation for the closure of its military bases? Are we to understand that the minister has simply not done his job to defend Quebec's interests?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the figures show that Quebec has certainly received its fair share.

• (1440)

As for the meeting on forestry, the Minister of Natural Resources has already indicated in this House that she and I are ready and intend to hold these meetings in the near future. It is simply a matter of proper scheduling.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, if Quebec got its fair share, how can the minister responsible for regional development in Quebec justify the fact that the financial compensation for the closure of military bases in Canada is accompanied by economic diversification assistance, while that is not the case for Quebec?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, it is the case.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN NATIONAL

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

The recent offer of CP to purchase the CN Rail network in eastern Canada has raised some major concerns. This is primarily because CP has already abandoned much of its routes in eastern Canada and indeed is competing with Canadian National Rail with its own D and H line which runs from New York City to Montreal.

Given this track record, what assurances can the minister give that this or any other offer will not lead to the abandonment of this main rail line which is so crucial to economic development in places like Moncton, the port of Halifax and indeed all of eastern Canada?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague would know that if the unsolicited offer from CP Rail was accepted by the government it would have the effect of privatizing all rail activity east of Winnipeg. That is why the government recognizes that we have to look at the unsolicited bid from CP Rail on a businesslike basis. It also involves a very serious policy question. That is one of the reasons why we have asked members on the government side of the House to look into other options including the commercialization of CN with employee participation.

As a fundamental part of government policy we recognize that it is absolutely essential to have a rail line from Halifax to Vancouver. That is the policy the government will pursue.

SALINAS MENDOZA

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Immigration to come into this House and brag about getting involved with Salinas Mendoza is despicable.

Salinas Mendoza has had 12 criminal convictions in Canada since 1989. A young woman in my riding agreed to a stay of sexual assault charges against Mendoza on the condition that he be deported to El Salvador and he was. Now he is back claiming refugee status.

I have been involved in numerous hearings and trials on this fellow costing over $250,000 since he has come back.

My question to the minister is whose interests come first in a refugee hearing in this country, Mr. Minister, those of the taxpaying—

The Speaker: I would remind and ask all members to please direct their question through the Chair.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I would like to ask the minister of immigration whose interests come first in a refugee hearing in this country, those of the taxpaying, law abiding citizen or those of the refugee criminal applicant?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will give the member the definition of despicable. Despicable means exploiting personal tragedies to simply score some political marks in this Chamber.

The answer to that question clearly is justice. In Bill C–44 we are trying to make that balance even more identifiable. Bill C–44 gives us the opportunity for the first time that when we know an individual has a criminal background to stop that refugee process and put them to immigration inquiry. Thus far, given the current legislation, that has not been possible.

We are putting into practice in Bill C–44 the things this member talks about but is not prepared to support.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, this is truly unbelievable. After all the bragging this minister has done here, I find out that Mr. Mendoza skipped his bail hearing this morning and has now walked after all of this.

Where does the minister fit in on all of the changes he is working on refugee hearings? I cannot believe this fellow—

• (1445)

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this is a side show to the circus and the member is the clown.

The Speaker: Order. My colleagues, of course all questions should be addressed to the responsible minister.

I would ask hon. members to please be considerate of one another and not let these questions or answers degenerate into simply name calling. I will permit the hon. minister to continue his answer but I would like him to consider perhaps lowering the tone just a little bit as we go along.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, if the member is interested in facts, the facts are these. This individual came to this country illegally. In April of this year we started an immigration inquiry. The adjudicator agreed with deportation but disagreed with detention. We appealed that decision on detention to the Federal Court.

Yesterday the Federal Court quashed the decision of the immigration adjudicator and set another immigration adjudication hearing today so that we can seek that detention.

The government has acted and acted properly.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEFENCE INDUSTRY CONVERSION

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry. Last August, Expro, located in Valleyfield, laid off about 150 employees. That company, which specializes in explosives, lost a big contract in the U.S., as military markets were collapsing all over the world.

What is the government doing to keep Expro from closing and save the 300 jobs at stake?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked several questions about the defence industry and the changes it is undergoing. On Sunday evening, the member even made a short speech in English on that issue and I congratulate him for doing so.

I explained on several occasions that the government is not in the business of finding solutions for every company experiencing problems. We are prepared to work with each of them to find new markets, ways of adjusting, strategies, as well as information. The idea is not to simply give money, as suggested several times by the hon. member.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to see that the minister did not listen to my speech until the end. Will he recognize that, because of a lack of true conversion strategy, more than 10,000 jobs are in jeopardy in the Montreal region? What is he waiting for to take action, as his government promised to do in the red book? We need a real industry conversion strategy and this is what my speech was all about.

[*English*]

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, it would seem that this member has a great deal of difficulty in understanding my answers.

The approach we are endeavouring to take is one that builds on the appropriate role of government, not only to create an environment in which entrepreneurialism can succeed but also in the defence sector to ensure that using the tools at our disposal we provide information, advice and strategy together with DIPP to try to enable firms to create dual use technologies and to move defence technologies to civilian use.

• (1450)

In the DIPP context—the member knows this very well—of 41 applications approved by the government, 39 have been for civilian or dual use purposes. That is a defence conversion strategy.

* * *

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, during his imaginative, if not wholly accurate, oration on the Pearson development contract delivered during the recent debate on amendments to Bill C–22, the Minister of Transport stated that the contract on terminals 1 and 2 was not a good deal; then he went on to misquote my position during question period yesterday.

If the minister thinks the current contract, which would have seen $750 million of private sector money that the government does not have spent on development of terminals 1 and 2 was not a good deal, would he please tell the House and all the Pearson airport users operating in unacceptable facilities what alternative plan he has that will quickly get them into acceptable facilities?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in time truth will out. Obviously what we have here, as we deal with Bill C–22, are not Tories in sheeps'clothing, but in wolves' clothing. The hon. member knows we quoted from his press conference where he said there is nothing wrong with the Pearson deal.

The Reform Party and the transportation critic for the Reform Party are in the minority of about 35 people in the entire nation who think the Pearson deal was a good deal.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, we do not know one way or the other because the Liberals are covering the whole thing up.

The minister's national airport program will take until 1997 to establish, at which time the process of funding and constructing the now overdue rebuild of terminals 1 and 2 at Pearson will start.

Can the minister honestly tell the House and the users of terminals 1 and 2 that it is okay to wait until the next century for facilities needed now, or alternatively tell the House where the high spending Liberal government is going to get another three–quarter to one billion taxpayers' dollars to spend on an airport it ultimately wants to privatize?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable that in the same question the hon. member talks about the free spending or high spending Liberal government and asks where we are going to find the money.

The transportation critic has just said that he does not know whether it is a good deal or not. As a matter of fact he said, "do not know one way or the other". That, Mr. Speaker, I believe.

One thing we will make sure of is that while the members of the Reform Party do not know one way or another whether paying $445 million to the consortium is a good deal or not, we know it is not and we are going to make sure that the bill goes through in the other place one way or another.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard): Mr. Speaker, Canada, through its peacekeepers, is currently participating with distinction in numerous UN peacekeeping missions, including in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Haiti.

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. According to various reliable sources, Burundi will be the next theatre of a very serious ethnic conflict. What is Canada doing to prevent new conflicts?

[*English*]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has reason to be concerned about the situation in Burundi as our eyes are riveted on the crisis in Rwanda. The government is committed to trying to take note of early warnings and prevent conflicts from arising.

To that end, in July we appointed a special envoy to central Africa. Since July, this envoy, Mr. Dusseault, has been twice in Burundi, met with authorities there and encouraged them in their negotiations and dialogue.

• (1455)

Earlier last month I was in Ethiopia and visited with Secretary General Salim Salim of the Organization of African Unity and said that Canada was willing to help them in their new committee that is focusing on conflict resolution.

I am also planning a trip into Rwanda and Burundi this fall to make sure that Canada is on top of this important issue.

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

The chairman of the review committee overlooking CSIS, Mr. Jacques Courtois, recently said that infiltration activities related to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers dated back to 1984, before CSIS was set up. However, according to CBC, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service relied on informant Grant Bristow to infiltrate that union in 1989.

Will the Solicitor General confirm that CSIS tried to infiltrate CUPW in 1989?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, CSIS denies categorically attempting to infiltrate the postal workers union.

However, I am informed that the Security Intelligence Review Committee will be reviewing the most recent allegations made on television last night on this matter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, how can the Solicitor General rely on the Security Intelligence Review Committee to shed light on this issue, when its own chairman is being contradicted by CBC's findings?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think the allegations of the hon. member relate to earlier statements by the chairman. What we are talking about are reports of stories on CBC television last night, which I am informed by the Security Intelligence Review Committee will be looked into by them.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, according to the immigration minister, a quarter million immigrants into Canada is no problem. But the Minister of National Revenue knows that there are a group of people who have come into Canada, the so–called astronaut families, who establish residences of convenience here and then avoid paying taxes.

Because these people are giving a bad name to the honest, upright, upstanding immigrants who make the majority of immigrants, what is the minister going to do to resolve this situation?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, we certainly do not attempt to target any particular group, be they from any particular part of the world or living in any part of Vancouver.

I would suggest to the hon. member that we are, as he knows from press reports, continuing to follow up any leads or information we may have of any individual, whether from that particular group or any other to make sure they pay their fair share of taxes.

I have made it perfectly clear in the House on many occasions that we intend to make sure that taxes are paid and we have a level playing field in Canada.

With respect to the question of people who live in Canada and work overseas, I believe a provincial court judge in Vancouver on Monday of this week gave a decision which found a person guilty and I believe charged him some $140,000 in fines and evasion of taxes.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, that is the wonderful world according to the Liberal front bench. The reality is that with a quarter of a million people coming into Canada this minister's resources are being flooded.

The Vancouver Sun columnist Barbara Yaffe on September 29 said:

> Interestingly, most of the calls I have had in recent days about this issue have come from the Chinese Canadian community who express some knowledge of the tax evasion and they say they are outraged.

I ask the minister again, can he tell us, considering that he has obviously limited resources, what is the real agenda of the Liberal government by flooding Canada with too many immigrants?

• (1500)

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is that Canada has too many immigrants. We could equally take his question as being that the Minister of National Revenue has too few inspectors and auditors.

We carry out as best as we can efforts to make sure that all Canadians, regardless of where they come from, obey the law with respect to paying their taxes. It is vital to do this to make sure that people generally throughout Canada recognize that it is a fair system and that there are not free loaders getting away with taking services and not paying their share. We do this regardless of whether people happen to be immigrants, recent immigrants, or whether they happen to be Canadians of long-standing.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1994

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill C–42, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts (miscellaneous matters), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to debate the second reading motion of Bill C–42. Bill C–42, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts (miscellaneous matters), is not to be confused with Bill C–40, the 1994 miscellaneous statute law amendment bill passed by the House on June 20. It was concerned with a variety of minor technical amendments to correct anomalies, inconsistencies and errors in federal statutes and to repeal provisions that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect.

That bill also made amendments of a minor, non–controversial and uncomplicated nature to a number of statutes. The bill we are concerned with today, which if passed this year will be known as the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1994, focuses mainly on the Criminal Code but also contains some amendments to the Canada Evidence Act, the Contraventions Act, the Mutual Legal Assistance and Criminal Matters Act and the Supreme Court Act.

While some of the proposed amendments might be considered technical, many are more significant and will result in improvements to our criminal justice system. A bill such as this one is long overdue.

Historically this bill and ones like it were introduced on a regular basis. However the last such bill was introduced in 1985. The Minister of Justice intends to return to the previous pattern. He anticipates bringing forward a second bill of this nature once Parliament has dealt with this one.

The primary source for most of these amendments is the criminal law section of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. The section is composed of delegates from each province, territory and the federal government and includes crown and defence lawyers. At annual meetings of the Uniform Law Conference, the section considers resolutions calling for amendments to the Criminal Code and other relevant statutes.

The other amendments in the bill originated from suggestions of the former Law Reform Commission of Canada, various judges, members of the bar, and federal and provincial departments and officials. These amendments, taken as a whole, represent significant changes to the criminal law aimed at increasing the efficiency of the justice system to the benefit of every Canadian.

• (1505)

When the Minister of Justice recently wrote provincial and territorial colleagues about the bill, he noted that each proposal fell within one or more of the categories said to be generally encompassed by the Uniform Law Conference resolutions.

In short, these seven categories cover proposals directed at, first, enhancing public confidence in our criminal justice system; second, making the Criminal Code provisions more efficient and more effective; third, implementing or achieving compliance with court decisions; fourth, filling perceived gaps in the Criminal Code; fifth, taking advantage of the advances in computer, communications and video technology; sixth, improving court procedures; and, seventh, ensuring greater fairness to the participants in the procedural process.

These categories illustrate laudable criminal law policy objectives and encompass the major themes of the bill. To date, the response we have received from the provinces to these proposals has been very positive.

I emphasize that the overall effect of these proposals will result in a more cost effective system of criminal justice while at the same time maintain or even improve the fundamental fairness of our justice.

The amendments to the Criminal Code are mostly procedural. Their cumulative effect will be to modernize procedure to make the Criminal Code more effective and more efficient. Procedural proposals range from permitting the Attorney General of Canada to take over private prosecutions for offences under federal legislation other than those under the Criminal Code, to proposals permitting the greater use of telephone, video technology and fax for certain procedural matters.

Under these amendments, authority would be given to permit judges to finish trials in progress on appointment to another court. When a judge has to be replaced during the trial for other reasons it would be possible for a new judge to carry on without having to start over again in appropriate cases of course.

These particular proposals should help in maintaining public confidence in our criminal justice system. They will also ensure greater fairness to participants, particularly the victims and the witnesses.

Other changes are aimed at making it easier for trial and appeal courts to establish rules of court. It will be easier to adjourn certain procedures when a judge is not available and it will be possible to arrange for a trial date upon committal after a preliminary hearing.

Changes to the Supreme Court Act would make it easier for the court to manage its workload and to remand cases to lower courts for further proceedings when that would be just in the circumstances.

Some proposals are directed at making improvements in the way in which some evidence issues are handled. For instance, several amendments would permit evidentiary proof by way of a certificate, thereby avoiding the need to require individuals to appear in person to testify. Other changes are directed at the manner in which evidence is to be obtained abroad and at ensuring that any such evidence is more readily admissible in Canadian proceedings.

Some amendments are aimed at increasing the use of technology, for instance permitting the use of a fax machine in limited circumstances. Another section would allow a person to appear by closed circuit television in some portions of a preliminary hearing.

A number of the proposals relate to arrest, pretrial release and other matters involving police practices and procedures. For instance, a significant improvement in the use of policing and court resources will be achieved by permitting police to release an arrested person on certain conditions restricting their liberty rather than as is now the case, having only the choice of releasing unconditionally or detaining an accused in custody until a hearing before the justice of the peace could be arranged.

Greater fairness to accused persons will be achieved through reducing unnecessary pretrial custody. Police will be able to spend more time on the beat preventing crime or detecting offenders rather than waiting in the corridors of courtrooms.

Perhaps the most significant changes which will contribute to a more effective and efficient criminal justice system are directed at trial procedures applicable to certain offences. The choice of trial procedure, summary conviction or indictable, would be given to the crown for the present indictable offences of assault causing bodily harm, unlawfully causing bodily harm and uttering threats to cause death or bodily harm.

The summary conviction maximum term of imprisonment for these offences as well as for the basic sexual assault offences would be 18 months instead of the normal six months for Criminal Code summary conviction offences.

• (1510)

This will relieve court congestion in the superior courts, reduce the strain on witnesses, particularly victims, and help contain the time needed to deal with many court cases to time periods required by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The changes will also send a strong signal to judges that significant punishment might be in order even for the minor instances of violent offences.

Similar benefits will be achieved by raising the monetary limit for theft and other property offences to $5,000 from $1,000. This is being done so that many more common offences related to property will be kept in the provincial court system, eliminating the need for preliminary hearings and jury trials for cases which rarely attract imprisonment.

There are proposals aimed at removing obsolete provisions or filling gaps created by changing circumstances. Gaps which presently exist with respect to publicity for certain pretrial proceedings would be closed.

It is important that the rights of accused persons to a fair trial before an impartial jury not be compromised by premature publicity of information which may or may not be relevant in admissible evidence.

The rights of witnesses and victims also require protection from the needless public disclosure of personal information. A prohibition would be created to ensure that sensitive material disclosed to the accused for the purposes of making a full answer in defence is not made public except for that purpose. This will serve to maintain the balance of interest between the right of the accused to a full answer in defence and the confidence that the public needs to encourage co–operation in criminal investigations and prosecutions.

The bill also seeks to enhance preventive measures already found in our law by proposing several changes aimed at making the peace bond process more effective. These changes will also ensure greater fairness to those participants in the criminal justice process who are in fear of threatened violence.

A peace bond is an undertaking given by a person on the order of a justice to be of good behaviour for a period of up to 12 months. It is a way of preventing a crime or, more important, the acts of violence constituting the crime from happening.

Their effectiveness will be improved by making violation of peace bonds punishable on indictment as well as on summary conviction, and by obliging justices to consider imposing specified conditions such as staying away from or prohibiting contact with the complainant. Police and others will also be able to apply for peace bonds on behalf of persons who are at risk of harm.

According to Statistics Canada's national survey on violence against women in 1993 three in ten women currently or previously married in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical and sexual violence at the hands of a marital partner. Almost one–half or 45 per cent of wife assault cases resulted in physical injury to the woman. The survey also showed that one–third of women who were assaulted by a partner feared for their lives at some point during the abusive relationship.

It is also important to indicate that children witnessed violence against their mothers in almost 40 per cent of the marriages with violence. According to the same survey, the police were only informed of about 26 per cent of wife assault cases.

These figures show there is a large number of women who are victims of various forms of assault. These provisions are important tools in trying to cope with domestic violence and will help implement one of the red book commitments to work effectively in keeping abusers away from women and children.

We have to start thinking of using our criminal justice system to prevent crime from happening rather than, as is more often the case now, picking up the pieces which are all too often the shattered remnants of human tragedy.

It is clear that the bill covers a wide range of matters and I have only touched on a small number of the matters dealt with in the over 100 clauses the bill contains. Many of the provisions are quite technical and may not attract attention in the course of debate, but together with those already outlined they are all aimed at improving the administration of criminal justice in Canada and at enhancing the confidence the public must have in our criminal law.

Efficiency of operation combined with effectiveness of operation must be enhanced in our administration of justice. It is our job as legislators to seek ways to improve our administration so that even better service is given to the Canadian public.

• (1515)

I am confident all the members of this House will be satisfied with the common sense benefits this bill provides. This bill is long overdue. It contains provisions which should be put in place as soon as possible. I very much hope it can be treated in a non–partisan manner and that it will be considered by the committee carefully but quickly.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to speak on Bill C–42. This bill contains over 100 amendments to the Criminal Code.

Certainly we know that crime is a national issue in the press these days. During the election constituents told me they wanted to see the Canadian government toughen up our criminal justice system and make it work for them rather than just seemingly for the criminal.

Canadians refer to the justice system as their criminal justice system because they own it. However many times in this House I have heard members of Parliament speak as if they were the only ones who had the expertise and they were the ones who were going to make the changes to it without wide consultation, without having broad political support or without really being accountable to the community.

I do ask: Does the application of the Criminal Code in present day represent mainstream Canadian values?

The spirit of this bill must be tied into Bill C–41 which is still at second reading stage. Canadians say they want to feel safe on their streets. Last week for example over 3,000 people turned out in Coquitlam, British Columbia to voice their concerns and frustrations over the Young Offenders Act.

Canadians are serious about protection. They are serious about appropriately denouncing crime. Newspapers are filled with reports of criminal activity. The public wants to know what can be done to curb what they see as an unacceptable level of crime.

We cannot wait around for crime to get out of control before we make changes. We must do what the public wants now. The Reform Party wants changes. We must remember that change begins with the recognition that a problem exists.

When I went through the bill I came across several interesting things I could not pass without making some comment. Bill C–42 is an acceptable bill but is far from being a perfect or great one. Some amendments will indeed strengthen the Criminal Code. However, Bill C–42 does frustrate me in parts.

For example, clause 28(3) of the bill states "everyone who commits a theft in relation to property, the value of which exceeds $5,000". This amendment would replace the word "one" with the word "five". If we were to look back to previous Parliaments with respect to this Criminal Code section we would find some very interesting things.

In 1954 the dollar indicated for theft over and theft under was $50. If someone were to be convicted of theft over $50 the punishment was an indictable offence. Consequently for the theft under $50 the punishment was a summary conviction. The next time this section was changed was in 1975 when any theft over $200 was an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for up to 10 years.

The law as we know it today was amended in 1985 to $1,000. The punishment is an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for up to 10 years for any theft over $1,000. For anything under $1,000 the punishment is a summary conviction.

The increase since 1954 certainly is amazing. From $50 to $200 is an increase of 400 per cent; $200 then to $1,000 is a 500 per cent increase; and $1,000 to $5,000 is again a 500 per cent increase. However in the 40 years that have passed it has totalled an increase of 10,000 per cent.

This is a softening of the law. If we were to use history as a benchmark I suppose the next amendment would make it $25,000. Incredulous. Someone could then steal all the furniture in my house and only get away with a summary conviction. This is not acceptable.

Property crimes in Canada have historically accounted for most Criminal Code offences. In fact in 1990 thefts over and under $1,000 comprised over two–thirds of all property crimes reported to the police. A StatsCanada report in 1990 indicates that all property offence categories recorded increased in 1990 over the previous year, including a 13 per cent rise in thefts of motor vehicles, a 9 per cent rise in break and enters, 8 per cent in possession of stolen goods, 8 per cent in theft over and under

$1,000 and 7 per cent in frauds. Interestingly enough this was the seventh consecutive year that an increase was recorded for theft of motor vehicles. In 1992 there were 823,748 theft under incidents reported in Canada. That made up almost one–half of all property crime for that year.

• (1520)

If the government now raises the dollar limit for theft under the numbers will increase and theft over will decrease, one would expect. What we will hear from the Liberals then is that serious thefts of crime are on the decrease, but are they really? I would not think so. If the same logic of thinking is to be followed, why not raise the limit to $100,000 if you really want to lower one area of the published crime rate? Instead of trying to create a deterrent for the crime the government is making this into a game of shuffling statistics.

The area of concern is the theft over category. From 1986, one year following the dollar cut off being raised to $1,000 until 1992, theft over had increased by 9 per cent. I am sure the government of the time felt that by raising the rate from $200 to $1,000 would help curb published property crime rates. Today with Bill C–42 the government hopes that by raising the limit from $1,000 to $5,000 this increase will help curb property crime rates in 1995 and beyond. The government should take a careful look back at history to see how things failed before charging ahead with only a hope that it is going to work.

The government should keep the dollar amount at $1,000 and continue with the same consequences therein. Strangely enough if a person were to go out today and steal a 28–inch television and a hi–fi VCR from an electronics store, they would be charged with an indictable offence and subject to a maximum of 10 years in prison. Consequently, if that person were to steal the same merchandise following the passage of this bill, their sentence might only be a summary conviction with a possible maximum of 18 months in prison. I would call that a reduction in the sentence and a softening of the law.

The government is telling criminals everywhere and the message is clear: "Here is your grand opportunity. Go and steal some big ticket items and we will barely slap you on the wrist". Getting softer with criminals is not going to reduce the crime rate. It sends the wrong message out to the community.

Capacity creates its own demand. In other words a legal vacuum is all too soon filled with the negative potential of human nature. The government wants the public to think it is getting tough with crime. However, when you look closely at this legislation you can see where the Liberal agenda is off the rails.

Bill C–42 proposes dual procedure offences that would allow the crown prosecutor to have the option to deal with a case either as an indictable offence or as a summary conviction. For example, assault causing bodily harm, unlawfully causing bodily harm, and uttering threats to cause death or bodily harm are all currently indictable offences, but if the crown so wishes it may change them to summary convictions under this bill.

I want to point out something I caught in the news release by the Minister of Justice when this bill was first tabled in the House. He was referring to the reasoning behind the dual procedure clause and the option. He stated that typically, a summary conviction procedure is quicker, more straight forward and involves less stress and inconvenience to victims and witnesses. If someone is assaulted and bodily harm is involved, am I to understand the minister believes the victim would rather see the offender get a light summary conviction and be out of jail in no time or perhaps no jail sentence at all rather than see real justice take place and make sure that the offender stays behind bars for a good long time?

Currently a summary conviction in the Criminal Code has a maximum penalty of six months in prison. Bill C–42 raises that maximum sentence to 18 months and for this I applaud the government. This harsher sentence will surely help to stop some of the crime that is plaguing our cities and towns. It provides the court with greater latitude for severity. Therefore the bill does have some valid amendments. As Her Majesty's loyal constructive opposition and alternative it is our duty to analyze the entire bill and to point out areas of concern as well as areas of support.

On a different note, we see technology changing before our eyes each and every day. I used to think the fax machine was an amazing tool until personal computers came along. Now I cannot believe how compact they have become. Sending a letter through the mail system was certainly the fastest and most efficient way to get a document from one place to another until E–mail and the information superhighway entered the workplace. We have to adapt to keep up with technology in order to remain effective.

• (1525)

Bill C–42 proposes that fax machines and closed circuit televisions be allowed at certain portions in hearings. This will surely help to lessen the cost of flying in witnesses from all parts of the country in order that they can attend a hearing. With closed circuit television, a witness can attend a hearing, be part of it even if they are a thousand miles away. This will cut costs and for that the government has done something correct. Now if it would only cut costs across the board, we would all be in better shape, would we not?

As a justice professional I have spent a great amount of time in the courtroom. A person giving evidence usually has had a choice of going to the witness stand either on oath or affirmation. However in seeing it firsthand so many times it was apparent that many were confused as to how to give evidence on this affirmation option. With this bill the affirmation is now clarified in the Criminal Code.

In another section there is a clause in this bill that would allow the police to obtain a warrant for a blood sample up to four hours following an accident. The current time period is two hours and this by no means is long enough. In speaking with police officers it is apparent they are inundated with logistics following an accident. If the person involved in an accident is unconscious but suspected of a blood alcohol level above the legal limit, the officer with the increase in time to four hours will have sufficient time to obtain a warrant in order to have a blood sample taken.

Drunk driving is a serious problem in Canada. Groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, better known as MADD, will certainly be happy with this provision amending the code. I see this as a good amendment to the Criminal Code one which reflects the current community mood.

There is one amendment that I would have especially liked to have seen in Bill C–42 but I did not find it. That is the development of a national registry of DNA samples taken from persons convicted of a serious crime. That serious crime could be first degree murder, voluntary manslaughter, child abuse, sexual offences, and so on, indictable offences.

The idea of banking information is not new. Under the Identification of Criminals Act and the Canada Evidence Act police have been banking fingerprint information and have used it extensively to track down possible suspects. Fingerprints are fundamental to the operation of the justice system and similarly then so should be DNA typing.

DNA typing has been used in the United States and is gaining notoriety in such cases as the one involving O.J. Simpson. With the exception of red blood cells, all cellular material in the human body can be typed for example, white blood cells, root hair, saliva, semen, skin and even bone. Since DNA is essentially the same from cell to cell, any part of the body can be compared to another part of the same body. With only minute samplings needed a police investigator is able to identify a victim much easier and therefore have a much more certain tool pointing to a suspect. Such hard evidence can defend as well as convict.

We want to create laws that will also save money as the justice system is overburdened and this could be one of them. Police investigations are extremely costly to the public purse and are very time consuming. With over 100 amendments in this bill the government passed over something that would have really aided the law enforcement officials to do a better job and to help protect the public.

In the United States, 21 states have enacted legislation to permit DNA banking in various degrees. In addition, seven other states have introduced bills dealing with this very issue. The American National Academy of Science stated that if DNA profiles of samples from a population were stored in computer databases, DNA typing could be applied in crimes without suspects. Investigators could compare DNA profiles of biological evidence samples with a database to search for suspects.

A British royal commission pointed out that a data bank would also enable unsolved earlier offences where DNA evidence had been found but not linked with the offender to be cleared up if DNA samples taken from a suspect in connection with a later offence matched the evidence found at the scene of an earlier crime.

If this government is serious about solving crime and bringing forth justice it will not sit idle and wait for the world to leave Canada behind in the dark ages of technology. We can demand a blood sample for impaired driving but we cannot do that for rape and murder. This does not make sense.

Another tough penalty I am encouraged to see in this bill is the increase in punishment for those who fail to remain at the scene of an accident. Currently the maximum is two years and this is quite unacceptable. An amendment in Bill C–42 will make it a possible five years.

• (1530)

In conclusion, this bill missed the mark in several areas. The over and under dollar value is way too high and is out of sync with what Canadians expect of the justice system. This is clearly a scheme by which the government wished to perhaps lower the crime rate in its published statistics. For example, dual procedures will only cause more criminals to walk the streets sooner and lawyers to get more of their clients through the courts. This is a clear softening of the law.

The biggest miss of this entire bill is its failure to include the national registry of DNA samples. The Minister of Justice has previously stated many of these changes, referring to amendments in Bill C–42, will lead to significant costs and time savings for the administration of justice and will assist the law enforcement officials to do their jobs effectively.

That is what he is claiming. My only remark to this would be does the minister really understand what law enforcement officials could use to save time and money? If he did then he certainly would have included DNA as a registry in Bill C–42 or Bill C–41.

We will support this bill at this stage. As a Reform member of Parliament I am committed to being the constructive alternative to the government. This bill has some amendments that will strengthen the Criminal Code. Again, the government has to

understand that victims of crime want to feel protected by the code because right now it seems that the only person who is protected is the offender.

For example, this week we have heard more cases going the wrong way in the community's eyes because of technical problems with the law. I encourage the government to bring forward more amendments, to give some of the many private members' bills a chance and give them an appropriate assent if it is unable to bring forward bills of its own.

During committee of the whole I will be moving an amendment to hold the line of the current standard in the Criminal Code. I hope our constructive help will be recognized by this government.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to make a speech. I want to clarify a few of the points that were brought up in the speech by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

First, with respect to the hybrid offences where it can be summary or indictable, in some cases the reason we want to have hybrid offences and proceed in a summary conviction is that the courts will not convict certain offenders on indictable offences. It is quite true that in many cases charges are not even brought where there are indictable offences, whereas if there were summary offences we would at least get the cases to court to get a conviction.

It remains with the judge as to the penalty. The fact of the matter is it may be a reduced penalty but in many cases a reduced penalty is better than no penalty at all. We want to have that flexibility.

With respect to the increase in the maximum on property offences from $1,000 to $5,000 that could be heard in provincial courts, it is the opinion of the Minister of Justice and myself that we want to have more of these cases heard in provincial court. They can be done more quickly. We have the expertise and the provincial court judges to hear them.

Because we are increasing from $1,000 to $5,000 does not mean there is going to be five times more work for the provincial court judges. There is going to be an increase, but there is going to be a corresponding decrease in the higher courts in the country. We feel it is going to be more efficient. We are going to have the same high level of justice. It is going to be less costly.

The other point concerns the national registry on the DNA. The hon. member makes a very good point. However, the reason it was not included is that there is a discussion paper now circulating on DNA. The Minister of Justice promised to give until November 20 for submissions on this discussion paper.

He is undertaking that new legislation will be brought forward, if not by the end of the year then early in the new year. This whole question of a registry is being reviewed along with other questions on DNA.

• (1535)

At this point I would like to move that we now move into committee of the whole. I think we will have unanimous agreement among all parties to proceed that way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilger in the chair.)

On clause 2:

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I think you would find consent to call clauses 2 to 19 as a block. I think they could all be carried at once. If you could call clause 20 we might deal with that.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is there consent to include clauses 2 to 19 and ask that they be carried?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clauses 2 to 19 inclusive agreed to.)

On clause 20:

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Chairman, I am going to be making a motion. I will move the motion first and then speak to it. I move:

> That clause 20 be amended by striking out the word "five" and substituting the word "one" and in paragraph (2) by striking out the word "five" and substituting the word "one".

• (1540)

He said: Mr. Chairman, the division between what is commonly known as theft under and theft over has been a demarcation in the courts which really sends a message to the community. It was not that long ago when theft under and theft over was $50. We then moved it to $200. Now in the percentage increase we are operating with the division of $1,000. I can just imagine the message that is going to send to my community when theft under procedures are going to be dealt with by theft under $5,000.

I can understand from the criminal justice administrative point of view the desirability of perhaps doing this to alleviate the procedures of proceeding by indictment, but it is not just the experts who own the criminal justice system. There is the educative role of the symbol of the message that the law sends to the community as to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. This amendment seems to be out of sync with the community mood and what is appropriate at this time.

I do not hear anything in the community that is suggesting that we have a real problem in the courts at this point that we must make this significant move from theft under $1,000 to theft under $5,000.

I question the basis as to what problem it is trying to solve. However, I also point out the serious message that it sends in a softening of the law to the community. I hope to hear from other members on this point.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Chairman, I understand what the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is saying. There is a concern among the public about crime, all types of crime at the present time. The public wants justice. It wants the justice system to react and deal with crime.

I do not want to say that property crime is not significant because it is extremely significant. Right now, however, the main concern is violent crime with a great many people in our cities. They want to make sure that our system can deal swiftly with violent crime.

If we move theft under $5,000 to the provincial courts as opposed to theft under $1,000, as is the situation now, that is not going to diminish justice in any way. All it is going to do is take some cases which are now tried by the superior courts and have them heard in the provincial courts.

The provincial court judges right now are of an excellent calibre. The cases can be brought forward more quickly. Justice is dealt with more expediently. As a result, there is less cost to the system and the decisions and results are equally good.

I honestly feel that we are not diminishing the calibre or quality of justice by this provision.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Chairman, I would like to make sure I understand the government's amendment which increases the amount from $1,000 to $5,000 and, consequently, the Reform Party's amendment. Does the amendment mean that all theft under $5,000 can be dealt with summary conviction?

• (1545)

[*English*]

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Chairman, theft under $5,000 can be dealt with by indictment but under the jurisdiction of the provincial court judge.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bellehumeur: But that is after the amendment. Today, theft of $4,500 is not dealt with by summary conviction.

What is the impact of this amendment, in the context of this bill? We may not have the same understanding of the amendment, since one member says yes and the other member says no. We are on clause 20.

[*English*]

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Chairman, the purpose is to move more of the cases of theft into the provincial court system and away from the superior court system. That is not to say that because we are going from $1,000 to $5,000 we are going to increase the theft cases in the provincial court system five times. Nor are we going to say that we are reducing the penalties because it is going to a provincial court. This discretion remains with the pertinent judge sitting at that particular time.

What we are saying is that these cases can be tried very competently under the provincial court system and that it is really more efficient to do so without any reduction in the quality of the justice dispensed.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Chairman, if we move cases from the superior court to the provincial court, would we not just be increasing the workload of the provincial court and what would happen to the cases already in provincial court? Would we decide then that we are not going to prosecute even more cases? Does it not just move the bell curve that far over that we are not going to bother prosecuting these cases?

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, these changes have been dialogued with the provinces for their approval and their consideration.

The fact is that in the provincial court system, the preliminary documentation, the waiting periods are not as long as they are in the superior court system. This will free up some time in the superior court system. It will in some cases add to the provincial court system, but in the opinion of the Department of Justice and the provincial authorities of the attorneys general departments and ministers of justice provincially it is not going to be a problem and add that much that the provincial court systems will be overloaded.

It will allow more time for the superior courts to hear cases of theft involving larger amounts and violent crimes.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that this is going to reduce the offence. It is going to reduce the offence for what now amounts to theft over $1,000.

The summary conviction provides for a maximum sentence of 18 months. If we move up to $5,000, offences that today are punishable by indictment with as I understand it a maximum 10 years imprisonment are now going to be subject to an 18 month prison term if they get the maximum under the provincial court system.

There is no question that this is softening the law. I would object to a softening of the law. We are now moving into an area where we are going to be subjecting people convicted of theft to a lesser penalty potentially. It is simply there. It is in the writing. What alarms me is what I heard my hon. colleague say before we entered committee of the whole, that one of the reasons we are

moving to this situation is because the courts were not convicting because it was an indictable offence.

• (1550)

Now, if that is wrong—

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: I wonder if the hon. member for Crowfoot would finish his remarks and then I will see that the parliamentary secretary responds.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, I would like the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice to comment on that. If my understanding is incorrect, and I hope it is, the reason the courts are not convicting is because they do not want to convict a person charged with theft for an indictable offence.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Chairman, I was referring to another point that the hon. member for New Westminister—Burnaby made in his speech. He talked about the hybrid offences, the dual offences of summary or indictable, that the charges could be either summary or indictable which did not relate to this particular provision at all. This was a general comment as I understood it that in some cases in certain areas where there is not a conviction, the judge will not convict somebody on an indictable offence for an offence they feel is not serious enough to warrant a conviction as an indictable offence whereas if we give the choice of summary or indictable and proceed summarily, the judge will be more predisposed to giving a conviction on that.

The other point the hon. member for Crowfoot made related to the change from the superior courts to provincial courts in certain cases of theft. Granted the situation now is 10 years maximum, but they are not awarding 10 years for theft under $5,000. Now under the Criminal Code they would get a maximum of two years and two years is penitentiary time. I cannot imagine any judge giving two years for theft under $5,000 because it means that person goes to penitentiary. I just do not think any judge is going to do that.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, am I correct in assuming that what the member has said is that judges are not going to determine guilt based upon the evidence? They are going to determine guilt based upon whether it is a summary conviction or proceeding by way of indictment. I need to have that clarified. If I heard him right that is exactly what he said.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Chairman, when I am speaking of summary and indictable, I am talking generally. There are sections in the Criminal Code where the charge is proceeded with summarily or as an indictable offence. In some cases the spectrum of the case can range but not to what one would consider a serious crime. If there is just a way of proceeding as an indictable offence the judge is going to say: "If I proceed as an indictable offence, the penalty I have to give is going to be far too serious for the crime". Therefore in certain sections of the Criminal Code there is the choice of proceeding summarily or on an indictable offence.

It is not left to the judge. It is how the case is laid, either as a summary conviction or as an indictable charge. The judge does not have the discretion. That is decided before it goes to court. It is just a means of asking how best to get a conviction. It is left with the crown prosecutor's office to determine the best way to proceed. Do we try for the higher sentence and end up with nothing or should we go summarily and at least be sure we are going to get a conviction?

• (1555)

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, certainly the conviction ought to be based upon the evidence. In every courtroom that I have ever appeared in the guilt was determined by the evidence, not by way of proceedings, whether it was summary conviction or indictable. This is the point I am making. I do not want to hang the proceedings up on this point, but the hon. member is saying this clearly. He said three times that it is going to matter to the judge in terms of determining guilt whether it is by way in which the court is proceeding, by summary or by indictment.

What I am pointing out is that the courts in this land have always determined guilt based upon the evidence, not based upon procedure.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Chairman, we always determine guilt upon the facts of the case. They have always determined sentence based on the facts of the case too. If the facts of the case are such that a stiff sentence is not merited, they are going to have a problem. If there is a choice, you can go summarily and the judge can see a fitting sentence in the summary conviction that meets the process of the justice system and the interests of society because one gets a conviction and a sentence that is going to be fair.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Chairman, this is getting very complicated. I simply want to know whether raising the amount from $1,000 to $5,000 would entail any changes in the procedure before the courts. Is it a case of evidence or evaluating whether we have a theft of $1,000 or $5,000?

My second point is, when you talk about provincial court and superior court, one of the consequences—and that is what my question was about earlier—one of the consequences is that a person accused of theft under $5,000 could not ask to be tried by judge and jury or by a judge alone in Superior Court. He will immediately be processed by provincial court; in Quebec, that is the Court of Quebec. Is that correct? Yes, thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Chairman, that is correct.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Chairman, currently under the summary convictions provisions, the maximum is six months in jail. You have told the government that you are going to proceed to make it 18.

In the provincial courts they always can proceed on the indictment and handle the more serious charges but I see that the principle here is to take away the options of the accused to elect to go to a superior court.

In these situations as practice has it, these theft offences are usually cumulative. Generally the information is multi charges against an offender. To limit this dollar amount related to summarial procedure is going to really hamstring a judge in being able to give the latitude of sentence required.

We feel that there is really no current problem in the justice system that is reflected in this change, that it sends the wrong message to the community and that we are looking for substantive justification of why this clause is here.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Chairman, in cases of a series of small offences, the sentences can be imposed consecutively so that there could be higher penalties for more than one offence, so that is still there.

The hon. member is right that the choice is not there but we have no intention of changing the penalties. We are going to as agreed keep the situation the way it is. There is still the possibility of higher sentences in a series of small offences if the judge chooses to sentence the person for each offence consecutively.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairman, I would also like the parliamentary secretary to address the issue of the symbolism of the law as to its educative role in the community for general deterrence to operate.

The potential sentence that can arise or if it be a consequence of an offence is directly related to how serious the community should look at that offence.

• (1600)

For example, for breaking and entering a dwelling house, the maximum is life in jail. We know that life in jail is not very often given for breaking and entering a dwelling house. However it is a symbol of how serious that charge is to be taken.

Regular theft, which is so pervasive in the justice system, is one of the most common offences before the courts. We think that to change the boundary sends the wrong message and undermines the operation of general deterrence.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to address that larger issue rather than the technical issues of looking at the offender and whether they will be able to elect or not to go to the higher court, but to first of all justify what is the problem that he is trying to solve with this provision and how is that going to undermine the operation of general deterrence.

Mr. MacLellan: Yes. In fact, Mr. Chairman, we feel just the opposite. This is going to aid the general deterrence because it is going to need a more speedy process of justice and we are going to be able to bring the accused before the courts more quickly.

Also, at the present time a lot of cases where there is more than $1,000 stolen are still brought before the provincial court judges, because it may be a question of proof. How do you know he or she stole goods in the amount of, say, $3,500? We know he or she stole something so we will proceed with the theft under $1,000, or the theft of this particular item, when in fact more was taken. However no one really wants to bother adding to that because they feel that getting it through the provincial court system will be faster, that there will be competency and that justice will be served.

Also, right now with theft, it is the violation of theft. Break and enter is a violation of an individual, not only materially but also a violation psychologically. Anyone who has had their home robbed or any of their possessions stolen feels they have been violated. It does not matter what was taken because that violation is there. The fact is that the feeling of the public against theft is very strong and they want these people brought to justice and punished. In the opinion of the Department of Justice this process can be achieved through these changes, and in fact will be enhanced through these changes.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the amendment moved by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Amendment negatived.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Chairman, we would like to know whether we are voting on the amendment to the amendment or on the amendment, because we have an amendment moved by members of the Liberal Party and an amendment to the amendment moved by the Reform Party, if I am not mistaken. I would like to know which one we are voting on now.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: There was one amendment, the one moved by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. Clause 20 is part of the bill. So the question was simply on the amendment standing in the name of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, which was negatived on division.

[*English*]

Shall clause 20 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: In Bill C–42 there are a grand total of 106 clauses. I wonder if I might be able to lump clauses 21 to 106 inclusive, or are there other clauses that members may want to address specifically?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

On clauses 21 to 106 inclusive:

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The question is therefore on clauses 21 to 106 inclusive.

• (1605)

Shall clauses 21 to 106 inclusive carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clauses 21 to 106 inclusive agreed to.)

(Clause 1 agreed to.)

(Schedule agreed to.)

(Title agreed to.)

(Bill reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to finish my speech on Bill C–52.

As I was saying before question period, it has cost the government $5 billion to contract out in 1992–93. This money that the government of Canada spent on contracting–out could have been used to improve the services provided to the Canadian public instead of maintaining a patronage relationship with the friends of the regime.

Let me tell you that between 1984–85 and 1992–93, costs have gone up with contracting–out. Costs have increased by 56 per cent at Public Works Canada during the same nine–year period. They increased by 114.2 per cent at DND and by 207 per cent at Health and Welfare Canada. Costs also increased at Supply and Services Canada—by 247 per cent. And, to really cap it, they increased by 628 per cent at Customs and Excise.

• (1610)

In ten years, while under pressure by the Auditor General and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts to do so, the federal government never managed to demonstrate that contracting–out was cost–effective. The Department of Public Works and Government Services is a major department. It handles a great deal of money. Let me give you a few examples.

Public Works and Government Services Canada is responsible for the inflow and outflow of all public funds and keeps an average daily cash balance of $2.3 million. It is also responsible for the accounting system and makes financial transactions totalling $163 million. It makes payments to the tune of $200 million annually for the Canada Pension Plan, the old age security system, taxes on goods and services, Public Service employees' pay, and so on.

It is also responsible for federal purchases. Last year, $13 billion–worth of goods and services falling into 17,000 different classes were purchased. It negotiates 175,000 contracts every year. It is the custodian of federal real property. It owns property valued at $6.5 billion. It provides office space to approximately 170,000 employees, in 4,000 different locations. It spends $2 billion a year.

How can we ensure that the government will not use contracting–out or privatization contracts to reward its friends? In other words, how can we avoid any kind of patronage in the awarding of privatization or other contracts by the federal government?

Bill C–52 should have more teeth. This is the Bloc Quebecois's proposal: We ask that a public review board be created under the bill to scrutinize contracts awarded by the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to ensure openness.

Second, we ask that a contracting–out code be clearly defined in this bill.

Third, we demand that members of Parliament of all political stripes be consulted about and kept informed of the government contract awarding process involving the ridings they represent.

Fourth and last proposal: We ask that the Department of Public Works and Government Services produce regular statements—monthly reports—to open up the federal government contracting process. The problem with this bill is that members of Parliament cannot find out which government contracts directly affect their ridings. There is no way to make federal officials accountable for contract–generated or in–house expenditures—to make them denounce any waste of public funds.

This bill should also provide for elimination of advance payments such as those we discovered recently at Communications Canada.

• (1615)

This bill must also protect the government because it left the door wide open to lobbyists. It does not allow a sufficient degree of openness. Not too long ago in this House, the hon. member for Richelieu moved a motion to prevent companies, stakeholders and lobbyists from contributing to the government's election fund. Unfortunately, this motion was rejected by the Liberal government and by many Reform members.

I think that lobbyists who occasionally attend $1,000–a–head dinners given by the Prime Minister have a right to expect the government to pay them back.

For all these reasons, the Bloc Quebecois proposes setting up a three–party public review board whose elected members would come from all political parties represented in and officially recognized by the House of Commons, from public administration experts and from Auditor General officials. The government should use this bill to give itself additional audit authority.

These are certainly the most important openness criteria the government should set for itself.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about sub–contracting and reported on some abuses that he saw in the last government. That is exactly one of the reasons why Canadians throughout the country decided to throw the former government out.

It is also because of the concerns we have that we—my colleague and I and other hon. members—are reviewing the issue of contracting out, to ensure that it is fair, equitable and open.

I have a very important question to ask the hon. member. He talks about openness, fairness, balance, etc. I wonder if he knows that the Minister of Public Works and Government Services invited all members of this House to subscribe to the open bidding service and to the publication on government procurement? The reason I ask this question is that he could find the answers to many if not all the questions he raised if he subscribed to those services which are provided by the minister.

Now, if I am right, and I just checked, so I think that I am probably right, no member of the Bloc has subscribed to this service. I did not check for yesterday and today, but as of last Friday. When my colleague talks about honesty, openness and fairness, why did he not subscribe to these services offered by the minister so that he can see for himself whether or not we have been fair? Why did he not do it or why did some of his colleagues not accept this service? Openness, fairness and honesty are there.

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, yes, I went through the process with the department in question to be able to subscribe to the service which the member, Mr. Duhamel, mentioned. They told me that it would cost $500 a year to have access to that information. Also, something which the member did not say is that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It is probably simply an oversight but I just want us to remember that we cannot name one another in this House; we must refer to other members by their titles or the constituencies they represent.

• (1620)

Mr. Asselin: The member for St. Boniface mentioned that we can always go to the library or the public information service, but it is a real maze, even for members of Parliament. My colleague, the member for Québec–Est, and I will soon subscribe.

But on the subject of openness, the member should understand that if the minister cannot promise to accept the lowest bidder who meets the conditions, it is a little less open; it becomes rather vague.

[*English*]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the English translation of my colleague's remarks in which he was saying that MPs should be consulted and informed on the awarding of government contracts in their ridings. I trust that was a correct translation.

I have no difficulty with the idea of being informed. However, if it is a matter of consultation, does the member opposite not see a danger that it will be perceived that politicians, MPs, are interfering with what should be an open process and putting political weight on what should be a completely non–partisan question?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, very recently at a meeting of the government operations committee, a government member told the committee about an experience he just had in his riding.

He had not been warned by the minister or any official, but fortunately, since he cares about his riding, he read a public notice from the department saying that the government was looking for a place to relocate the post office in his riding. The member intervened with the department and helped save a million dollars in this transaction.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I I draw to the attention of the hon. member, to continue with the question of my colleague opposite, that the very thought of members of Parliament being advised of or being part of a

bidding process is exactly the wrong direction. It is everything that could possibly be wrong with politics in my view.

We have no business being part of what is going on in the bidding process or anything of that nature concerning the spending of public money in our ridings. If we were in different ridings it might be a different situation, but in our own ridings it is something we should not be touching with a 10–foot pole, in my estimation.

Another point I raise with my colleagues is that of always going to the lowest bidder. It is normal business practice to be very careful to make the best purchase, which is not always the lowest bidder. I suspect there has to be some flexibility, because in business practice and experience I am familiar with price is an important factor but not the only factor in awarding a contract. Could I be favoured with a response from the member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, the question is twofold. First, I said that it should be standard procedure for a member to be informed of the goods or services which may be provided under a government contract or by contracting out, in his or her riding.

Members of this House are consulted; they have to vote and participate in the proceedings. When we are working in our ridings it is our duty to make representations. It is not a question of sticking our noses in the government's affairs, but we should at least be made aware of what is going on in our ridings.

Secondly, we discussed the issue of the lowest valid bid. What needed to be included should have been clearly mentioned in the specifications. If that was done in the first place and a bid is found to be valid, it is valid based on those specifications. Then, to accept the lowest valid bid is, in my opinion, to properly manage public money.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, given the government's strong commitment to improving the efficiency of government operations and to deficit control and reduction, the amalgamation of common services embodied in Bill C–52 makes eminent sense to me.

It has been clearly demonstrated that one of the primary causes of waste and confusion is the unnecessary duplication of services and functions both within the government and between levels of government.

In these times we simply cannot afford to have human and financial resources diverted to performing tasks throughout many departments and agencies of government when such tasks can be more effectively and much more cost effectively handled through a central agency.

This is the primary rationale behind the creation of the new Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada. Although it is just about a year since the amalgamation began, a number of efficiencies and savings have already become apparent. There will undoubtedly be many more such savings in the years ahead as the benefits of this integrated approach take full force.

Public Works and Government Services Canada provide common services to more than 150 federal departments, agencies and crown corporations. It provides them with a wide range of services to meet their needs, including property management, communications, printing and publishing, translation, architectural and engineering services.

It also looks after the issuing of all Government of Canada payments and undertakes billions of dollars worth of procurement on behalf of its clients each and every year. In short, Public Works and Government Services Canada is there to look after thousands of administrative transactions daily on behalf of its clients so that individual departments can focus all their time and energies on their own programs and priorities. To me this is a very good thing.

The amalgamation of the four founding elements of the new department, that is the former departments of Public Works Canada and Supply and Services Canada, as well as the government telecommunications agency and the translation bureau, has already paved the way for efficiencies of operation. For example, the corporate services areas of the individual components are being integrated. Corporate services encompass such central functions as finance, administration, corporate planning, contract claims resolutions and security, among other areas.

When taking into consideration the operational reviews that have been carried out and the recommendations, as well as the new systems to be implemented and the amalgamation, these initiatives will result in the savings of expenditures totalling $180 million over five years from the date of amalgamation. This sounds good to me.

Regional operations have also been integrated and the total number of regional offices reduced from 10 to 6, again another cost cutting service. This has been achieved with no less service to client departments or, most important, to the general public. Clearly the new integrated Department of Public Works and Government Services has already demonstrated that it can provide a more comprehensive service to the government and, more important, at a considerable cost saving to the taxpayer.

While the efficiencies that Public Works and Government Services can effect within its own organization are substantial, they represent only a small part of the story. By bringing together the experience and expertise of the component organizations we are creating within the department a centre of expertise more extensive and more skilled than we have ever had in the past.

This in turn will help create savings and efficiencies not only in the Department of Public Works and Government Services but through all government departments and all agencies.

• (1630)

The department will facilitate government–wide savings by providing re–engineered systems for use by all departments. Such sophisticated systems as electronic procurement and settlement, automated biowork station, a travel escort system and so forth will provide throughout the government streamlined processes, better ways of delivering services, rational resource allocation and more savings.

In its central position with close links to all departments and agencies, Public Works and Government Services can and will play a leading role in many government initiatives aimed at cost cutting and the reduction of duplication.

For example, the department is very actively involved in the government initiative known as locally shared support services. The basic idea of this initiative is to consolidate service and reduce costs by having departments and agencies located in the same building or complexes share certain physical support services. Again this is a very good idea, one–stop shopping for all.

These might include such functions as security, mail room or facility management. Individually, these arrangements may be quite small, but taken collectively over hundreds of federal installations all across Canada, they can add up to many millions of dollars in savings to Canadian taxpayers. Again, I would hope the House would see this is a very good thing and a very good idea, one worth our full support.

Public Works and Government Services has organized to support and encourage this initiative through its regional delivery network. It has identified two phases to implementing this scheme. In the first phase large departments, including Public Works and Government Services itself, will make use of their size, their regional representation and economies of scale. They will offer their services to smaller departments.

In the second phase re–engineering and integration of electronic services will be added. This phase will provide telecommunication and informatics infrastructure, office automation and video conferencing as well as total office support facilities similar to those in the private sector.

A number of these innovative initiatives are already being pilot tested during this current fiscal year. Certain economies have already been put into place across the country such as sharing of reception services and joint management of storerooms and warehouse facilities.

The point is that the creation of the Department of Public Works and Government Services through the amalgamation of most of the government common service agencies will not only help Public Works and Government Services to make substantial cost efficiencies within its own organization, it will also create a consolidated centre of expertise and leadership that can help scores of departments and agencies throughout the government introduce similar economies to their own operations.

This will add up to hundreds of millions of dollars in savings to Canadian taxpayers in the years ahead. This is reason enough for all of us in the House to support this legislation and to give speedy passage to Bill C–52.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member who just spoke. As regards this bill, we are not opposed to the idea of trying to do more with less money. We do not oppose to that principle; on the contrary, the Bloc Quebecois favours such an approach by the government. However, this legislation is nothing more than a bunch of old sections from various acts which are put together to amalgamate old departments into a single one, under a new name. Can the hon. member tell us just what is new in this bill? Can she tell us if there is anything new to give more transparency to that department which, in the old days, was known as the patronage department? Is there anything new in this bill to promote that transparency which we have heard so much about since the beginning of the 35th Parliament?

• (1635)

[*English*]

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, there is no question the government is committed to open, fair and transparent access to the procurement process. That is why the Minister of Public Works and Government Services offered to all members an invitation to join in the open bidding process in the government business opportunities publication.

With this system subscribers get instant access to contract opportunities, notices of planned sole source contracts and notices of contract awards. It also offers contract histories which are information on contracts that have been awarded in the past, to whom and for what amount.

I would respectfully say that you cannot get much more open than this.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member that $180 million after five years is certainly the direction the government should be going. However I happen to note that is against a $2.3 billion per year budget.

I did some quick mathematics. I believe we are talking about an 8 per cent reduction after a full five-year period. Does the member not think there is a little bit more in the system that can be squeezed out than taking five years to get only an 8 per cent reduction in the budget?

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right. If that was all we were going to save, then perhaps he would be right about 8 per cent. But I would totally disagree that it is all that is going to be saved.

Quite realistically we are talking about a number of things here. We are talking about an integrated approach. We are talking about a one-stop shopping centre, so to speak, that will make it easier for our constituents, yours and mine. We are talking about same housing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I just want to remind all members, although it may not be critical in this debate today, but the best practice has been established and we try to remind one another to direct all remarks through the Speaker.

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, one major thing is the expertise that is going to be housed together and able to do things quite uniquely. Those are all benefits.

I remind the hon. member across the way that by the year 2005 we will save $1 billion. This is truly going to be a real cost saving initiative. It is also more than that. It is going to be a truly new initiative. It will plunge us into the next century.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct one remark to the member for Guelph—Wellington. The good news I heard in her remarks was that these changes will eliminate much of the duplication of services between the federal government and the provinces.

Would the member agree that this will eliminate one of the primary sources of friction between the federal government and the provinces, and that provinces like Alberta and Quebec, for example, should be very happy?

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, I definitely think this is going to go a long way to address many of the concerns that provincial governments have raised with the federal government. I appreciate my colleague bringing that up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to make a suggestion to you, Mr. Speaker. When the Bloc member spoke earlier, he said that the system set up by the minister cost $500 to each member of Parliament. Since that figure seemed very high, I went to check on it and I was told that the figure is only $37. Consequently, I—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. I am sorry but this is really not a point of order. It may be an issue to discuss and I am sure we can look at it later. Questions and comments. Debate. The hon. member for Kootenay East.

• (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, it is always nice to be able to say something positive about the direction in which the government is going. In this instance I believe that it is going in the right direction in terms of consolidation, efficiency and savings.

In fairness to Canadians who have suffered loss of real income over the last five years and who may have been displaced or have had members in their families displaced—many Canadians have had to scramble to survive—there must be an understandable lack of sympathy. I can understand the lack of sympathy on the part of Canadians for systems within the government which are bloated and not efficient. However the government is going in the right direction.

I also believe that within any workforce, whether it is the civil service or any industry, that when people are not efficiently producing they know it. When people are working at jobs that are dead end jobs and can see that they should be redeployed that they have this, I will call it, a antsyness, a feeling of discomfort in their place of work.

In that place of work there is typically a lack of job satisfaction. Certainly there is a lack of a sense of security. I know I have been in situations from time to time in employment where it was obvious that the enterprise that I was in was going nowhere and that gives no sense of security. When we have a lack of direction from the top, a lack of statement of purpose and a lack of plan coming from the top, it exacerbates the situation.

Yesterday in the House I raised the example of Parks Canada. We have a situation in my constituency where members of the Yoho National Park—only 90 people work there—are in a real dilemma. They do not have any idea of what is going on. The top people in the parks department do not have any idea what is going on either.

All sorts of things are being proposed. For example, in clearing the highway which is the major project for the park in the winter, it is now proposed that the whole operation be moved to Lake Louise. What does that do to the businesses in Golden? What does it do in terms of the efficiency? It is also proposed that the head office be moved to Jasper. What does that mean? The picture I am trying to paint is the situation all over the map.

When we have a downsizing challenge, whether it has to do with the issues covered specifically by Bill C–52 or all of government, I submit that the government must be prepared to take one step. That one step must be specific, it must be incisive like a razor, but above all it must be part of a total plan.

With great respect to the Liberal frontbench, to this point I get no idea of an incisive, total plan. As a consequence the civil service right from the bottom to the top is saying: "When is the shoe going to drop? Is it going to be me? What is going to happen?"

I suspect that members from British Columbia are aware of the fact that they will be getting letters, that they will be getting petitions from people within the civil service. I cannot speak for the rest of Canada but I can say as far as British Columbia is concerned, many of us are receiving representations from the federal civil service saying: "What is going on? What is going to happen next?"

There is a tremendous feeling of insecurity. If I could do anything I would encourage the frontbench to get on with a total plan and more important, to communicate what that plan is once they have actually got it together. The current fear and anxiety within the federal civil service is leading naturally to a loss of productivity.

• (1645)

A couple of minutes ago, I raised the issue that there will be $180 million saved on a $2.3 billion budget after five years. I repeat that the government is going in the right direction but the problem is it is taking rather mincing steps.

I would like to read an excerpt from a speech given by the chairman of the board of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce on February 15 in Halifax. Considering that this person is responsible for countless billions of dollars in assets and has tens of thousands of employees in one of the major banks in Canada, he has a tremendous sense of the direction Canada is going. I suggest we listen rather carefully to this excerpt from his speech.

> It is all too easy to think that debt is a government problem, but it is not. The debt does not cost governments; it costs Canadian taxpayers. Canadians pay for the debt directly every day in interest paid from taxes.

Before I carry on I want to underline the point that this is not the Reform Party speaking, although it sounds like it. This is the chairman of the board of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. He said:

> The per capita annual interest charge is about $2,200 from tax revenues; $2,200 per Canadian goes to pay interest on accumulated debt. Before a single dollar of income is redistributed, before a dime goes to social programs, before a penny is spent on any other government program $2,200 must be paid yearly in interest for each and every person in Canada.

Are you listening? Remember, this amount—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, order. If I want to take every occasion you present me with I will try to react. In terms of speaking to one another, the word you or in French the word vous totally excludes the Speaker. I really love my work and I like to be included and wish I could sometimes be even more involved.

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your intervention. All of us are on a learning curve. I certainly am as one of the new people here and I appreciate your comment.

> Remember the amount of $2,200 is needed from each one of us just to pay the interest on the debt. We are not even touching the principal. As a result, the cumulative debt of the federal and provincial levels of government is growing at a rate of $60 billion a year and the compounding continues. The pattern has persisted for years. Is calling this situation a fiscal cancer an overstatement? What would you call it?
>
> And let us remember: Politicians did not do this. Governments did not do this. Civil servants did not do this. We prosperous, peaceful, common sense Canadians did this to ourselves.
>
> Whatever the party or prime minister or finance minister, the Government of Canada has not had a single balanced budget in 20 years. During the same period there have been scores of budgets in the provinces. Relatively few provincial treasuries have forecast a balanced budget and only rarely have they achieved their targets.
>
> Of course, we have had elections; 83 different occasions on which the people could exercise their democratic right to choose national and provincial governments. We had all those opportunities to change policy directions. We have elected Liberal, Progressive Conservative, New Democrat, Social Credit and Parti Quebecois governments. We have given them variously majority or minority mandates. We have even had from time to time intense national debates about debt and deficits, but our total debt has continued to soar even higher.

• (1650)

He talks about Canadians and says:

> We have only ourselves to blame. Most experienced politicians, I would guess a solid majority in every cabinet in the country, will confess privately that there is no constituency for cutting spending. Canadians may be in favour of cutting somebody else's special interest spending but not their own. The result has been an endless procession of impossibly conflicting instructions to our political leadership: Cut spending, but not on this; save money, but not on that.

I like this guy. He goes on to say:

> Pity our politicians. It would have taken the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job to respond to such a conflicting cry and neither of them had to get elected.
>
> Government spending problems are too often oversimplified as being a question of inefficiency. Some say that the problem can be resolved by reducing spending in all current categories. That would help but it is only the beginning. The real problem is that many government programs are outdated and it is not just that we are spending too much, it is that we are spending on the wrong things.

The real problem in my judgment is that we as politicians have a responsibility to talk straight to our constituents. During the last election it perplexed me whenever the Reform Party would talk straight and say we must drive the deficit to zero in as quick a period of time as possible that we were attacked by the

Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives as being the slash and spend and hack and cut party.

The reality is that we in Canada are at the wall. We have managed to get away with this infrastructure spending, or should I say borrowing, this transfer of intergenerational debt to my grandchildren who I have never seen and are not even born and their descendants, all for the sake of some election sloganeering.

It is the responsibility of all politicians no matter what their stripe to generate a culture of acceptance to the fact that it is going to hurt. It is going to hurt me, it is going to hurt you, Mr. Speaker, and it is going to hurt the people who are listening to this debate or reading it in *Hansard*. It is going to hurt. We fundamentally have a choice of doing it to ourselves under our control, or letting some external force do it to us.

Today the finance minister stood in this place and very forcefully and very eloquently said: "We will maintain control". How can you maintain control when you continue to spend $110 million a day more than you have coming in? It is impossible. You cannot maintain control in a world where there is such a thing as compound interest and in this instance compound debt. When we are spending $110 million a day that we do not have, we are simply transferring what we are doing in 1994 to somebody way out there somewhere else.

I conclude my comments with a quick review. Bill C–52 is going in the right direction for all of the right reasons. If you will pardon me for nit–picking, I happened to notice in our review that a part of the purpose was that the deputy minister be appointed by cabinet.

It strikes me that the deputy ministers of all departments are people of great importance and strength. They give direction to their departments and strong counsel to their ministers. I suggest that the deputy minister not just in Bill C–52 but in other bills should appear before the standing committee. There should be more public scrutiny because more and more power is falling into the hands of the top civil servants. That would be a healthy thing to do.

• (1655)

In summary we are going in the right direction with Bill C–52. I do support that direction. I do see all of the things the last member was talking about, but it is not good enough by a long shot. We as politicians must generate a culture of acceptance of the fact that we are living beyond our means. We must be straight up with our voters. We must convince Canadians that we will be able to go in the right direction.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before questions and comments it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Rosedale—Gun control; the hon. member for Verchères—Customs tariffs.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, in his comments at the conclusion of his speech the hon. member said that we should be straight up with Canadians and I agree.

If his party formed the government today, would that member's government also be spending more than it took in? The question clearly relates to the fact that no matter which party was forming the government the government expenditures and the deficit clearly were going to take more than one year to be dealt with. Yet the member continues to harp as if the Reform Party somehow would magically eliminate this if it were the government. Could the member answer this simple question: Would the Reform Party also be spending more than it took in?

Mr. Abbott: That is a valid question. Of course we would. One cannot just simply go hack, slash, bump and that is the end of it.

However a plan that after three years this government will owe an additional $100 billion in debt is absolutely the wrong direction. What we would have at the end of three years is we would not be going further into debt. Canada cannot afford it. The Canadian public intuitively in the back of their minds know it. They are just waiting for some politicians to be open, up front, honest, candid and frank with them and get on with the job that will have to be done.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member for Kootenay East wants to be open and frank.

Our government has constantly talked about bringing the deficit to 3 per cent of gross domestic product. That is a plan, that is a direction and that is something the Minister of Finance is committed to. As we talk about social program review which is coming up tomorrow, we are going to have a plan on the table with different directions of where we are going to go with our social spending.

We want to talk about being honest. Why does the member not come across here and say: "What are we going to do without employment insurance? Are we going to do away with it? Are we going to do away with all our social programs? Are we going to reduce old age pensions?" That is the kind of honesty he is talking about. Let us hear him say those things.

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, the government currently has a plan to go another $100 billion into debt over the next three years with this 3 per cent figure it is talking about. It has no commitment to reduce the deficit to zero. It has a commitment only to reduce it to 3 per cent.

I heard it said by the late Kim Campbell, that is late in a political sense, during the last election that there was not any problem. If she managed to get the overspending down to whatever the number was it was fine, it was going to be balanced books because we did not have to go out and borrow money. Then after actually analyzing what she was talking about, she

was going to be using Canada pension plan contributions. She was going to be using the actual cash flow, the input that was coming into the government. That same kind of fuzzy thinking has managed to spill over. Maybe there is something unusual about that side of the House. When people move from this side, which is where most cabinet ministers were in the last House, to the other side and get cabinet positions somehow a fuzziness seems to set in.

• (1700)

The reality is that there is no commitment on the part of the government to control overspending. I will not call it the deficit because that is confusing. The deficit is simply how much more is spent than is taken in.

With respect to the question of targets let us talk about UI. Right now the minister of human resources is going around trying to fly all sorts of trial balloons. The Reform Party principle is very simple and very straightforward. It is called unemployment insurance.

Unfortunately all politicians in the House over the last 20 years have forgotten the word insurance. Insurance works on an actuarial basis that it is not going to be used as some kind of low grade social program. Therein lies the problem. Even today the minister and the government are working through a UI revision as though they are revising a low grade social program. They are not putting it into the arena where it should be, which is unemployment insurance.

I have a lot of other comments but the bottom line to the exercise is that there is no simple answer to the problem. I am prepared to say to the people of Canada that it is going to hurt. We can either do it ourselves or we can have it done to us. As long as we continue to add $100 billion to the debt of the nation and as long as we continue to spend $110 million every day, we are not solving the problem. We are just digging the hole deeper.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, I would have a question for my hon. colleague from the Reform Party who made a remarkable speech. Our colleague tells us that real politicians would tell us that it is going to hurt. I agree up to a certain point. Now, who will this hurt?

At present, some people avoid paying tax on billions of dollars by using family trusts and tax havens. Here is my question: Is my hon. colleague prepared to hurt these people too, so that all members of our society pay their share?

[*English*]

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of moving to the finance committee which has been very instructive. There is a myth, an absolutely gigantic myth, that somehow billions of dollars are squirrelled away and that if we could get our hands on them we would solve the whole deficit and debt problem. The myth that was originated by the NDP unfortunately is being perpetuated by the Bloc Quebecois.

The plain fact of the matter is that family trusts have to do with capital gains. Family trusts pay taxes on earnings. Family trusts pay current taxes on interest. Family trusts do not pay tax on accrued capital gains until they are disposed of by the family trust. The myth continuously put forward by the Bloc is that they never pay or they are going to roll forward. The fact of the matter is that they will be paid in exactly the same way as any other individual pays them.

It is instructive to be sitting on that committee as they continue to try to put forward the myth that there is some kind of simple, magical equation, some kind of a simple answer, because there is not.

• (1705)

I come back to the same thing. It is going to hurt all Canadians. In further response to the member's question, the reality is that if we do not control this the people who will be hurt the most are those who can afford it the least. We have to target the meagre resources we presently have to make sure those people who have the least get the most in terms of help.

I do not think major industrialists and people who would have these countless millions of dollars in family trusts to which the Bloc keeps referring need the help of the social program. It is the intention and the direction of the Reform Party to protect those who need protection the most.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–52 combines previously dispersed functions in government into the new Department of Public Works and Government Services. At first sight it is a technical bill, a necessary but technical piece of legislation to make the combinations. It is becoming apparent from the debate that there is more to the legislation than that. The bill is part of the government's effort to streamline the system of government in Canada, to make government a better servant of the public. It is for that reason I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C–52.

Part of the platform that saw the election of the government was a firm commitment to government renewal, reforming away government works to restore confidence among Canadians in their leaders and institutions. At the same time there was an equal commitment to reducing the cost and increasing the effectiveness of government to lower the deficit and relieve Canadian taxpayers.

The bill, along with several others introduced in the House in recent weeks, is tailored to meet both those commitments. Merging the former departments of public works and supply and services, the telecommunications agency and the translation bureau through Bill C–52 permits a more streamlined, responsive service by government while reducing the costs of doing the taxpayer's business. The amalgamation will assist deficit reduc-

tion by cost savings in the order of $180 million by the year 1998.

The legislation also lives up to the government's commitment to restore confidence in the administration. Other members referred to the tremendous task the new department must perform. An annual cash flow of $1.4 trillion, purchasing $10 billion worth of products and services in a year, 175,000 contracts per year, and managing $6.5 billion worth of real estate are now under one government department. What is remarkable about the legislation is that it creates a single organization under one minister to perform all this work.

Thus not only client government departments and agencies but the vast community of Canadian firms doing business with government can deal with a single agency. One minister and one management team will provide the focus and direction as well as the forum to see that both client and supplier interests are served. This is truly one–stop government shopping for Canadian business.

Rest assured that the new department is dedicated to serving both the interests of its client departments and the interests of the business community. The business community embraces all sizes and types of Canadian firms. Their competitiveness is vital to a strong, innovative Canadian economy.

That is why in carrying out the many large and small purchases on behalf of government the new department attempts at all times to remain innovative and up to date, maintaining best practices in dealing with suppliers and managing its affairs to encourage innovation and competitiveness among Canadian businesses.

That is why the bill rewrites previous legislation to provide flexibility which permits the use of purchasing to assist in achieving the strategic objectives of government, for example penetration of foreign markets by small and medium sized Canadian businesses.

• (1710)

While the new department strives to meet its primary objectives of efficient and effective services to government, it is guided in its purchasing practices by the principles of competition, equality of treatment and openness.

Where possible, contracts are awarded through competitive, open bidding. Uniform conditions and evaluation criteria are applied to all bidders. To remain competitive suppliers and potential suppliers must be informed and up to date on government requirements. They must know not only what is coming up by way of demand but also the rules and regulations they must comply with.

The new department uses various means to provide such information and assistance. One of the newest and most innovative is the open bidding service which was referred to and explained briefly by the member for Guelph—Wellington when she spoke earlier. The open bidding service provides around the clock electronic information and assistance to suppliers anywhere in Canada, any suppliers that have access to telephone lines. It provides subscribers with all the information they need to make an informed bidding decision in government procurement opportunities. They no longer need to be included on a government source list or await an invitation to bid.

This sort of a process is very welcomed by small businesses in small communities outside the Ottawa circuit such as my riding of Peterborough. Subscribers can review opportunities in their product or service areas and order bid documents for those they are interested in. Documents are forwarded as quickly as possible by the chosen delivery method, be it fax, mail or courier. Current contract award information as well as information on past contract awards are available to subscribers of the service.

Other departments and crown corporations, as well as the governments of Alberta and Ontario, have decided to use this open bidding service to advertise their contract needs. This significantly broadens the market available to suppliers through a single information source. Open bidding is the aim of the publication entitled "Government Business Opportunities" which is issued three times a week.

I was somewhat bemused by the earlier criticism of the minister and the bill through suggestions that government purchasing practices were not open enough and more information should be provided. I really do not understand the distorted view of reality that could trigger such a complaint.

Federal government purchasing is already scrutinized by Parliament, the Treasury Board, the Auditor General, the Canadian Internal Trade Tribunal, the Contract Claims Resolution Board, all the mass media, the suppliers themselves and the taxpaying public. On top of all that, all purchasing requirements valued at $25,000 or more are posted on the open bidding service I just described. As well, construction, maintenance, architecture and engineering opportunities valued at $60,000 or more are so posted. When sole source contracts are necessary, information is carried both on the open bidding service and through the "Government Business Opportunities" publication.

The Minister of Public Works and Government Services has gone to even greater lengths to ensure open and easy access to contracting information. He has written to all members of Parliament, as every member of Parliament who checks the mail knows, urging them to subscribe to the open bidding service. The parliamentary secretary just gave some information on the cost of this service. Following that suggestion would certainly better equip members of Parliament to serve their constituents

than contributing to the paper burden by tabling tons of material on 175,000 government contracts.

We live in an electronic age. Canadian citizens and businesses are rapidly adapting to the evolving information highway. Members who complain about lack of information might well be advised to catch up. Subscribing to the open bidding services would be one step.

The Bloc also expressed some concern over the fact that riding by riding stats were not available for contracting activity in the new department.

• (1715)

The simple fact is that Public Works and Government Services does not keep information based on riding. Since the amalgamation of these various government services the department systems are not integrated. Further, several searches of both the manual and electronic data bases showed that all the systems are out of date or in need of upgrading. As a result, the department at this time simply cannot produce such reports, that is reports based on riding, in its routine operations.

Further, we must all realize that riding–based activity is not always accurate and at times it is downright misleading.

For example, consider the case of the two large oil companies, Imperial Oil and Petro–Canada. These companies bill all government purchases, close to $300 million per year, through their Ottawa offices regardless of where those purchases occur, whether they occur elsewhere in Canada or abroad. Rather than compile and publish misleading riding–based statistics, the Department of Public Works and Government Services actually does something real about an even distribution of regional benefits from government purchasing. Wherever feasible within the confines of agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, regional benefits are given a high priority when evaluating bids for major government projects.

Examples of regional benefits are not hard to find: $1.2 billion of the Canadian patrol frigate contract to Saint John Shipbuilding in New Brunswick, $40 million of the Canadian Forces supply system upgrade contract to SHL Systemhouse in Ottawa, $16 million of the North Warning System contract to a Richmond, B.C. firm, and so on with other regional benefits wherever they are possible.

Further evidence of this minister's desire to keep purchasing practices open and fair was his decision that contingency fees have no legitimate place in government procurement and the introduction of a new contract clause is aimed at eliminating them. Bidders are now required to certify that they have not hired a lobbyist to solicit award of the contract where any part of the payment to the lobbyist depends on the client obtaining the contract.

Another example: The minister has introduced major improvements in contracting methods for advertising and public opinion research. There were no effective guidelines to purchase such sensitive services in the past. The media and the public have long perceived the practice to be open to abuse and political patronage. For the first time new guidelines have been approved by cabinet bringing the procurement of advertising and public opinion research under similar rules of fairness and openness to those governing all government procurement.

These new guidelines, the new open bidding service and the new lobbyist clause, are all evidence of the determination of this government to reintroduce integrity and restore the faith of the public in our political and administrative systems.

I think the evidence is clear. This government and this new department which is created through this bill support both the spirit and practice of good business in Canada to the benefit of government operations, the business community and Canadian taxpayers alike.

I conclude by saying that Bill C–52 is far more than an effective highly technical piece of legislation combining under one roof previous government services. It is a fine example of this government's commitment to openness and fairness to Canadian business.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member was in the House earlier when we were told, in response to a question, that the bill the hon. member just commented on prevented some overlapping with other provinces. Basically, that is the spirit of non–overlapping that we advocate in the Bloc Quebecois.

Here is my first question. What is there exactly in this bill to specifically preclude this kind of overlapping?

• (1720)

I have another question for the hon. member. The Bloc Quebecois tabled a reasoned amendment on this subject. It reads as follows:

> "this House declines to give second reading to Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, because the principle of the bill does not provide for a specific code of ethics to be put in place aimed at making transparent the contracting process and the acquisition of all goods and services by the Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada".

Does the hon. member agree with the idea of improving transparency through this bill? If he does, where exactly in the bill is this spirit of transparency fostered?

[*English*]

Mr. Adams: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments.

The answer is the same to both of his questions. As far as greater efficiency between the levels of government is concerned, I described the open bidding service. I mentioned that already the governments of Alberta and Ontario have joined in this electronic open bidding service which is available to every part of the country reached by telephone, which is virtually every part of the country. That is an example. That is a step toward greater efficiency between levels of government.

It is my hope that the governments of other provinces will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity and will therefore make it even more efficient between federal and provincial levels.

With regard to the matter of openness, I described as well as I could the open bidding procedure. This is a procedure which is available even to the smallest business. People have a telephone. The cost is not large. It lists forthcoming opportunities. It lists the results of previous contracts, in other words who obtained contracts for the previous weeks or months.

This is something which is available in offices across the country. That is in addition to the thrice weekly publication of similar information which is also available, although I think I sense where the member is coming from, which is less easily available to many of our smaller firms.

To answer his question about transparency, it does seem to me that one answer to his question is that the open bidding service is as transparent as it could be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, our government took office a year ago with a very clear platform and very specific commitments to Canadians. We said that we wished to develop a country where efficient and innovative governments cooperate not only with one another but also with businesses, unions, educational institutions and others.

We said that we wished to emphasize the concept of partnership in all our dealings. We are committed to making job creation and economic growth our top priorities. We promised to trim the deficit and to use iron discipline in bringing federal expenditures under control. We also said that we would restore public trust in the government's integrity.

All our commitments and promises are reflected in the public works and government services minister's priorities and performance in the last 12 months.

This department, which is responsible for most common services provided by the federal government, worked hard to increase government efficiency, create partnerships and convince Canadians that the government is conducting its operations fairly, openly and in the public interest.

The Department of Public Works and Government Services is in a good position to take up the challenge of providing effective services, establishing strong links and eliminating duplication in the provision of government services.

[*English*]

In the area of efficiency and reduction of duplication of services, the amalgamation has already begun to pay dividends. During the past year there has been substantial progress in realizing the central corporate services of the department such as finance and administration and amalgamating these into a single operation which can serve the needs of the component sections of the department, but with significant savings in financial and human resources as well.

• (1725)

A similar rationalization of resources has taken place at the regional level, again with substantial cost savings and reduction of duplication. Much work still remains in order to realize the full potential for savings through this process of amalgamation.

[*Translation*]

The minister remains confident that he will be able to cut common services staff by more than 20 per cent in the next four years without reducing service levels for Public Works and Government Services Canada's client departments and agencies.

The full process will generate overall savings of some $180 million. This streamlining process is in line with the government's promise to cut waste and duplication and is a big help in meeting the government's commitment to fight the deficit through major cuts in public administration expenditures.

Public Works and Government Services Canada has made steady progress toward the government's goal of reaching sound agreements with other levels of government, the private sector, its public service clients and the general population. Significant headway was made in intergovernmental co–operation last summer when the federal government and most provinces signed agreements to work together to reduce government costs.

Public Works and Government Services Canada already works with the provinces to identify the areas where the two levels of government can work together to reduce duplication or, better yet, share services in the interest of our taxpayers.

Some provisions of Bill C–52 will pave the way to closer intergovernmental co–operation.

[*English*]

For example, it will allow Public Works and Government Services when requested by other levels of government to offer realty, architectural and engineering services to provinces as well as municipalities, something that was not possible before this legislation. It will simplify the process in following up on opportunities for intergovernmental co–operative initiatives.

Over the next few years I am confident we will see a real increase in all levels of government working to eliminate duplication, to share in procurement where this is beneficial and to better co–ordinate services directed at the Canadian public.

Another area in which the department has been working hard and making progress is in building stronger, more satisfactory partnerships with the Canadian business community. As the prime procurement agency of the government which spends some $10 billion each year for goods and services, Public Works and Government Services is one of the prime points of interface between the government and Canadian business and industry.

In the past the two major points of friction and frustration in the government's dealings with the business community have been first, the sense by business that dealings with governments were slow, cumbersome and costly and, second, that there was too much political interference and cynicism, in other words that the system was not as fair and open as it should be.

Under this government real progress has been made by Public Works and Government Services toward addressing both of these problems.

[*Translation*]

By promoting high–tech communications with businesses, the department has managed to simplify the process and reduce costs. The electronic procurement and settlement system is a good example. This central control and settlement system linking client departments with suppliers allows users to do business electronically, to place orders and issue vouchers without paperwork and to pay suppliers without bills being sent.

The system was tested successfully and should be fully implemented during the year. It is as popular with the government as it is with suppliers.

[*English*]

The open bidding system that I just described has been introduced and provides an electronic bulletin board that allows all potential suppliers an equal chance to be aware of the government's requirements and to respond accordingly.

On many occasions the minister has given a personal invitation to all MPs, including MPs from the Bloc and the Reform Party, to get on the open bidding service. We should take him up on this offer, as I have done.

The minister has also introduced a clause to all contracts effectively eliminating the practice of contingency fees in securing government contracts, thus curbing the influence of lobbyists in this area. He has introduced—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. The member will have the opportunity to conclude his remarks when the bill comes before the House at the next opportunity.

It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should change the name of the "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms" to the "Canadian Charter of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities".

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I get into the meat of my presentation today, I would like to spend a couple of minutes describing to the television audience the difference between a private member's motion and a government motion and what is most assuredly going to be happening to this motion in exactly one hour.

A private member's motion receives one hour of debate in the House. Then it is dropped from the Order Paper, never to be seen again, unless there is a spark of interest somewhere and it resurfaces.

This is one of the checks and balances in our parliamentary system. It allows backbenchers and opposition members a chance to get a point of view across. It gives opposition and government members a chance to debate ideas.

If this were a votable bill rather than a motion, it would receive a grand total of, I believe, three or four hours of debate. It would come back two or three times and would be voted on. On a very rare occasion of unanimity in the House on an opposition member's bill, it could become law.

The chances of a bill becoming law promulgated by an opposition member are fairly remote. Hopefully it is something that we in this Parliament could consider, because it is really the essence and the spirit of parliamentary democracy. No one in the House has a lock on good ideas. If we are to use our opportunities as parliamentarians effectively, we would learn from each other and modify each other's bills to meet a common objective.

In any event, my motion was inspired because I felt we were becoming a nation of entitlement. This was very much to our detriment and to the detriment particularly of the younger generation of Canadians.

During the election campaign my fellow candidates and I were doing an all–candidates meeting at a high school in Edmonton. In the question and answer period one of the students got up and said: "What are you going to do to get me a job?"

Through the luck of the draw I was the last person to respond and I got a chance to listen to the other candidates. I listened to them telling this young person in an auditorium full of students that we were going to create a nirvana—poor choice of words—motherhood and apple pie. We were going to spend money here and spend money there and create jobs.

I could just see all their eyes glazing over because they had heard it all before and had no reason to believe it. My turn came along and I thought, I am going to tell these people the truth.

• (1735)

I said to that young man: "Look, if you want to know who is going to get you a job when you graduate from high school, have a look in the mirror because that is the only person in the world who is responsible for you. Your success in life is going to be directly attributable to what you put into it. If you expect me, your parents, your school or anybody else to do for you what you need to do for yourself you are going to be sadly mistaken and very disappointed in life".

I am telling you I was Mr. Dinosaur from the Reform Party. He must have been thinking: "Here is this old–timer who does not have a clue about what is going on. How could he possibly be standing here and telling me I am responsible for myself, like I don't have to show up at school every day. If I come in late nobody seems to care". That is not fair because that is not the way it is in life.

That is the germ of the idea of how we got into this situation. It is not just individuals who feel that there is a sense of entitlement, it is all of us. Our whole society has become one of entitlement. If somebody wants to start a business what does he do? He does not get every nickel he has together and get his friends and relatives together and start a business. The first thing to do is trot down to the bank and see if the government will guarantee a loan. Is there not a grant for doing this? Cannot somebody else risk their capital so I can progress in my life? That is just not the way it works in this world.

We have become a nation of rights, a nation of entitlements. We did not become this way just with the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It has been happening slowly but surely. It probably happened perhaps in the 1950s and then accelerated in the 1960s. Here we are today with the single thing that has really codified this whole notion of rights, the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada.

As I progress in my speech this afternoon, I am going to be referring to some information that I got from a book entitled: *Protecting Rights and Freedoms: Essays on the Charter's Place in Canada's Political, Legal and Intellectual Life.* I recommend this book to anyone who has any particular interest in going further into the investigation of the effect of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in our country.

I want to acknowledge that I will be quoting from the essays of three individuals, all of whom will be familiar to colleagues in this House and to you, Mr. Speaker. The first is the Right Hon. Kim Campbell when she was Solicitor General. She delivered a presentation at a 10th anniversary conference on the charter of rights. The second person is Lysiane Gagnon, a well–known member of the media from Quebec and Jeffrey Simpson who needs no introduction from me.

As a matter of fact it was interesting that in another part of Kim Campbell's writings she said that Canadians, as compared with Americans, really have a different sense of what government means. We look at government as protector of our rights and freedoms. Government is not something feared by the average Canadian. She compared that with the situation in the United States where the government is seen as more obtrusive by the individual citizen.

Ms. Campbell was comparing the case of our bill of rights and the American experience. The two do not exactly relate, but let me give you the gist of what she was saying as she was talking about the tension that exists in Canada between Parliament and the judiciary. With the Charter of Rights of Freedoms, the Supreme Court has taken on great powers that were not previously in our common law tradition to be vested with appointed judges. It was the role of Parliament to reflect the mores of the time and to interpret what was going on in society. We have evolved into more of an American system where the judiciary has far more to say about what is going on.

• (1740)

As a matter of fact Kim Campbell said: "Courts are now required to choose from among competing approaches and values. The real question therefore is not whether the courts are making policy but rather the appropriate limits of the courts' policy making role". She said that when she was the Attorney General of the country. That is a profound statement.

She further said: "By giving Canadians constitutionally entrenched rights and freedoms and by making these enforceable by the courts, the charter has given the courts a much more powerful and visible role in our governmental system. This has led to some tensions and to questions about the proper scope of judicial review in a parliamentary system".

Her concern was that unless Parliament and the courts understand and respect each other's role we will evolve toward a system in which the courts, rather than democratically elected legislatures, are seen as the primary protectors and promoters of rights and freedoms.

That has happened. The courts have taken on an increasing role in our society and the role and the responsibility of Parliament has as a result been diminished.

Then the question comes up: Why do we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the first place? The Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not have one word in the whole thing about responsibilities. The thought of responsibility does not enter into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. How can that be?

It was because it was never intended to be anything other, at least according to many people. The introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada was done because Pierre Trudeau wanted it. He believed if we had a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that guaranteed individual rights and freedoms we would be able to make a place for French speaking Quebecers in the whole of the country and for English speaking Canadians in Quebec by law, the notion of individual rights. As I understand it the problem was not that we should have these individual rights across the whole country. It was the people in Quebec wanted to feel at home in Quebec. It was maîtres chez nous, not maîtres chez all of Canada, it was maîtres chez Québec, at home.

Quebec was not part of the patriation of the Constitution. It did not sign on and so instead of this becoming something we could all cherish and bind us together, it became yet one more irritant.

These are the words of Lysiane Gagnon: "This was another episode in the long antagonism between two schools of thought. One embodied by Trudeau focused on the rights of French Canadian individuals. Given equal chances and a decent degree of protection for their language they should be able to affirm themselves throughout the country. The second school of thought focused on the collective rights of Quebecers to develop the institutions and increase the powers of the province that was their only true homeland, the place where they formed a majority".

We now have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms without responsibilities covering the whole nation. The intent was to make Quebec feel more comfortable as part of the nation. It did not work. What are we left with? A situation where the courts are now making decisions that should be made in Parliament. They are making decisions that fly in the face of common sense.

I have examples of that. I do not need to bring it out in this case right now. There are many examples. The hon. member opposite wants an example. Let me give an example.

The top court said just the other day that too drunk is a defence in a rape case. A guy gets too drunk, rapes someone and as a defence cannot form intent and there it is.

• (1745)

This is a decision that is made by our courts but it does not reflect the common sense of the common people. What happens? People see something like this and they say Parliament could not possibly understand what is going on. The courts do not understand what is going on and people feel disconnected from the very institutions that they should be connected to and feel comfortable with.

Now we have a situation in which we have rights through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms I submit is with us whether we like it or not because it has incredible symbolism in the country. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms in a survey done in 1991 had more symbolic significance to Canadians than anything else, including the flag.

I submit that it is going to be part of us for a long time but in the chapter that Jeffrey Simpson wrote, he wrote about Harvard professor Mary Anne Glendon in her book of the same name in its simplest American form, the language of rights is the language of no compromise: "By indulging in excessively simple forms of rights talk in our pluralistic society we needlessly multiply occasions for civil discord.

We make it difficult for persons and groups with conflicting interests and views to build coalitions and achieve compromise or even to acquire that minimal degree of mutual forbearance and understanding that promotes peaceful coexistence and keeps the door open to further communications".

We have seen this in our very Parliament, as last week two members who have very different opinions about things were starting to fight because one has a right and the other feels denied that right. Yet all of life is a compromise of one form or another. It is a means of getting along with each other. Under the guise of rights we are getting ourselves back into corners where compromise is not part of the equation.

I will quote again from Jeffrey Simpson: "A distinguishing characteristic of this rights talk is the degree to which discretionary decisions of government and the normal and sometimes healthy tensions in a pluralistic, democratic society are elevated to those of apparently fundamental human rights. These rights by virtue of being rights cannot easily be compromised. They

can only be defended to the maximum. These rights also seldom have obligations or responsibilities attached to them".

What can we do? Where do we go from here? We are very likely going to have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with us forever. How do we go about making the Charter of Rights and Freedoms more like that which was originally intended, something to draw us closer together, to bind us, to protect individuals from excesses of the states, to protect minorities from majorities and to have rules that we could live by?

I would submit that we could achieve that if somehow we were able to induce the courts to interpret the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in a fashion and in a manner that gave some sense to society as a whole so that when decisions were made involving the Charter the justices would not always take the most liberal interpretation as per individual rights and the narrowest interpretation toward the rights of society as a whole.

I do not know how this delicate balancing act could be achieved but it is certainly worthy of the attempt because we have evolved to a situation today in which people think of ourselves as rights and entitlements. We have a situation in which regardless of the colour of the book that the government is quoting from, whether it is the Reform's blue book or the Liberal's red book or the Bloc's book, there are certain things that we have to do as a nation.

• (1750)

We have to start to live within our means. As the money dries up people are going to be backed into more and more corners connected with rights and we are going to have to start thinking more and more in terms of our responsibilities to our nation.

We recall those 17 words that President Kennedy used years ago to discuss exactly this: "Think not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country".

If we could inculcate somehow that simple phrase into our lexicon, if we Canadians could think what can we do for our country rather than what our country can do for us, I think we could go a long way in bridging some of the conflicts that are evident here in this House, the conflicts between those of us on this side of the House and back and forth, and individuals who are concerned with their rights. We should probably show far more concern for our responsibilities to each other and to our nation and far less for our rights to ourselves.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest proposes the name of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms be changed to include a reference to Canadian charter of rights, freedoms and responsibilities.

It is an interesting proposal but I do not think it is one with which I could agree for various reasons. In 1982 Canada's Constitution was amended to include the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Although the charter came into force in 1982 the rights and freedoms it contains are not new. The charter is part of a human rights tradition which Canada shares with other countries like France, England and the United States.

In England the Magna Carta in 1215 was an early written attempt to formulate individual rights. The revolutions in France and the former British colonies also ended with attempts to set out in writing the rights which individuals possess vis–à–vis the power of the state. Individuals, it was decided, could not be deprived of these rights by the ruler or in a democracy or by an elected body representing the will of the majority. The government was not to circumvent the rights of the individual.

The French called their document le déclaration des droits, des langues et des citoyens. The Americans named theirs The Bill of Rights. We would later call ours, of course, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

These constitutional documents represent attempts to draft statements of rights at a national level. At the international level, the League of Nations and the United Nations began to grapple with human rights prior to, during and after World War II. The international movement to develop universal human rights standards gained momentum following World War II as a result of the atrocities committed during that terrible war.

In 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the universal declaration of human rights while the European convention for the protection of human rights and the fundamental freedoms was adopted in 1950.

In Canada, following World War II, provinces began to enact legislation to prohibit various forms of discrimination such as the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights, eventually leading to the present day forms of human rights legislation. At the same time and throughout the 1950s as Canada's self–image as a country began to develop, proposals were made for a Canadian bill of rights.

A joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons considered the proposal in 1947 and again in 1950. Ten years later the Canadian Bill of Rights received royal assent. A federal statute, the Bill of Rights applied in areas of federal jurisdiction but it was not considered a constitutional document.

In the 1960s and 1970s the law making process at the United Nations similarly resulted in the signing and ratification of the

international covenant on civil and political rights and the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights.

● (1755)

In Canada another period of constitutional negotiation was beginning with the adoption of the enriched charter of human rights as one focus of discussion.

I am not going to review the history of the charter's adoption. There are many who are familiar with it. Suffice it to say that amending the Constitution is not an easy process. Every provision, including its topic, was carefully scrutinized by the government, by the special joint committee of the House of Commons and the Senate on the Constitution and later by provincial first ministers.

In the end, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms became part of the Constitution by virtue of the Constitution Act of 1982. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is and aspires to be a statement by Canadians about the rights and freedoms which we as Canadians deeply value in our democratic society.

Toward this end the charter protects a broad range of rights including, for example, equality rights and the right of freedom of expression.

Many charter rights derive from or have their equivalent in those universal standards of human rights which I have mentioned earlier. There is a broad tradition of rights and striving for rights and the documentation of rights.

Rights do not, however, come without responsibilities, nor are they absolute. All human rights amendments recognize this fact. Section 1 of the charter states that an individual's rights and freedoms are subject to certain reasonable limits. In determining what constitutes reasonable limits in a free and democratic society, governments and the courts balance the rights of individuals with the interests of society. This very process ensures that responsibilities along with rights are recognized by our courts. It is not necessary to change the title of this charter to emphasize the integral relationship between the individual's rights and his or her responsibility to the rest of society.

Perhaps more important, as I stated earlier, changing the title of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms would require a constitutional amendment. This is because part I of the Constitution Act of 1982 sets out the provisions of the charter and section 34 of part I establishes the charter's title. The charter's title is thus part of the Constitution and can only be amended using the amendment procedures in part V of the Constitution Act of 1982.

The procedures in part V include the general amending formula in section 38 of the 1982 act. Section 38 permits amendment of the Constitution on the consent of the Senate, the House of Commons and the legislative assemblies of at least two–thirds of the provinces having at least 50 per cent of the population of all the provinces. As we have seen in the past, obtaining such consent or agreement is difficult. The Prime Minister has indicated that the government has no plans to reopen discussion on amending the Constitution in the foreseeable future. I think this also extends to changing the title of the charter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Richmond—Wolfe and a member of the Official Opposition, I am pleased to take part in this debate and to explain our position on the motion of our colleague from Edmonton Southwest, to explain this position in relation to the new political environment both in Quebec and in Canada.

The private member's motion on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is very interesting in itself. Our colleague from Edmonton Southwest is suggesting that we add the word "responsibilities" to the title of the Charter, so that it would be called the "Canadian Charter of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities".

This motion reminds us of a fairly recent past when the late President John F. Kennedy asked the American people, and every individual in particular, not to ask what the government could do for them but what they could do for their government.

● (1800)

Remember the context of that time. It was the early 1960s and new frontiers to cross were appearing on the horizon of the American empire. Remember the invasion of Viet Nam, the conquest of space and the imminence of a new social contract.

I repeat, the idea of individual responsibility is not bad as such. However, the situation of Canada today is quite different from that of the United States in the 1960s. We may be on the eve of major social changes in this part of the North American continent and these changes will certainly not lead to a stronger Canadian state. President Kennedy's message was addressed to a nation. The Quebec people are not part of the Canadian nation and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not apply to them.

First, Quebec has its own charter, as we recall. It will soon have its own constitution. The debate on the responsibilities of a citizen in the context of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms do not concern us. Why? For Quebecers, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms symbolizes domination, not to say betrayal. Let me explain. The adoption and coming into

force of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms with the Constitution Act of 1982 marked the high point of the federal Liberal Party's policy of Canadian nationalism. The new Constitution of 1982, by entrenching a declaration of rights and liberties, took from the Quebec National Assembly legislative powers over language and education, rights which the people of Quebec had fought for since the Conquest.

The entrenchment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution Act of 1982 and the unilateral patriation by Trudeau's Liberal government mark a very sharp decline, indeed the abandonment of the most important British traditions in law and Canadian institutions.

British law and institutions base all of the state's sovereignty on Parliament alone, as a result of the long struggle between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Contrary to British tradition, the 1982 Canadian charter reinforces individual sovereignty at the expense of state sovereignty. In other words, individual rights prevail over collective ones.

With the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it is the judicial authority of the Supreme Court of Canada which replaces the sovereignty of Quebec's National Assembly. The 1982 charter officializes, from a constitutional point of view, Canada's integration to the American continent, as Pierre Mackay wrote in a publication entitled *L'ère des libéraux: Une réforme constitutionnelle qui s'impose*, published in 1988 by Les Presses de l'Université du Québec. Indeed, the ultimate sovereignty in a state such as the United States does not rest with the Parliament but with the people, and the constitution is both the guardian and legal representation.

Thus, the precedence of the principle of distinct society for Quebec, in the context of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms entrenched in the Constitution, does not exist. That principle is violated by the power of the Supreme Court of Canada, which imposes the charter principles to all Quebecers.

Needless to say that the Canadian charter does not recognize the right of people to self–determination. Consequently, under the Canadian constitutional law, the only way that an aboriginal nation, or Quebec, could become independent would be through an amendment to the Canadian constitution, something which is absolutely impossible—as the hon. member said—given the amending formula provided in the 1982 Constitution Act.

The Canadian constitution says very little on the right of communities. As I said, the distinct or particular character of Quebec is not recognized in any way. The 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives individuals certain rights and freedoms versus the state. The charter allows an individual to go before the courts to have his rights uphold, a process which can even result in the invalidation of laws passed by Quebec's National Assembly.

• (1805)

The Bloc Quebecois opposes any Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and does not feel in any way concerned by the motion of the Reform member for Edmonton Southwest.

In Quebec, community life deserves as great a protection as that granted to individual rights by the Canadian charter. Collective rights in Quebec are essential to the survival of Quebecers and the principle of responsible citizens is part of the solidarity which reflects so well economic and human activity in various fields of Quebec society.

Following the election of the Bloc Quebecois at the federal level and then the Parti Quebecois at the provincial level, our province is about to undertake a major social project to ensure recognition of the unique character of its people. This is a project in which individual responsibility versus state responsibility will primarily be defined in the context of the new solidarity surrounding the consolidation and independence of that state.

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to address this motion that my colleague has put forth. I feel it is a key motion. If we would take it seriously and listen to what he has to say, it could be one of the things that could turn this nation around in many respects.

I have listened carefully to what my colleagues across the way and over here have said. I hope that they will listen more closely. I think they have missed the point of what my colleague is trying to say as he has made this motion.

Many Reformers have been long interested in developing a charter of responsibilities to provide a counterbalance to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Everyone knows that we cannot enjoy our rights and freedoms unless we first of all discharge our responsibilities as citizens.

A number of countries have defined an individual's duties to their family, other citizens and their country. Some of these countries are Switzerland, Germany, Ecuador, Israel, Morocco, Japan, Pakistan, Thailand among others. If we look at what they are doing in these countries, as I will in a moment, we will see some interesting things that they have developed that we could also adopt.

This is not some idea that I have dreamed up. This is not something that I have come up with. My constituents as they have observed what is happening in Canada in our courts, in our social programs and in our families have told me: "You should stand up in the House and you should say we have too much of an emphasis on rights in this country and not on our responsibilities". That is what I am doing today. I am making this point that

we need to emphasize responsibilities, not just rights in this nation.

I want to quickly go through a list of responsibilities that I feel should be included in the charter of rights, freedoms and responsibilities. After I have done that I will give some examples.

First, every Canadian has the duty and responsibility to contribute to the defence of the nation from attack by a foreign power and/or from insurrection from within. I am sure we all would agree with that.

Second, everyone has the duty and responsibility to abide by the Constitution of Canada, to respect, comply with and uphold the laws of this country and to obey and assist the authorities to enforce those laws.

Third, everyone has the duty and responsibility to render assistance in cases of emergency or calamity or in circumstances likely to endanger the existence or well–being of all or part of the population. We have taken that for granted. We should spell that out.

Fourth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to responsibly exercise their rights and freedoms as an individual having due regard for and without restricting the rights and freedoms of others. We often forget this. I think we need to hear this being said more often.

• (1810)

Fifth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to vote in elections and referendums and to participate in civic affairs within the limits and conditions established by the law.

Sixth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to pay their fair share of taxes within the limits and conditions established by the law.

Seventh, everyone has the duty and responsibility to receive education and training under the conditions and in a manner provided by law in order to meet his or her personal obligations to their family, their community and society as a whole. People have an obligation to do their best, to train themselves so they can serve their fellow man in the best way possible.

Eighth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to provide the necessities of life, educate and protect his or her children until they are adults. If we were to take that one point and explore the meaning of it, it would radically change our attitude to our social programs.

Ninth, everyone has the duty and responsibility for the crimes committed by their children if it can be proven that they failed to provide proper control and supervision. We need to give parents the responsibility for the actions of their children.

Tenth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to support and protect his or her parents in case of need and to the extent of his or her means, particularly when they are old and unable to work. I will give an example of this in another country where it works very well.

Eleventh, everyone has the duty and responsibility to assist and support other members of their immediate family in case of need to the extent of his or her means.

Twelfth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to do their fair share for society and to not take advantage of others or take advantage of the state. Think of the implications that has.

Thirteenth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to meet their own needs before taking advantage of any program, grant or loan from the government.

Fourteenth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to work in accordance with his or her capacity and not make claims for welfare benefits from the state until and unless they are destitute and unable to work because of disability, age or ill health and no other means of support is available from other family members, private charities and non–governmental organizations. That point would radically change the mindset of many people in this country.

Fifteenth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to a personal code of conduct, behaviour and lifestyle that would not cause them to be a burden to their family, their community or society as a whole.

Sixteenth, everyone has the duty and responsibility to co–operate with the government with respect to law enforcement and report any illegal activities.

The seventeenth and last point—this is not an exhaustive list, but it is just an example of the things we could put in here—everyone has the duty and responsibility to conduct oneself in an honest and fair manner relative to others so as to contribute to the well–being of their family, their community, their province and society as a whole.

I said I would give some examples as well of what these points imply. If we look at the Young Offenders Act, here is one example of where we should be putting more responsibility on people for their actions. Very often our young offenders are let go with little or no call on them to compensate their victims for damage they may have caused.

For example in my constituency a couple of years ago a group of teenagers took and trashed a car, a beautiful automobile that belonged to another young person. They completely smashed it up so that it was totally worthless. The police came and took these young people before the court. The court said: "That really was not a very wise thing that you did".

It virtually let them off. It asked them to pay a $500 deductible. The rest of us have to pay for the damage they caused. Six of those youths were completely let go. They should have been held accountable. They should have been held responsible. The parents should also have been responsible for the actions of

these young people. That needs to be addressed. That is why we need to include responsibilities in the charter.

• (1815)

Another example is that the family needs to be the first line of defence, not the government, in providing care for members of society. I am referring to some of our social programs. Also parents should be responsible for child care. That primary responsibility should lie with them.

I would like to read something from the Swiss civil code. The Swiss have very low unemployment at around 2 per cent or 2.5 per cent. Much of it is due to the fact that they have a charter of responsibilities. I do not have time to explain all its ramifications but I will give an example of what they have.

Since 1978, Swiss law has compelled families to look after their needy before the government is asked to do so. Fathers, mothers, grandparents and others must support children. Governments sue grandparents on behalf of needy children and the elderly can sue their offspring for support. The Swiss courts collect the money.

Let me quote: "All persons are bound to contribute toward the maintenance of their ascendants and descendants in direct line as well as their brothers and sisters if without such assistance they were impoverished".

Let us think how different that is from the situation in Canada today where virtually no responsibility is placed on parents, grandparents or children for other members of their family. We need to emphasize the role families need to play in our society. We must once again generate the feeling of the importance of this basic unit in society, this basic economic unit, this basic cultural unit.

Parents should not only have the right to discipline but they should have the responsibility. The government would like to remove the right for parents to spank their children. Should we not be going in another direction and putting an emphasis on the responsibility of parents to do this kind of thing?

My colleague over there is unaware of what the government is doing. It would like the justice minister to remove the section in the Criminal Code that would allow parents to spank their children. If we did that, those parents who would choose that as a tool to discipline their children would no longer be able to do so. We are moving in the wrong direction with regard to a lot of legislation in the House.

We should be teaching our children in our schools what it means to be a good citizen of Canada. I noticed the Bloc objected very strongly to that and I can understand why. If that had happened we may not have had a group of people in the House today bent on breaking up the country. We need to emphasize that in our schools.

It has huge implications for immigration, for bringing in families and all of a sudden dumping those families on to the state. We should place more value on the family and the role it can play in society. Governments have been undermining the role of families.

In conclusion, we should make clear when people come to this great country that they have rights but they also have responsibilities. We need to send a signal to the people of Canada that government is not the primary caregiver. One of the best ways to do this is to change the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to include responsibilities.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the motion, although I see where it is coming from and I certainly agree that the charter as it exists has created a great amount of work for the courts, which has taken away from Parliament to some degree.

The motion as it stands confuses the principle of rights and freedoms with that of behaviour. When we say "responsibility" we are talking about how people should deport themselves as citizens. I submit that the motion would have made much more sense if it had suggested a charter of responsibilities for perhaps the Citizenship Act which is currently under review.

• (1820)

However even then I would find myself in difficulty supporting such a motion. One of the basic freedoms we have as Canadians is the freedom to do nothing. We have the freedom not to be strong, to be individuals who may be seen as weak. We are nevertheless individuals who deserve not to be penalized because we are less strong than others. That is the reason we need a charter that deals with the rights of individuals.

I had a great deal of difficulty during the recent hearings on the renewal of the Citizenship Act. I have to go back in time also to the Canada clause of the Charlottetown accord. In that particular latter instance a document purported to tell me as a Canadian whom and what I should respect. It said that I had to respect minorities, people because of gender, and people for various other reasons.

I submit that as a Canadian I do not have to be told things like that. As a Canadian and someone who would automatically know because of the way I have lived I would know that everyone in the country should be treated equally. I would think this is a fundamental matter.

When we talk about responsibilities we are beginning to impose our own rules of behaviour on other people. The hon. member opposite during his remarks cited, for example, that it should be the responsibility of every Canadian to report lawbreakers, to inform the authorities whenever someone is deemed

to be doing something that is against some law or regulation. We had an instance of that about 60 years ago and that was the type of rule that existed in Nazi Germany. I believe Stalin resorted to that as well.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Bryden: Hold on a second. This is precisely the situation that exists. When we require citizens to do something we need to have choice. Previous speakers did not deal with the question of how we are going to enforce responsibilities. Is it going to be something that is mandatory or is it going to be something that is voluntary?

If it is going to be something voluntary then it is the rules of conduct or what we would expect in a good citizen and that really belongs in a citizenship act, not in a charter of rights and freedoms.

On the other hand, as one member suggested earlier there is the idea that we should actually require citizens to do it. Then again we come back to the problem of where the state is actually requiring and enforcing behaviour.

There may be instances where a Canadian citizen for whatever reasons, perhaps fear, does not want to report on a crime that he or she has observed. Do we punish that person? I go back to the historic past to see that certainly in countries with dictatorships it was very common to punish people who did not properly report misdemeanours against the state. This is very serious.

I do not think that is what was intended by members opposite when they demand a charter of responsibilities. I think they are basically talking about the Citizenship Act.

I would like to make another point, if I may. We go on to very dangerous and difficult ground when we discuss issues like this one but we should discuss them, certainly. We heard another member talk about the difference between individual rights and freedoms and collective rights and freedoms. Here we have another problem. As the charter exists it looks at individuals. I submit this is the way it has to be because each one of us is our own self. We are true to ourselves. We may not be as strong as other people but we need protection as individuals.

When we talk about collective rights, however, we get into the same type of situation that occurred during the early part of the 20th century when nationalism flourished in Europe and led to the rise of Nazi Germany and Franco Spain and so on and so forth.

• (1825)

When we approach collective rights, I submit we have a situation in our country where I think it was suggested that some people in the province of Quebec would like to have collective rights for self–determination. If we subscribe to that dictum then the Cree in northern Quebec ought also to have collective rights for self–determination. Therein lies the contradiction. When we talk about such collective rights, then the country is broken up. I suggest if separatists were true to that principle then it would break up Quebec.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Just so everyone understands perfectly clearly, I am proposing the agreement of the House under what is called the right of reply. If I give the closing remarks to the mover of this motion, we have to all understand that no one else wants to speak. Once the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest is given the floor those will be the closing remarks and that will end this debate.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their thoughtful, genuine and heartfelt comments about this. When we talk about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, when we talk about our Constitution and when we talk about how we relate to one another, these are really serious deliberations.

The debate in this Chamber in the last hour is probably the reason many of us are here. We want to talk about ideas and why our country works the way it does. Just because something might be difficult to achieve does not mean it would not be worthwhile achieving. If a worthwhile goal cannot be achieved in one fashion then perhaps as my hon. colleague just mentioned another approach might be more appropriate and might work. That is the nature of this debate.

For instance, if we feel that some of the comments from an hon. colleague are going too far, then it is incumbent on us to make a suggestion that would improve it. We should not just automatically throw the baby out with the bath water. That is the beauty and the magic of our democracy.

We walk into this great Chamber daily and from time to time we feel as though we are not really accomplishing anything, and perhaps some days we are not. But if we can move public discourse and discussion just one centimetre forward on something that will make our country better for our grandchildren, then we have done a wonderful thing.

I would like to conclude with a little story about my three year old grandson who is the light of my life. He was visiting his maternal grandparents in Oshawa. He came back after being away for a month or so. My wife picked him up at the airport. He got into the car and he looked around for papa and asked in his little three year old voice: "Where is papa?" My wife said: "Papa is in Ottawa". He thought for a minute and said: "Oh, yes. Papa is in Ottawa. Papa is saving the country". It is little things like that which bring a touch of warmth to your heart.

All members here and those who will come forward are saving the country. It is through this interchange of ideas that we will do that and I thank all my colleagues for their attention and contribution to this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The time provided for Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1830)

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having the opportunity of returning to a question which I asked the Minister of Justice some time ago with respect to the matter of gun control.

By way of introduction to this question which I will be asking again of the minister and pursuing this matter I want to remind all members of this House of some particularly important realities we have to bear in mind on this delicate and difficult issue. That is there is quite a difference in the perceptions of those who come from rural areas in our country who have specific interests and specific problems to address with respect to this debate and those of us who come from urban areas.

I come from an urban area where I want to bring to the attention of the minister the serious concerns that our fellow citizens have about this issue.

My riding of Rosedale I know is often associated in the minds of members of this House and others with the idea of a residential area of some wealth and some luxury, where we have many tree–lined streets and gardens. All of my riding is not like that. Much of my riding is an extremely densely populated urban area like many other complex dense urban areas in this country.

In that part of the riding we have apartment buildings where we have a serious problem with violence. We have places where the violence is related often to drug use. It is often related to young people and disaffected youth who are easily coming into contact and possession of firearms.

In Regent Park which is in my riding during the course of the last election two young men were shot. Recently bullets have been fired in that complex area around apartment buildings. Bullets went right through the window of some perfectly innocent people.

I am not describing a phenomenon that does not exist elsewhere in this country. I know from talking to other members and from talking to various people interested in this issue that this is a problem which exists elsewhere in this country as well.

The question is what is to be done and what is the minister going to do. That is the purpose of my question tonight. In asking that question I want to preface it by saying that when we look at it from an urban perspective clearly nobody needs long guns in an urban riding. Nobody needs a rifle or a shotgun living on Sherbourne Street where I live. The only people who have such guns are basically those who are are using them for sporting or for club purposes. There is no reason to have a handgun unless you are a police officer or a law enforcement officer.

The question then is how do we stop the cycle of violence we are looking at in these types of areas. How do we prevent our communities and ensure that our communities do not become like the United States where in fact a culture of violence is inculcated by television and by the media?

I want to address these questions to the minister. Where are we now on the question of registration of ownership? Where are we on controls of ammunition sales? Where are we on tougher restrictions on handguns and the prevention of cheaper guns coming in from the United States and border controls? Where are we on a complete ban on assault weapons of any kind? Where are we in our recognition that perhaps this problem calls out for a different solution in rural areas than in urban areas? Nobody in an urban area wants to prevent aboriginal people from carrying on their traditional way of life. Nobody in an urban area wants to prevent rural people who live on farms from having the firearms necessary either to hunt for recreation purposes or even just for pest control on their farms.

What we are looking for is protection in our urban areas. We also recognize that this may call for different solutions for different problems. I would ask the minister if there is any way in which the department is capable of drafting regulations which would recognize that fundamental difference between the way of life of those of us who live in cities and those of us who have different needs in the rural areas of our vast country.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the government has said it will be bringing before this House further changes to Canada's gun control legislation some time before Christmas. This is a difficult challenge for all of us. I am sure that members on all sides of the House will agree with me that we must work together to find ways to make this legislation clear and effective but also fair.

• (1835)

The Minister of Justice recently said that the first and most important obligation of the government must be to protect the lives and safety of all Canadians. I agree with him. Safe homes and safe streets are at the very centre of a stable, peaceful and prosperous society.

It has been said that this is an issue which divides urban and rural Canadians. I do not agree. There is no question that attitudes differ but the reality does not. If firearms are used to commit a crime does it matter whether the crime takes place in the city or in the country? A crime is a crime. It is a problem for all Canadians, not just those who live in our large cities.

I am convinced however that we can find ways to effectively control firearms without jeopardizing the enjoyment of those for whom the shooting sports are an important source of recreation.

Recently hundreds of firearm owners rallied here in Ottawa. They were saying to the government: "Do not blame us". They feel that the government is making them pay for firearms crimes they did not commit.

My colleagues and I do not blame the many Canadians who own and use firearms responsibly and safely. The government does not blame responsible shooters, nor is it punishing them for the crimes of others. What it is doing and what it must continue to do is to develop legislation that responds to the needs of all Canadians.

We need to find ways to control access to firearms without imposing excessive or unproductive regulatory burdens on their owners. We need to find ways to punish and deter those who might otherwise be tempted to misuse a firearm and to endanger others. Deterrence does not always work but we must make absolutely sure that we get as much effective deterrence from the law and its administration as we can.

There are people in this country who believe that everyone should have the right to bear arms. I am not one of them. I believe that principle is foreign to Canada and it is something which most Canadians would not support. Ownership of a gun is a privilege which must be earned and carefully maintained by training, education and responsible use.

I also believe that it is a privilege that should not be infringed without justification. In restricting access to firearms we might inconvenience law abiding Canadians. If we do we must be sure that we act in the interests of the safety of all Canadians and that measures adopted by this House will not forget that privilege and those who have earned the enjoyment of it.

[*Translation*]

CUSTOMS TARIFF

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, on May 5, in a question directed to the Minister for International Trade, I asked him, substantially, whether he intended to resist U.S. pressure on Canada to refrain from imposing tariffs on farm products subject to quotas, including poultry, eggs and milk. I wanted to know whether the government was prepared to strike a deal with the United States by taking a conciliatory stand on the issue of customs tariffs on farm products subject to quota, thus facilitating the entry of Canadian durham wheat and barley on the U.S. market.

The minister categorically denied that he would engage in any bargaining of this nature in negotiations between Canada and the United States on the issue of grain imports.

The agreement reached on August 2 regarding Canadian wheat exports to the United States was proof that a deal had been struck, but at another level altogether. Canada did not sacrifice the interests of Canadian and Quebec dairy, egg and poultry producers for the benefit of wheat producers; it simply caved in to U.S. demands and sacrificed the interests of wheat producers by agreeing to a ceiling on our wheat exports to the United States. Ironically, a year from now, we will have to start all over again.

I also wanted to know whether according to the minister, GATT rules would take precedence over NAFTA in the event of trade disputes, and his answer was yes. I also asked whether he could table the legal opinions on which his answers were based. Immediately after Question Period, the Minister of Agriculture approached me to confirm verbally the information I had been given very briefly by the Minister for International Trade and to give me the assurance that he would do what he could to send me a copy of the legal opinions in question.

• (1840)

I never saw these opinions, not even a summary or a condensed version. A few days later, an official at the Department of Agriculture called to let me know it was not customary to release such opinions. After a rather laborious conversation, in the course of which I reminded him of the minister's commitment, I was finally promised a short version of the legal opinions. Later, I was told this version was being drafted and that I would receive a copy as soon as it was available, in about two weeks.

Three weeks later, still no news. After contacting a new resource–person this summer, I was told that the delay was due to a misunderstanding between the Department of International Trade and the Department of Agriculture, but the letter was now on the Minister of Agriculture's desk, waiting for his signature. The minister does not seem to sign his mail very often, because I have been waiting for that letter for two months and I am still waiting.

My colleague François Beaulne, MNA for Marguerite—D'Y-ouville, was luckier. He managed to get a reply, which some people would call vague, in only a few weeks.

On May 13, Mr. Beaulne sent a letter to the Minister for International Trade, asking him for those legal opinions. Incredible though this may seem, he received an answer dated June 22, in which the minister replied to his questions, although in a rather summary form, I must admit.

It would seem that the ministers responsible for Agriculture and International Trade are not exactly chatty or keen on public disclosure, to say the least, when we are talking about releasing the information used to make decisions on behalf of the Canadian and Quebec public.

According to the principle of responsible government, ministers are accountable for their actions to Parliament. Therefore, the off–hand manner in which the ministers responsible for Agriculture and International Trade treated my request is astonishing and unacceptable. When ministers release outside the House information that was denied a member who asked for it in the House, we must conclude that these ministers misuse their power, undermine the dignity of this House and ride roughshod over our institutions and democratic values.

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as hon. members are aware, Canada and the United States started negotiations in December 1993 in an attempt to deal with a number of problems connected with bilateral trade in farm products. Although these questions were examined in their entirety, negotiations were conducted on each product. There was no compromise and there will be no compromise in this respect.

The latest memorandum of agreement on grain bears this out. The memorandum deals only with our grain exports to the United States and has absolutely no connection with questions still outstanding.

The memorandum of agreement benefits Canadian grain farmers by giving them stable and secure access to a U.S. market where the returns are high. In this memorandum, Canada obtains guaranteed access to the U.S. market for wheat at a level that is higher than average historical levels for Canadian exports. Furthermore, conventional wheat exports for which the CWB is not responsible are not subject to the U.S. restrictions. The level of access provided in the memorandum of agreement is far more attractive than the inevitable alternative, a highly restrictive measure that would have reduced our exports to about half the level provided in the agreement.

The memorandum of agreement also establishes a joint grain commission that will be asked to examine U.S. and Canadian grain marketing practices and their impact on the international grain market. The commission will do a critical study of the export incentives program, a U.S. export subsidy program that has caused imbalances in the market situation.

The memorandum of agreement also obliges the United States to withdraw the measure on wheat and barley taken under the provisions of GATT article XXVIII and prohibits them from imposing any other restrictive measures on grain that do not comply with NAFTA or GATT, during the twelve months the memorandum is in effect.

I can guarantee the House that a satisfactory settlement of the agriculture–related problems that still exist between Canada and the United States remains one of the government's absolute priorities. I would also like to emphasize that each question will be examined on its merits and that no deals will be struck.

Bilateral trade in farm and agri–food products is evaluated at $13.7 billion. Canada and the United States both have an interest in developing that trade in such a way that it benefits their respective countries.

Regarding the hon. member's allegation concerning the discussion he had with the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister for International Trade, I was not aware of that. The hon. member should write to both ministers to let them know that he intends to raise the matter in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.45 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 5, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SPACE PROGRAM

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago today Canadians watched with pride and awe as Dr. Marc Garneau blasted into space and into history, becoming the first Canadian to orbit the earth.

[*Translation*]

This was quite a step forward for Canada. Until then, Canadians had had to content themselves with the role of spectators where space exploration was concerned.

But everything changed when Marc Garneau, a Quebecer and a true Canadian went up in the space shuttle *Challenger*.

[*English*]

Just recently, following the successful flights of Dr. Roberta Bondar and Dr. Steve MacLean in 1992, another Canadian, Dr. Chris Hadfield, has been selected to participate in a mission which will see the American shuttle using the Canadian robotic arm dock with the Russian space station. This is an example of true collaboration among the nations of the earth and beyond.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOUTH AFRICA

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the new President of South Africa visited Washington, where he was not only greeted with all the honours due to him as a head of state but also as a champion of racial equality. President Mandela is living proof that justice, law and democracy can and must triumph over tyranny and oppression.

The Bloc Quebecois is delighted at the progress made by the citizens of South Africa since the first free elections and the end of apartheid. But the struggle is not over and we must now work with them to build a new South Africa.

Canada must make available its assistance and its support for economic development and for President Mandela's fight against the poverty and destitution afflicting the people of his country.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the health care crisis we are currently experiencing in northern and rural Canada.

The government is proud to talk about the sanctity of our universal health care system. However, when one of the towns in my riding advertised to replace a retiring surgeon for over a year it met with no success.

By and large Canadian doctors seem unwilling to settle and work in the north. Consequently northern communities have had to increasingly rely on foreign physicians who must weigh the opportunity of working in Canada against an uncertain future caused by short term work visas.

Our patient to doctor ratio is around 1,700 to 1, compared to about 160 to 1 in Vancouver.

Northern natural resources contribute billions to government coffers, yet our hospitals are being shut down or their services drastically cut back, resulting in northerners travelling hundreds of miles to receive adequate health care.

Is this an example of the accessibility promised by the Canada Health Act?

* * *

POVERTY

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, children are this nation's most valuable resource and it is our responsibility to eliminate the poverty that creates barriers for 1.25 million Canadian children. Lack of food is affecting their growth, health and ability to learn and has led to an increasing number of young people resorting to crime and suicide to escape poor living conditions.

In London—Middlesex the three levels of government, the school boards, businesses and community organizations have come together to form the kids count program, an innovative project aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty that hinders a child's development. I commend this community–wide co–operation that seeks to give every child the opportunity to do his or her best.

The government is committed to the elimination of child poverty through job creation and the reformation of our social security system.

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[*Translation*]

VERDUN OPTIMIST CLUB

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint–Paul): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and thank Mr. and Mrs. Bérubé, presidents of the Verdun optimist club, as well as all of the club's past presidents, for the excellent work they have done.

The Verdun optimist club provides assistance to many young people in need of help in the riding of Verdun—Saint Paul.

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Pierre Lamarre on his recent appointment as president. I wish him much success in his new functions and look forward to working with him to help our young people.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette–Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria): Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, I commended minister Dingwall warmly for imposing a moratorium on post office closures in our small communities.

It is not enough to keep post offices open. Our small communities must also be provided with modern written communication transmission services; our rural post offices must have faxes and electronic mail.

Again the status quo is not good enough for our small communities. Time has come to modernize their communications network.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, these past few days, the media have been outlining social program reform proposals the Minister of Human Resource Development had not yet tabled. Before parliamentarians even had a chance to review these proposals officially, the public was informed of the highlights of the minister's reform.

In fact, everyone but parliamentarians was informed.

So, why all the secrecy today, seeing that the minister's reform is making the front page of all newspapers?

I do not know if this is a new way of launching trial balloons that the minister is experimenting with, but one thing is sure: he will certainly not win any award for discretion and respect for Parliament.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Prime Minister answered a question from my colleague from Calgary West regarding the reimbursement of $34.5 million to the Government of Quebec for its 1992 provincial referendum.

In his answer the Prime Minister stated he was committed to pay the Quebec government $34.5 million because of a promise made by the previous Tory government.

It is interesting that the present Liberal government arbitrarily chooses the contracts, whether verbal or written, it will respect. It chose to permit the sale of Ginn Publishing to Paramount on the basis of a verbal agreement but cancelled the Pearson International Airport contract and the EH–101 deal which were both written legal agreements.

The carryover process for contracts negotiated by the Tory government remains very unclear. The government has an obligation to Canadians to explain what criteria are taken into consideration when respecting or abrogating a contract. This action will haunt it. The Canadian taxpayer has a right to know on what basis the government makes its decisions.

* * *

VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, Canadians recognize that television has a powerful impact on their lives. Despite efforts to raise awareness and decrease levels of violence on television some studies have indicated an actual increase of incidents of violence over the past few years.

Television plays a central role in our society. It can deeply influence those who watch it, especially our children. Our young people watch television in order to understand the world around them. Parents must be mindful of the responsibility and be aware of what is being watched. Advertisers should be encouraged to be selective and we as members of Parliament should encourage non–violent programming through funding and education.

By working together we can all ensure that television, which is a guest in our home, can be a positive influence on our young people.

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[*Translation*]

BLOC QUEBECOIS FUNDRAISING

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle): Mr. Speaker, last week, the hon. member for Richelieu presented a motion to change the party fundraising process at the federal level. In fact, this was nothing but window dressing to conceal the Bloc's own fundraising habits and lack of transparency.

While all federal political parties comply with the Canada Elections Act and make their list of donors public, the Official Opposition hides behind a special provision of the act to avoid disclosing information that the public is entitled to.

This guilty silence on contributions received by the Bloc Quebecois and its list of donors lets an uncomfortable element of doubt hang over its funding sources.

* * *

SWEARING IN OF LISE BACON IN THE SENATE

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on behalf of all Liberal members from Quebec and point out that Lise Bacon is now a senator.

Mrs. Bacon is one of the most respected and credible politicians in Quebec. She was elected in 1973 to the Quebec National Assembly, where she did a brilliant and effective job in the most senior positions.

For a long time, the former Deputy Premier of Quebec has recognized the benefits for Quebec of belonging to the Canadian federation and she never hesitated to promote federalism.

Mrs. Bacon's presence in the Canadian Senate will mean one more voice for all those who do not identify with the Bloc Quebecois's separatist stance.

[*English*]

Welcome, Lise, and thank you for joining us in promoting a united and prosperous Canada that is the envy of all the world.

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[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Quebecois reacted with amazement to the Supreme Court decision, based on the Charter of Rights, which admits extreme drunkenness as a legitimate defence for sexual assault.

From now on, someone accused of sexual assault who can prove that he was so drunk as to be almost insane or acting on impulse will be able to evade his responsibilities.

Nevertheless, common sense tells us that someone who commits a crime as serious as sexual assault after he has voluntarily consumed too much alcohol or drugs cannot use his state of mind as an excuse or to seek lenient treatment from the court.

• (1410)

On behalf of the thousands of women who have been raped, will the federal government amend the Criminal Code? That is the question which the Minister of Justice must answer as soon as possible!

* * *

[*English*]

REFORM PARTY

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, next week the Reform Party will be holding its democratic assembly here in Ottawa. In sharp contrast with this place, voting will be fast and easy. The expected 1,500 delegates will vote electronically and the results will be known in about 30 seconds.

Although I cannot invite all members of the House to come to observe, I extend the invitation to you, Mr. Speaker. Please come and see how a modern, efficient organization operates. Come and see for yourself that in policy and in process we are ready to form the government and to bring a new measure of efficiency, competency and accountability to the governance of this great country.

With the national debt now at $533,082,058,000 and the dollars and cents growing more rapidly than I can speak, Reform has become the only hope for the country.

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CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Barry Campbell (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, the government made a commitment to add sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination to the Canadian human rights code. It has already introduced Bill C–41 which would address the issue of sentencing in crimes where hate is a motivating factor.

We have done these things because they are right and decent things to do. Amending the code is a matter of fundamental justice and equality. The goal of the Canadian Human Rights Act is not to confer special rights on anyone but rather to ensure equal rights for everyone. These measures are consistent with our commitment to attack hatred and discrimination and promote tolerance in our society.

In this House where our currency is words, we must never forget their power. They can be used to empower and embrace or

to attack and incite. Words have an impact. Free speech is not free of consequences. I will never use the holocaust as a metaphor but there are lessons to be learned. As Eli Wiesel said of that time: "It began with words".

When we add sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act and when we pass Bill C–41 we will be using words to embrace and all Canadians can feel proud of that.

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NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Family Week. In fact, it is the 10th anniversary of this very special week. Thousands of Canadian families and over 25,000 organizations and agencies are celebrating it across the country. Special events are being organized under the theme of the International Year of the Family.

As part of National Family Week, the federal secretariat of the International Year of the Family will spearhead a national awareness campaign to encourage federal government employees to spend time with their families and if possible to donate time to community organizations of their choice.

I am sure all my colleagues join me in celebrating the importance of family life for people across Canada and around the world.

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MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, Yukoners were treated to the sight of what Liberal consultation really means when the Minister of Justice visited Whitehorse, Yukon, and refused to have public meetings but only closed door–sessions with certain selected individuals.

In fact, when independent and NDP members of the legislature in the Yukon asked to be privy to these meetings, they were told they were not allowed by the president of the Liberal Party. The Minister of Justice said that the meetings in Yukon were unique because Yukon does not have a Liberal member of Parliament.

Consultation on gun control or any other area that affects all Canadian citizens should be done with every member of this House, not just Liberal members, not just run by the Liberal Party. Shame on the Minister of Justice for not having enough gumption to—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am receiving letters from concerned constituents about section 43 of the Criminal Code, the section that allows parents to administer reasonable corporal punishment to their children. The Minister of Justice indicated that he is considering the matter.

Two studies his department has paid for advocate abolition of this basic parental right. One of these studies says: "It is almost impossible to isolate corporal punishment as a causative factor" of increased aggression, yet this study still advocated the repeal of section 43. Why, I wonder, when there is no proof that reasonable correction is harmful?

Interest groups with a leftist social agenda have the ear of the government. Together they would replace the authority of the parent with the authority of the government. Parents have a right to be concerned about this disturbing trend.

• (1415)

The government should be looking at ways to enhance the authority and responsibility of the family, not trying to bring it under submission to the state.

Loving parents know better than bureaucrats or judges how they should raise their own children.

* * *

TOURISM

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, tourism plays a very important role in the Canadian economy. Every year tourists from all over the world visit our country and discover its diversity and beauty.

More than half a million Canadians representing 5 per cent of our workforce are involved in the tourism sector. Tourism also represents about 4 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product.

[*Translation*]

I support the work done by our government and the Department of Industry to maximize the benefits derived from the tourism industry in Canada. In New Brunswick, for example, the tourism industry had a great summer, thus helping to improve and revive our provincial economy.

[*English*]

A healthy tourism industry will certainly help revitalize our economy.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

FAMILY TRUSTS

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, at a time when the *Toronto Star* announces that social programs may be cut by up to $7.5 billion and when the poor are justifiably worried, the government makes a point of reassuring the rich who have family trusts and do business in countries seen as tax havens. The chairman of the finance committee said yesterday that he did not see anything unfair in maintaining these tax shelters.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Are we to understand that the chairman of the finance committee acted yesterday as the minister's scout and that the minister, despite what he said back when he was in opposition, has decided to overlook the continuation of the privileges granted to these trusts?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the government's attitude toward family trusts is very clear. That is why we asked the finance committee to hold public hearings on this issue. We eagerly await the committee members' findings.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government's complacent attitude goes against what they promised to do when they sat on the opposition side. The finance committee did not prove anything. It simply showed that the Minister of Finance does not want to review the issue, does not want to know how much money is kept in these family trusts or what our tax losses amount to. Obviously, lobbying efforts by the rich have paid off, Mr. Speaker.

Is the minister suggesting that the possibility of using these family trusts, this powerful, outrageous tax planning instrument, to defer paying capital gains taxes for 40, 50, 60 or even more years is not an undue privilege?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, what raised the issue at the outset are certain amendments to the existing legislation that were made by the previous government, the Tory government.

If pressure has been exerted by lobbyists for the rich, it is very clear that this was done while the Leader of the Opposition was a member of Brian Mulroney's Cabinet. If there was such lobbying, if figures are available, it is his government and the person who took his place following his resignation that really changed the law.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think I will have to send my c.v. to the Minister of Finance so he will know that I left the government in 1990, while the privileges granted to the rich by the Liberal government in 1971 were extended in 1992.

Mr. Loubier: The Minister of Finance does not know how to count.

Mr. Bouchard: The Minister of Finance cannot keep track of dates, so it is not surprising that he cannot keep track of deficits.

Does the Minister of Finance not admit that he is flouting the most basic principles of fairness by maintaining this tax privilege for the rich, when he is thinking of increasing the tax burden on the middle class by taxing RRSPs while getting ready to reduce the level of social protection for the poor?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, there were a record number of deficits while the Leader of the Opposition was a member or friend of the Conservative Party.

• (1420)

It is very clear that we, in our last budget, eliminated loopholes such as the $100,000 capital gains exemption. We understand full well that there may have been some inequities in Canada's tax system. That is why we are launching the most open prebudget consultation process ever seen and I hope that the opposition leader's colleagues will, for the first time, offer constructive suggestions.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. His colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, decided on a ten–week lobster fishing season to protect that resource. Consequently, fishermen have no choice but to comply with the limit imposed by the federal government. However, following changes made to the UI program, lobster fishermen are no longer eligible to benefits and they cannot fish other types of resources, because of the conservation measures imposed by Ottawa.

Indeed, while the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans limits lobster season to 10 weeks, his colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development, imposes a minimum of 12 weeks of work for lobster fishermen to be eligible to UI benefits. Does the minister admit that his unemployment insurance reform forces lobster fishermen to rely on social assistance?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to assist the hon. member in giving him information that he clearly does not possess.

Last Monday I announced a major employment enhancement program that will affect the Atlantic region, Quebec and other provinces. In Quebec alone we will be adding an additional $28 million which will be used for people who are facing difficulty getting employment, those who are having trouble getting full weeks, offering a number of options and choices in training and new employment.

It demonstrates once again for the hon. member and his colleagues that this is a government that is very sensitive to the concerns of all working people, particularly those in the resource industries. That is why we made the announcement we did.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Human Resources Development did not understand the question. Does the minister admit that he acted without taking into account the constraints imposed by his colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and will he recognize that the plight of lobster fishermen reflects the spirit of his reform, which is to eliminate the unemployed instead of eliminating unemployment?

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that we on this side are trying to understand the proposition of the member opposite.

Is the member saying that if a section of the fishery lasts 24 weeks, the qualifying period for unemployment insurance ought to be 24 weeks; if another section lasts 12 weeks, the qualifying period ought to be 12 weeks; however, if another section lasts only two or three weeks, the qualifying period should be two or three weeks; in the case of 40,000 people displaced because of resource loss, the qualifying period ought to be zero weeks?

If that is the position of the Bloc Quebecois, it should come forward and say it cleanly and clearly. Let me tell those members, it is foolish.

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JOSÉ MENDOZA

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, last year a government official advised Tasha Peirson to stay a sexual assault charge against José Mendoza in exchange for his deportation.

It was the government's policies that then allowed Mendoza back into the country and reapply for refugee status. It is the government that is paying for the process that Mr. Mendoza is using to stay in Canada. Yesterday it was a government official who admitted that the immigration department was responsible for his escape.

I ask the Prime Minister, since it is the federal government that has been responsible for the mishandling of this case from start to finish, what responsibility will the government now assume for the safety and shattered lives of Mr. Mendoza's victims?

• (1425)

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who is out of the country on official business, I would like to tell the leader of the Reform Party that the minister gave a detailed answer to the question yesterday.

Let me repeat for the benefit of the Reform Party and the House that the Federal Court made a decision in this case and the minister concurred with that decision. As the hon. member knows, the minister did everything possible under the law to protect the public in this case. Furthermore—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party is not interested in trying to find out the truth and the answer.

We cannot discredit the whole immigration system for one case like the Reform Party is doing. There is a Canada–wide arrest warrant for the individual in question. Once he is apprehended, we will be proceeding in due course.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would appeal to you for short questions and short answers.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, this is not just one case. It is typical of many cases and the issue deserves an answer from the Prime Minister.

The federal government has spent over a quarter of a million dollars supporting the so–called right of Mr. Mendoza to drag out his stay in Canada. Now the privacy commissioner has launched a taxpayer funded inquiry to determine whether Mr. Mendoza's right to privacy has been infringed upon by immigration officials, the media and the member for Fraser Valley West.

I ask the Prime Minister, compared with the hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent on Mr. Mendoza's behalf, how much is being spent to repair the lives of Mr. Mendoza's victims.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat the answer the minister gave yesterday and the answer I just gave. There is a

Canada–wide arrest warrant for the individual in question. Once he is apprehended we will proceed under the due process of the law.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the answer to my question was not on the paper, and so it was not necessary to read the paper. My last question is still to the Prime Minister.

The immigration minister and the Prime Minister cannot dog responsibility for Mendoza and similar cases. They cannot continually shift the blame for these cases to the police, the courts or the refugee board.

As the head of the government, when is the Prime Minister going to hold the minister of immigration directly and personally responsible for the multiple failures of his department?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have laws in this land and we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that protects the citizens of Canada and the people who are legally in Canada. We respect the law.

This man is not legally in Canada at this moment. He will be found. We have asked the police to find him. We have issued a warrant for his arrest across the country. When he is arrested due process of law will follow.

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. Last night, while watching the *Fifth Estate*, Canadians were stunned to discover that the committee monitoring CSIS was aware of the activities of informant Grant Bristow long before what was recently revealed. Back in 1992, the department of the Solicitor General already knew about the illegal activities.

Will the Solicitor General explain why Mr. Jacques Courtois, chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, said in his last public statement that he did not know that Mr. Bristow was working for CSIS?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with allegations about matters that took place years before this government took office and before I became minister, but I will try to be helpful to my hon. friend.

I did not see the program. I am informed there is a reference in it to a matter reported on in the public report of the Security Intelligence Review Committee in its 1991–92 report. That was tabled in Parliament. It is a matter of public record and it speaks for itself.

• (1430)

Furthermore, Mr. Courtois is the head of a committee operating at arm's length from the department and the government. I think he is in a better position to explain his answers.

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, what is going on at CSIS? How can Canadians have confidence in CSIS when the president of the Security Intelligence Review Committee refuses systematically to answer legitimate questions from members of Parliament?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the committee is bound by the law passed by Parliament. He is in no position to ignore it unless and until Parliament amends the law.

The Security Intelligence Review Committee informs me that it is looking into all the allegations contained in the CBC report of yesterday evening. I do not think it is fair or reasonable to pass judgment on the work of SIRC in this matter until we have the report. At that time we will be in a better position to pass judgment on its work.

So far I think we should let the committee finish its work. It wants to make a report this month. I look forward to receiving it so that, if any corrective action is necessary in the light of factual findings showing definite problems, I will be able to take that action.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, the minister of immigration said in his speech to police chiefs that the buck stops here. He has promised to get tough on those who abuse Canada's immigration and refugee systems.

I ask the Prime Minister: When will he hold his minister of immigration to that self–imposed standard of accountability?

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the great majority of the House and I believe that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has done a very good job.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gagliano: The minister consulted with Canadians and right now before the House is a bill that would definitely help the minister to take action, but the member and the Reform Party are not supporting the bill. Maybe they should support the bill and move fast.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister of immigration was asked about the release of José Mendoza. The minister responded: "I think once he will be found he will pay the price".

There is a young woman in Abbotsford who is in fear of her life. Police are now watching over a member of Parliament.

I ask the Prime Minister: What will it take? Will it take the death of an MP like occurred in Australia or the death of another innocent Canadian? What is he going to do to clean up the immigration department?

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the minister repeated yesterday and I am repeating twice today that the Prime Minister said we have a law in Canada and we have to respect the law.

There is an arrest warrant for the individual in question. As soon as he is arrested we will follow the due course of the law.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, it is increasingly obvious, as more information becomes available on the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, that only a public inquiry would be able to shed light on an agency that is clearly beyond the control of this House.

My question is directed to the Solicitor General of Canada. Could the Solicitor General tell us whether he was aware of Mr. Bristow's activities and his involvement in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have already pointed out that the allegations, and so far they are simply allegations, refer to matters that took place years before I became minister and years before this government took office. That is why I am very pleased that the arm's length independent Security Intelligence Review Committee, using the wide powers it has under the law, is looking into the matter.

I do not think it is fair or reasonable to pass judgment on the quality of that work before it is available. Once it is available, as I have said, I am ready to take any corrective action that is found necessary in the light of definite findings of problems that need to be dealt with.

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, my question was quite clear, but I will repeat it to give the minister a chance to reply in kind.

Did he know that Mr. Bristow was involved in unlawful activities within the Canadian Security Intelligence Service? Yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think it is well known that the law prevents anybody from talking about whether somebody is connected with or working with CSIS.

It has not been confirmed that Mr. Bristow is in fact linked with CSIS. I think this is a matter we should leave to the Security Intelligence Review Committee, especially since it deals with matters well before this government took office and I became minister.

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TAXATION

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, due to the higher than expected interest rates the budget projections of the government are off by as much as $10 billion. To make up this shortfall the government has only two choices: cut spending or raise taxes.

Last weekend the Deputy Prime Minister said that social programs spending cuts would not go to reduce the deficit. I ask the Minister of Finance: Should Canadians take this as a sign that the government is preparing to break its deficit reduction pledge, or is the government planning to raise taxes as much as $10 billion?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the second part of the first question is no, and the answer to the first part of the first question is, as we have said, we are going to hit our targets.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, one of the areas the government seems particularly determined to tax is the retirement savings of individual Canadians. This will force Canadians to rely on the government's dangerously underfunded Canada pension plan and old age security program.

Has the Minister of Finance even considered the impact of reduced RRSP contributions on the government CPP and OAS programs when the baby boom generation of this nation retires?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question in the House on numerous occasions. I have said I am not going to vitiate the consultation process by commenting on individual suggestions because we want to hear Canadians.

It must be the fifth or sixth time from that side of the House and the eighth or ninth time from that side of the House that they ask the same question. I really hope between now and the consultation process that both parties learn to sing another note.

[*Translation*]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance and the Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec.

In reply to a question I put to the minister yesterday to find out why Quebec did not have an economic diversification assistance program to compensate for jobs lost as result of the closure of the military base of the Collège militaire de Saint–Jean, the Minister responsible for the Federal office of Regional Development—Quebec said there was a program.

Could the minister give us some details about this program and its budget?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the college plays a crucial role in the community of Saint–Jean, and through the Minister of Defence and the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, we will provide $5 million annually, money that is vital to development. The minister also announced that an advisory committee consisting of local authorities has been established, which is crucial, if we really want to diversify the region's economy.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer surprises me.

Would the minister agree that the amount he mentioned for Saint–Jean was $5 million for building maintenance and organizing French courses, which has no connection with an economic diversification assistance program like the one the government set up at Cornwallis and elsewhere in Canada? I repeat, why is it yes to Canada and no to Quebec?

• (1440)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the hon. member seems to dismiss the importance of the college for the region, but I can assure you, it is very important.

Second, an advisory committee has been set up and is now working on regional diversification, which will provide a firm basis for the region's economy, and that is why it is yes to Quebec.

[*English*]

NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Since the turn of the century entrance fees have been charged in Canada's national parks. Many park users are willing to continue to pay their fair share, provided they know that their money is being well spent.

After two months of consultations with national parks stakeholders, can the minister tell us what he plans to do to modify the economics of national parks and when these changes may begin?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our colleague for his ongoing interest in parks.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Dupuy: Obviously there are others who are not interested in parks. They should be. There are parks in their region.

I am expecting to receive recommendations regarding user fees in national parks and historic sites by the end of October. However the discussions and consultations will continue regarding town sites. Final decisions are expected around next April.

In both cases the views of members of Parliament will be listened to when we come to make decisions.

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CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General did not see the report on television last night. I hope he takes a look at a replay of it. It stated that Grant Bristow had apparently committed illegal activities and that his CSIS handler had obstructed the police investigation.

Will the minister confirm whether illegal activities were committed and advise the House of the actions that were taken by CSIS and the previous Solicitor General in response to this report?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I cannot make any such confirmation. These allegations are being looked into by the Security Intelligence Review Committee. Like the hon. member I await with interest and desire for a quick report of that committee.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, this report was given by SIRC to the former Solicitor General in 1992. The report should be available to the present Solicitor General.

The minister has frequently commented on his willingness to pursue disciplinary action. Will he assure the House that once the SIRC report is released he will be taking legal or disciplinary action against any wrongdoing that was committed?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. People in the Magdalen Islands and in the surrounding mainland are very concerned about the *Irving Whale*. This barge is leaking tens of litres of oil every day, thereby harming the flora and fauna of the St. Lawrence.

Would the minister assure us today that she will have the wreck's leaks sealed in order to stop this continuous pollution of our water, thereby reassuring the people affected by it?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for her question. She should know that the people from the Magdalen Islands and their elected member contacted me at the very beginning of my new mandate to ask me to do what had not been done by the Leader of the Opposition when he was environment minister.

The *Irving Whale* was already there. The Leader of the Opposition was the minister responsible for three years, but he never had the wreck refloated. I will do it in less than a thousand days.

• (1445)

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, instead of attacking the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. minister should look after her responsibilities.

Am I to understand that the Minister of the Environment, aware of these leaks, will allow thousands of litres more of the oil still trapped in the barge to flow into the gulf until the summer of 1995? Is this what she wants to do?

[*English*]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of the Environment received petitions from the people of the Magdalen Islands. He did not even bother to respond. Within three months of assuming the position of Minister of the Environment I got the process in motion to lift the *Irving Whale*.

At the request of the hon. member who was the previous critic, we had public hearings. Those public hearings he requested have been completed. We have endorsed the proposal for lifting the *Irving Whale*. The tenders have been let and the project will begin as soon as it is humanly possible. I think that is action as compared to what my predecessor did.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food and his Saskatchewan counterpart agreed this past July to a new farm safety net program that would be developed to replace the GRIP.

The premier of Saskatchewan has written twice to the Prime Minister and has also telephoned him about this. When will the minister from Saskatchewan who is supposed to represent the interests of his province at the cabinet table announce the changes to this new program?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, I recognize the importance of this issue to the province of Saskatchewan. It is also an important issue generally because of course the principle of equity with respect to action taken in Saskatchewan must fit with the overall programming of safety nets across the country.

I would hasten to point out to the hon. gentleman, who I think already knows, that I did not cause the problem with the GRIP in Saskatchewan. This government did not cause the problem with the GRIP in Saskatchewan. That dubious responsibility rests with previous federal and provincial governments. We are trying to solve the problem with respect to Saskatchewan and we intend to do it as rapidly as possible.

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, regardless of who caused the problem or whose problem it addressed, the details of this program were promised by the end of July. It is now October.

Why will the minister not stand up for farmers in his home province? Will the minister give this House today a real date for the release of this program?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman will know that in the past with respect to safety net programs in agriculture part of the problem has been a failure in the preparation and thought process that has gone into these programs to make sure that we get them right in the first place.

In this program that we are responsible for, we are making sure that we do it right in the first instance so it does not have to be fixed time and time again after the fact.

UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I thought the minister's idea of a permanent United Nations army for rapid deployment to trouble spots around the world had a great deal of merit. Other member nations at the UN apparently did not agree with Canada's proposal.

Does the minister have any plans to modify or amend his proposal to try again to get it accepted or have we heard the last of this good idea from Canada?

• (1450)

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we do not intend to capitulate at this moment. Obviously this is an idea that would give the United Nations a very effective instrument which could be used to enhance substantially its efficiencies.

There are a number of countries that are supporting this idea. Some superpowers have some hesitation in supporting it because it is quite clear their influence would be diminished through this initiative. Nevertheless we will carry on the study and invite as many members of the United Nations as possible to participate in the study and come forward with a resolution that will enhance immensely the efficiency of the United Nations.

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[*Translation*]

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. On May 13, 1993, the Government of Canada and the province of Quebec signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the implementation of the Community Action Program for Children. Under the terms of the MOU, grants were supposed to be paid no later than the end of August or the beginning of September. Unfortunately, for the most part, this has not been the case.

My question is this: Could the minister, who belongs to a government which seems to be suddenly very concerned about child poverty, explain why she waited until yesterday, Tuesday, October 4, to approve grant applications presented by community agencies working among these client groups?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that the Bloc member is concerned about the welfare of Canadian children. However, I wonder where her party, which has a good research service, gets its information. Yesterday, I was in Quebec and every day, across Canada, I sign projects of this kind. As a matter of fact, we approved quite a few recently, including one in the member's riding.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, as she is very much aware, the delays caused by the minister are unwarranted and unacceptable.

Could the minister explain why her office refuses to give the Official Opposition the list of projects which were submitted and of those which were approved? What is she trying to hide?

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to see the separatists so interested in federal programs. I applaud them. Of course I will give them all the information they wish to have. All they have to do is contact me and I will give them the information they request.

The Speaker: My colleagues, perhaps when we address each other we could address each other as parties. It might facilitate things.

* * *

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Transport made light of my statement that without a public inquiry we will not know if the Pearson deal really was good or not. Obviously he believes it to be a bad deal.

Will the minister advise this House what proof of wrongdoing by the Pearson group led him to this position? What proof does he have?

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that the critic for the Reform Party and the Reform Party, the so–called defender of the public purse, would stand here today and support paying the developers $445 million for the Pearson deal.

Before the election this Prime Minister gave notice that we were going to review the bill and if it was not in the public interest, we would cancel the bill. Everyone involved in that deal decided to sign it. We and all Canadians believe that the deal was bad. We cancelled it. The Reform Party is wrong.

• (1455)

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, the minister offers no proof because there is no proof to offer. Yet he continues to refuse to hold a public inquiry to determine what, if any proof exists. Will the minister admit to this House

that his position is nothing more than a cover–up of a Liberal election strategy gone bad?

The Speaker: My colleagues, the use of the word cover–up sometimes is a little bit strong. I would hope that other terms might be considered when posing questions or answering questions.

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I even find it more incredible that the Reform Party would be supporting the position of a previous government of Brian Mulroney with respect to the Pearson deal.

The Reform Party seems to forget that there have been public hearings on the bill. The public has been heard, the facts have come out and we have reports that indicated the deal was not in the public interest.

We believe we are on the right side of this. The people of Canada believe that we need to cancel the deal. We have and we intend to get on with building Pearson the way it should be, in the public interest.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DOUBLED–HULLED SHIPS

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, in response to questions put to her in this House as to whether Canada had passed legislation on double hulling, the Minister of the Environment asserted in a sarcastic tone of voice that such legislation existed and had in fact been passed in 1993, did she not? How can the minister reconcile this statement made in this House on four separate occasions and the one made in Vancouver yesterday, when she said that there was no act on double–hulled ships and that, if such an act did exist, it would have the effect of shutting down the port of Vancouver?

[*English*]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that would have been the last question on double hulls. As I pointed out to the member, I not only sent him a copy of the bill but the bill in question which was passed in 1993 deemed that all newly constructed oil tankers must have a double hull. That was the law of the land adopted in 1993 and I sent the member a copy.

What was suggested in Vancouver and to which I objected was that unilaterally Canada should prevent any ship coming from any other country that was built before 1993 that did not have a double hull for oil tankers.

What I suggested very clearly in the port of Vancouver is that when we move on double hulling, and my colleague the Minister of Transport is very interested in this issue and understands that we need to have an international agreement, we have to make sure that the port of Vancouver has the same chance to compete as the port of Seattle. That is why I made the point.

PATRICK KELLY

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the justice minister to review the Patrick Kelly case and in particular to release the Ontario police file to Mr. Kelly's lawyer, but more fundamentally to order an independent review into the Kelly case.

Will the justice minister commit to this House that he is going to order an independent inquiry and if so, when and what form of inquiry?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is a little late. There has already been a press release issued. The Minister of Justice has appointed a special counsel to look into the Kelly case, both what has transpired and what will transpire. The investigation will continue through the department.

* * *

• (1500)

LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs and concerns the Canadian government's initiatives over the last year for modernizing the law of the sea and for fisheries conservation.

Will the minister assure the House of continuing Canadian support for the establishment of the new international tribunal on the law of the sea authorized under the 1982 United Nations Law of the Sea Convention?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. I know he is well versed in the subject and has long experience in this regard. I want to assure him that the Government of Canada is very much committed to a convention on the law of the sea.

* * *

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General.

It is now clear that the CSIS spy, Grant Bristow, was not only the key player in the creation of the Heritage Front, training its members in the art of intimidation, but he also acted for CSIS spying on legitimate organizations such as the Canadian Jewish Congress and even the Reform Party.

When the Canadian public is demanding to know how all of this could happen, CSIS is hiding Bristow in a safe house at a secret location at taxpayers' expense.

I want to ask the Solicitor General if he supports CSIS in these types of activities. If not, will he use his power to ensure that Bristow appears before the Security Intelligence Review Committee to blow the whistle on these outrageous activities of CSIS?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have already said publicly that I have indicated to the director of CSIS I expect the agency to act squarely within the law as passed by Parliament.

Furthermore, the Security Intelligence Review Committee has very extensive powers and I am sure it knows how to use them.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency Mr. Faustin Twagiramungu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Rwanda.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I also wish to draw your attention to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency Mr. Somsavat Lengsavad, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Since the House reconvened on September 19, you have, on a number of occasions, admonished certain members about their choice of words. Today for example, you asked a member not to use the term cover-up, but did not find fault with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for using the word bullshit.

Does the fact that you did not comment mean that the word is accepted in parliamentary language, Mr. Speaker?

[*English*]

The Speaker: I am not sure where this is going to lead us.

I did not hear the remarks in question but I will be happy to review the blues and see in what context they were used, if indeed they were used.

Mr. Tobin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. That word has never, ever, crossed my mind, let alone escaped my lips.

• (1505)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I am not asking you to make assumptions as to what the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is thinking. We are only concerned with what he said and, in that respect, I think that whatever the context in which this particular word is used, it can—

[*English*]

The Speaker: At best we are getting into uncharted waters and with that I will take my leave.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I take some pleasure and interest in tabling a document in both official languages entitled "Improving Social Security in Canada" recommended to the interest and debate of members of the House.

* * *

MOTION TO EXTEND HOURS OF SITTING

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, on Thursday, October 6, 1994, the House shall continue to sit from 6.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. for the sole purpose of continuing its consideration of the motion of the Minister of Human Resources Development with regard to the social security review, (government business No. 15);

That, during the aforementioned period of time, the Chair shall not receive any dilatory motion or quorum call;

That, during the aforementioned period of time, if no member rises to speak, the Speaker shall declare the debate adjourned; and

That proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38 shall be taken up on that day at 9 p.m.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I would like to seek unanimous consent to go back to tabling of documents to table a document that I was going to table earlier.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to return to tabling of documents?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

WESTERN ARCTIC INUVIALUIT CLAIM IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):

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

[*English*]

Under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 1992–93 annual review of the Western Arctic Inuvialuit Claim Implementation.

* * *

PETITIONS

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first one has four pages with 105 signatures.

The petitioners are concerned that Parliament not repeal or amend section 241 of the Criminal Code in any way and uphold the Supreme Court of Canada decision of December 30, 1993 to disallow assisted suicide, euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has two pages with 57 signatures. The petitioners request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

• (1510)

I present these and I concur with my petitioners.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present two petitions today, the first from 135 constituents who pray that the government will not give societal approval, including the extension of societal privileges to same sex relationships if any amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act were to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation as a grounds for discrimination.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the second petition signed by 57 constituents states that the majority of Canadians believe that physicians should be working to save lives, not to end them.

Therefore these petitioners pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously.

It is my pleasure to submit these petitions and to inform my constituents that I concur with both.

GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, today my colleagues and I are presenting 3,000 signatures to the House.

These petitioners are asking that grandparents', and grandchildren's rights in this country be respected. Too many times children are being denied access to their grandparents and these petitioners request an amendment to the Divorce Act.

Amendments could state that in no case may a father or a mother without serious cause place obstacles between the child and the grandparents.

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to present a petition on behalf of my constituents and beyond who pray that Parliament effect appropriate amendments to relevant Canadian law which would guarantee access by grandparents to their grandchildren unless otherwise ordered by a court judgment.

The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is healthy for the psychological health and well–being of both parties.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have two petitions to present today on behalf of my constituents.

The first petition requests that current laws regarding assisted suicide be enforced and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

ABORTION

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, the second petition asks Parliament to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have three petitions to present today on behalf of Maureen Morrison and other signatories.

The first petition signed by 52 people prays that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes to the law which would

sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

ABORTION

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, the two other petitions which I would like to present to the House today contain 111 signatures. Both petitions pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I too have the honour to present to this House a petition requesting that the Parliament of Canada amend the Divorce Act so that it is more in line with the Quebec legislation, that is to say Section 611 of the Quebec Civil Code, which effectively grants thousands of grandparents the privilege and right to have access to their grandchildren as well as the right to make and get an answer to inquiries regarding their health, well-being and education. I have the honour of presenting and tabling this petition on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the pleasure of presenting a petition signed by many taxpayers of my riding of Carleton—Gloucester and other ridings across Canada. These petitioners are asking Parliament to look into the issue of the Divorce Act and that amendments be made to this act so that obstacles can no longer be placed between grandchildren and grandparents where there should be none.

• (1515)

After all, it is only natural that grandparents have access to their grandchildren and vice versa, except in very rare cases.

[*English*]

CHILD ABUSE

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 200 people from across eastern Ontario with concerns about the way our law is applied very often to child abusers. They mention here that babies and young children lack the ability to defend themselves. Therefore, they are calling upon Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure that stiffer sentences and mandatory treatment are handed out to all child abusers.

GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from my constituents that recognizes there is a unique relationship between grandchildren and grandparents and that no parent should have the right or the privilege of providing an obstacle and preventing that relationship.

Therefore, the petitioners request that Parliament amend the Divorce Act to include a provision similar to article 611 of the Quebec Civil Code which states that in no case may a father or mother without serious cause place obstacles between the child and the grandparents.

ABORTION

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I submit a petition to Parliament from Canadians who wish to amend the Criminal Code to protect unborn children.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I present a petition urging the government not to amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would indicate approval of same sex relationships.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I present a petition from citizens who oppose physician assisted suicide. They petition that Parliament ensure the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes to the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to bring forward a petition organized by a nationwide network of Canadian grandparents and to add my voice to those of my colleagues.

These grandparents seek amendments to the Divorce Act to ensure their own access to their own grandchildren. As a grandmother I agree with these petitioners and support their cause.

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I too am pleased to present a petition on behalf of residents of Canada requesting changes to the Divorce Act which would extend the rights of children and grandparents.

It is my pleasure to present this petition.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have a number of petitions containing 8,500 signatures, primarily from the residents of my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, calling upon the government to

place a moratorium on any changes or cuts in VIA Rail service between the cities of Sarnia and Toronto.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MOTION FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the notice of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the notice of motions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed from October 4, consideration of the motion that Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying yesterday in my presentation, the minister has already invited all members, be they from the other side of the House or from this side, to get on the open bidding service.

[*English*]

The minister has also introduced in this bill clauses in the contracts effectively eliminating the practice of contingency fees and securing government contracts. This will go a long way in curbing the influence of lobbyists in this area. He has also introduced sound guidelines with respect to purchase of advertising and public opinion research which brings the procurement of these services in line with general purchasing practices.

These and other initiatives taken by the department have already had a very positive effect on the partnership between the government and the business community. They have gone a long way toward reassuring the general public that the government is conducting its business in a fair, open and efficient manner.

Public Works and Government Service Canada is committed to seeking out more opportunities to co–operate with the private sector and to establish strategic partnerships wherever possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in the past year, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services has achieved convincing results in support of government goals and priorities by increasing operational efficiency, eliminating duplication, establishing partnerships and restoring trust in our government. This shows among other things that integrating the most important common services into a single organization makes sense.

Bill C–52 will give the department the legal foundation it needs to pursue government objectives in order to better serve all Canadians.

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to let the member mislead this House. It is completely false to say that improvements were made in the Department of Public Works to make it more transparent and to reduce the influence of lobbyists.

Furthermore, for members of the Bloc, for example, it has become nearly impossible to obtain information on how Public Works awards contracts. As members of Parliament, we would like to have access to this information and we are prevented from having it. We get the feeling that there is not only lobbying and patronage but that there may also be a lot of inefficiency and waste.

So when the member says that the Department of Public Works is open and efficient, that is far from true.

Mr. Discepola: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the purpose of this bill is to bring together four organizations in order to reduce costs for the government and to provide taxpayers with better service at lower cost, so this bill is worth presenting.

I hear that there is no openness, but the open bidding service exists and all members of this House have been invited to use it. This computer system provides access to the information at any hour of the day or night. It does not cost much and even your constituents and business men and women can subscribe to it. It gives you information on the kinds of contracts available, their value, who bid in the past, how many contracts have been awarded in the past few years and also the value of the contracts that were awarded. If that is not open, I do not know what it is.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, as far as openness is concerned, again, of course this computer system provides information on contracts, on some but not all contracts. Many contracts are submitted by other departments or by public tender; maybe in some cases, maybe not in others, we do not know. Many contracts are not on that information system. Of course, an electronic listing of government contracts is not a bad thing. Of course not. But how do you go from there and say that merging four organizations in one department, Public Works and Government Services, will improve the efficiency of awarding contracts or even the openness of the process, when we have to know if there is really waste or inefficiency?

• (1525)

I even hear from some people who worked in the department that the regulations and their application are so confusing that they are afraid to disclose what goes on inside the Department of Public Works. There are all kinds of regulations in the government, but actually implementing them is another matter and that is where waste and inefficiency and patronage come into the Department of Public Works. And we know it. We said many, many times before that if there is one department where patronage and waste are a problem, it is the Department of Public Works and Government Services.

[*English*]

Mr. Discepola: Mr. Speaker, first of all, in the registration of contingency fees, since May of this year Public Works and Government Services Canada has put in place that every single person who bids for contracts in the public service sector, of which there are almost 175,000 to the tune of $10 billion, must state clearly that they have not hired lobbyists to influence any contract.

[*Translation*]

Sometimes I am also shocked because since the Bloc Quebecois came on the scene, it has been criticizing us federalists on this side of the House and saying that we waste money and that there is so much duplication throughout the federal system. This bill is intended to eliminate duplication and make the service more productive, that is make it provide service to the Canadian public. We will save money with this system.

[*English*]

I find it appalling at times that they criticize. When we do take the initiative in this government to group together three or four levels of service under one roof to provide that service so vitally needed, not only for the business community but for our taxpayers who ultimately pay the final bill, the hon. member on that side of the House has the audacity to criticize us for doing it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on the bill to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services. As you know, this is an incorporating act which, by tradition, is not considered to be very controversial legislation. Not so with this bill. The Bloc Quebecois does not have to follow any such tradition: We are here to question everything, even what appears to be a mere formality.

In fact, the seemingly neutral character of this legislation conceals very important considerations. This tool to restructure the Department of Public Works and Government Services should have been used to develop procedures ensuring true transparency regarding the management of public money. Such transparency is conditional on extending the role of MPs. Let us not forget that this department is among the top solicitors of goods and services.

In the 1994–95 budget, expenditures for this department were expected to reach $2.3 billion, under the program for real property services, supplies and Crown corporations. In 1992–93, through the Quebec procurement directorate alone, a total of 17,400 contracts representing an estimated value of $269.9 million were awarded. Cheques totalling over $34 million were also sent out in the form of benefits, payments and tax refunds.

• (1530)

Stocked items representing $3 billion were sold, as well as $4 million worth of surplus assets, through the Crown Assets Distribution Centre. But are there any monitoring measures involving elected representatives?

In other words, this bill should be based on the fundamentals of government transparency, follow–up and monitoring, in the riding, by the member concerned. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Early last summer, I asked the Minister of Public Works to provide me with information on his department's activities in my riding of Châteauguay. Like my colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois, I thought this was a very reasonable request, since one of the major roles of a member of Parliament is to ensure proper management of the taxpayers' money spent on federal government operations.

After a long wait, I was really surprised to get from the minister a rather terse and disappointing answer. He told us, and I quote: "Unfortunately, the information you are requesting cannot be found in a single document only— In short, your request would represent an excessive workload for our department—" This goes to show what the government thinks of follow–ups by members on expenditures made in their ridings. How can a member of Parliament carry out his or her duties and functions when he is unable to get follow–up reports or information on the operations of this department in his or her riding?

This lack of transparency is what people concerned by the integrity of the public system have been decrying for some time now. This lack of transparency can be noticed even in our ridings as it affects civil servants and contractors. Let me give you two examples from my riding of Châteauguay. Early this year, the director of the Canada Employment Centre in Châteauguay called me to ask if I had any objection to the Centre being moved. The offices were getting crowded it seems. Of course, I said I saw no drawbacks, but I would have liked to know the

criteria that were used and be informed before the decision was made.

Some time later, the manager of the building told me that he could have provided more space to the Centre, making the move unnecessary. How much did this move cost? How could I check and interfere in this matter without the proper documentation? At a time when it is no longer possible to waste taxpayers' money, why is the member constantly fighting to obtain information?

I have another example. I have learned recently that the Canada Employment Centre in Châteauguay had asked a non–profit organization, namely the Société de développement économique de Roussillon or SODER, to manage the independent workers assistance program. It did not take long for some people to come to my office complaining about decisions made under the program. When I asked the director of SODER for information regarding the budget, the number of applications turned down, the reason they were turned down, the name of the applicants, etc., he told me that all this information was confidential.

According to him, he was the one who made the decisions. Is it possible that an employee working under contract for a federal government agency can decide what an elected member of Parliament has the right to know? I talked to the director of the Employment Centre. He was supposed to know whether this situation was normal. I have been waiting for his answer for several weeks. I am now convinced that I should go to the minister and ask him again to be more open and to have more respect for the role of the member of Parliament.

Similar examples speak for themselves. It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that about 87 per cent of Canadians no longer believe in politicians. What do we do? What can we do? The bill before us today gives us a golden opportunity to change direction. With this merger which, according to the government, will lead to savings, it would be possible to put in place control mechanisms accessible to members of Parliament in order to make the system more transparent.

• (1535)

The minister was worried about the cost of transparency. He even used this as an excuse to turn down my request. I suggest that transparency, and to me there are no ifs and buts, is a real way to save money. Today, how can we be sure that budget limits are observed? This is not about challenging the way public servants implement policies and regulations. It is about exercising our vigilance as elected representatives.

The government should use this bill to set up the appropriate mechanism for exercising that vigilance. The Auditor General of Canada has already pointed out the department's shortcomings in this respect. In 1991, leased office space represented over 40 per cent of the total and required annual rental expenditures of $379 million. The Government of Canada procured goods and services for a total of $8 billion annually and participated in the administration of major projects valued at $23 billion.

According to the Auditor General, the department awarded $3 billion worth of non–competitive contracts annually—three billion dollars that were not subject to the rules for competitive bidding. Furthermore, there was no corporate system to record and report on supplier and product performance. What action was taken on the comments and recommendations made by the Auditor General?

Whether the project is in its initial stages, during the bidding process, or in its final stages, when the books are closed, access to information is not available as a matter of course. Much depends on the good will of public servants, whose workload was not planned to accommodate this much needed transparency. However, whether we are talking about agencies or individuals, when funds are allocated from the public purse, public funds and the public interest are involved, so we must be able to account for the ways such funds are spent.

This lack of transparency casts some doubts on the integrity of the entire system for awarding contracts. Transparency is essential to prevent any possibility of patronage, conflict of interest or undue privilege. Look at the Pearson Airport case. Look at the bill to control lobbyists, a bill was watered down as a result of very effective representations made by those same lobbyists. Look at the proposal concerning grassroots funding of political parties which was dismissed out of hand by the Liberals.

The management and control of government contracts must be a priority for us, for the sake of both fiscal responsibility and openness. Recently, a Canadian Press dispatch indicated that in 1993, that Coopers & Lybrand, a very prestigious firm, contributed to the then leading federal parties: $107,000 to the Liberal Party of Canada, and $150,000 to the Progressive Conservative Party. During the 1992–93 fiscal year, that same firm was awarded government contracts for a total value of $3,771,917. If you are good with arithmetics, you can figure out that Coopers & Lybrand's total contribution of $257,000 is approximately 6.8 per cent of all the contracts awarded. A pretty good return!

I have another similar example. Again according to the Canadian Press, Ernst & Young also participated in the funding of the two major federal political parties in 1993. It gave $64,000 to the Progressive Conservative Party and $44,000 to the Liberal Party of Canada. During the 1992–93 fiscal year, that firm was awarded government contracts worth $272,132. The ratio is much higher in this case since the total of $108,000

contributed is 39.6 per cent of the contracts awarded. I leave it up to you to draw your own conclusions.

• (1540)

These two examples stress the need for openness in the government contracting business. As things stand right now, all government contracts over $25,000 for goods purchased or over $60,000 for capital projects are handled through the Open Bidding Service, the OBS, which is an electronic service available only through subscription. If contracts are less than $25,000 or $60,000, invitations to bid are sent to the chosen few who are listed on the suppliers file.

Of course, there are transfer payments published in the Public Accounts, but that is not readily available and is out–of–date when you want answers on what is happening right now, today. I must admit that the Minister of Public Works and Government Services is right when he says that these tools are meant to ensure the efficient management of the tendering process, they were not designed to give members of Parliament or the general public access to information on that process.

This is precisely for that reason that the parliamentary wing of the Bloc Quebecois is asking for a monitoring mechanism which would scrutinize the contracts and implement what we are asking for in our amendment: openness. A contracting–out code must be included in the bill. In particular we demand that all members of Parliament, irrespective of their political affiliation, be consulted or at the very least informed, when government contracts are awarded through this process in their ridings. Finally, the Department of Public Works and Government Services must establish a system whereby periodic summaries would be made widely available.

I would like to mention another particularly damning fact about the way the federal government manages public spending, and consequently the questionable administrative practises used in the Department of Public Works and Government Services.

One of these practices, unfortunately not publicized enough, is to accept advance payments by government agencies to allow them to keep their annual budget allocation. In order to do so, they pay in advance for services to be provided in subsequent years and, as a result, they can maintain the integrity of their resource envelope for the fiscal year.

Last month, the President of the Treasury Board wrote a letter to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services indicating that questionable practices, namely advance payments, were going on in his department. In so doing, the President of the Treasury Board was forcing the Minister of Public Works and Government Services to look into this practice involving among others the Canada Communication Group.

In a press release dated September 19, he said the following: "In mid–August, officials from Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) contacted Treasury Board officials with information indicating that an internal audit showed that the Canada Communication Group (CCG) might have accepted irregular advance payments. They asked for advice and direction on this issue. Treasury Board officials responded by explaining that this practice was indeed contrary to government policies, and gave direction on the actions required to rectify the situation".

By emphasizing the seriousness of the situation, the President of the Treasury Board drew attention to a problem inherent to the administrative practices of this government. In a letter to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services accompanying the press release, he even made the following comments: "This situation is, of course, very serious. Of particular concern to me is the question of apparent disregard for existing principles of financial management and control within government and Treasury Board policy. Therefore, I am asking you to look into this matter personnally; have an independent review of the matter undertaken by your internal audit organization and report back to me within a month on your findings".

• (1545)

In summary, we have here a convincing and damning example of shameful waste of public finances. It is really regrettable that the ongoing inquiry was limited to the internal level. I doubt that this inquiry is being done correctly; it is obvious that the procedure used to examine this serious problem of fraud is deficient because it is limited to the internal level. How many such cases never get discussed in public?

A conclusion must be drawn immediately about this major incident. The administrative practices of the government, as they appear in the present case, are in no way transparent. This is why the Bloc Quebecois asks in its amendment that all the expenses of the Department of Public Works and Governmental Services be made known to the public. I find deplorable and charged with consequences the fact that the government has not considered amending Bill C–52 in this way. The same thing could be said of the transparency, so often promised by the Liberal Party of Canada during the last election campaign, but which has gone unheeded since the Liberals took office.

The control of public finances necessitates such mechanisms. Without them, members of Parliament cannot have free access to government contracts that are in effect in their own ridings. Without transparency mechanisms, how can we make officials accountable for their spending?

The amendment of the Bloc Quebecois is therefore the expression of that new philosophy which should inhabit us all: to find a new way of administering public affairs in order to put

aside the old traditional practices that are responsible for our $508 billion deficit.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc has repeatedly talked about "transparency" and "openness". I find very interesting that, since last Friday, not one Bloc member has accepted two proposals from the minister which would allow them to obtain the information they want. Not one member of the Bloc. Perhaps the Bloc could tell me why? This would cost them only $37 a year.

On the same subject of transparency, committees such as the Standing Committee on Government Operations on which sit two members of their party can ask for any information they want. This is another mechanism which helps ensure transparency.

As for the advance payments, what happened? The minister himself called for an investigation. The minister himself accepted the recommendations. The minister himself has already begun to make adjustments. The minister himself, with the President of the Treasury Board, is conducting an investigation in order to make further corrections. We have listened, we have heard and we know that there is a problem. We have taken steps to correct it.

I find interesting that, when my colleague talks about transparency, he seems to want to use as an example the donations we have received from some companies. They know who our financial supporters are. That is why they put the question. We do not know who theirs are.

Therefore, when talking about transparency, it would be interesting to know their reaction to that.

In closing, I would like to make a last comment. When they talk about the data they want, riding by riding, they refuse to understand that we are in the process of amalgamating a number of departments where there were different systems. They are not yet all integrated, but progress is being made.

I would like to hear what my good friend thinks about the questions I just raised and about the points I just made. Does he not think that he and his colleagues are going a bit overboard? This department is transparent, this minister has listened and has taken steps to make necessary adjustments.

• (1550)

Mr. Godin: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague for his questions. I agree that his government is trying to be transparent, but we cannot see any results. It is the results that we would like to see much more quickly.

The hon. member said that there were ways we could use to get the information, but this is not exactly what I want. In fact, what I would like to know is exactly what is happening in my riding, and how to go about finding that information.

The computer system is often mentioned as a possibility. This is a good way to get information while the process is going on, but once it is finished, we cannot confirm anything with this system. It does not work anymore.

On the second question, I would say that yes, the minister is changing these things, but the point of our amendment is to avoid the need to provide for a mechanism that would force us to pay millions when it is not necessary, each time the minister notices—or fails to notice—that something is going wrong. We simply want to ask him to establish a framework that would allow the minister to do his job without having to check to see if there are any problems.

As for the contributions we get, that makes me laugh. Since we raise money two or three dollars or even 25 cents at a time, you can be sure that we would much prefer to get $140,000 or $150,000 all at once. I would like that a lot. It would make me very happy to present you with a list. But unfortunately, such is not the case. For our part, we raise 25 cents or one dollar at a time; and I can tell that, at this rate, the list on your desk would be rather long.

I think that this sums up what the member was saying. I would simply like to point out that on July 5, I wrote the following letter to the Minister of Public Works trying to get some information concerning my riding: "am writing you with a view to obtaining information on the activities of your department in my riding. I would like to have the list of service, procurement and rental contracts issued since October 25. I would also like to have the list of federal properties located in my riding". I did not ask for much. It was not complicated. This was the minister's answer: "I thank you for your letter dated July 5, 1994 requesting information on the activities of my department in your riding from October 25, 1993, to this date. Unfortunately, the information you are seeking cannot be found in one single document. In order to be able to answer your questions, we would have to conduct extensive research in many areas of my department and in the numerous data bases which we have inherited following the amalgamation of the four different agencies which now make up the new Department of Public Works and Government Services.

Moreover, the costs involved in collecting data and preparing reports for MPs could run as high as $168,000. For the most part, this data is not computerized. In short, it would unduly increase the workload of our department. I am sorry to inform you that the department simply does not have the human and financial resources to collect the data you are seeking".

In other words, what the minister is telling me in his letter is that it is not possible for the time being. This is precisely why we would have liked to see the bill amended, so that we could be able to get the information we need, whenever we need it.

• (1555)

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I simply wished to congratulate the member for Châteauguay. His speech was excellent and his reply to the member for St. Boniface most effective. He quite rightly pointed out that in refusing members of the Bloc access to information about contracts awarded in our own ridings, the Department of Public Works merely confirms its complete lack of interest in transparency. It is as though the department wished to conceal information.

So I wanted to congratulate the member for Châteauguay on his speech.

Mr. Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member and tell him not to take it too much to heart. When, in a speech, a member points out a flagrant lack of control, however tactfully, it is never well received. I, too, wish to congratulate you on your speech.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Outremont has the floor.

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, in the light of the hon. member's remarks, I must say that I note a pattern in the Bloc Quebecois policy, which is essentially a double standard policy. Take the list of people who make donations to political parties for example. What is good enough for us —I want to emphasize this point, but I did not intervene when the issue was raised earlier— may not be for them, as we could read in the papers this morning.

Coming back to the bill before the House today, I should point out that during the election campaign we promised to rekindle the spirit of co–operation between the federal government and the Canadian provinces.

As a matter of fact, we made a commitment in the red book, and I quote: "work closely with provincial governments to reduce duplication and improve service delivery".

This motto from the red book was quoted repeatedly by the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada. We went even further—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. members not to refer by name to a member currently sitting in the House of Commons. Ministers and the Prime Minister must always be referred to by their title. I would request the co–operation of all the hon. members in this matter. I give the floor back to the hon. member for Outremont.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada then. We went even further in the famous red book, and I quote: "This means identifying which level of government can best deliver what services".

No matter what the opposition claims, I can say that since October 25, that is exactly what we have been doing, as a truly responsible government. Day in and day out, we are wrongly accused by the opposition parties of wanting to centralize powers in Ottawa. They keep wrongly accusing us, day after day, of not taking appropriate steps to cut costs. Day after day, they wrongly accuse us of encroaching upon provincial jurisdictions. Today however, they have a golden opportunity to tell us we are on the right track. Today, they have the opportunity to show that their constituents are well represented by supporting Bill C–52.

Canadian taxpayers—as well as ourselves for that matter—have had enough of confused and slow services. They do not have the patience any more to tolerate overlapping and duplication. In fact, they demand that their government serve them better, faster and more efficiently.

That is why, since the House reconvened, we have been looking at restructuring the public administration with a view to reducing costs and improving services.

• (1600)

The government is confident that it can meet these goals by working essentially on four fronts: first, streamline the delivery of many services and programs; second, tackle overlap and duplication; third, define each sector's responsibilities; finally, transfer some activities to other levels of government, when necessary.

Changing systems, work procedures and people's mentality is no easy task. You need energy, patience and a great deal of willpower. But, with good will, it can be done. The fact that, at their very first meeting last December, the ministers agreed that their priority would be to improve the Canadian federation's efficiency is a case in point. We have achieved very interesting results so far and the signing last June of bilateral agreements including an action plan to eliminate overlap is the best proof of that. This plan contains a detailed list of elements and objectives as well as a schedule in some cases.

This intergovernmental agreement is a very important step toward a more rational and effective approach to public administration in this country. It is also a very significant step forward which, at the end of the day, will benefit all Canadians. It will also benefit all Quebecers, which is why the members opposite should, in my opinion, clearly support the government's initiative.

What will be the precise impact of the bill before the House? What are its objectives? The answers are simple and obvious. The bill before us today meets the following goals: first, make policies and programs more effective, affordable and accessible to our clients; then, determine with the provincial governments who is in the best position to deliver a specific program or service; and finally, make adjustments to respect priorities and account for changing circumstances specific to each province.

These goals are precise, realistic and totally focused on improving service to clients. There is no doubt that, with the provinces' co–operation, we can make rapid progress in this area. There is no doubt either that reviewing all our programs and services in order to reduce duplication and overlap is very important for all Canadians. In general, Bill C–52 will simplify administrative procedures so that we can conclude agreements with all provincial governments.

Further to the agreements reached in July, the Department of Public Works and Government Services will soon begin negotiations with the provinces to determine just how government services will be shared. Among the priorities already identified are data processing, supply and real estate. The outlook for this co–operative shared approach is great. We are convinced that it is important to harmonize computer and information systems. We believe that we can save large amounts by sharing premises and services with other levels of government.

Also consider related services like security, storage and reception, which, when combined, can save us millions of dollars a year and give everyone better service as well. All governments at all levels have budget problems. All governments must find solutions to the growing deficit. Of course, in the past, each one wanted to have its own structure, its own window and its own service outlets.

• (1605)

We cannot afford all this infrastructure any more. Even before the recently announced agreements, provincial and municipal governments as well as public agencies asked us to help them get goods and services at a lower price. Indeed, the public sector increasingly realizes that we must be careful with our taxpayers' money.

In fact, we are receiving more and more financial assistance applications from organizations, because the system is working fine in many areas. At present, we have co–operation agreements concerning the purchase of police cars with some municipalities, for example, and similar agreements for the purchase of pharmaceutical products and shared standing offers for goods and services.

This is why this bill before the House allows the department to purchase equipment and services on behalf of other federal government agencies.

Given the high level of international competitiveness, we continually urge Canadian businesses to improve their efficiency and become more competitive on both the national and international markets. These principles must also apply to the government and all the machinery of government. More importantly, it is crucial to put to good use each and every dollar the Canadian taxpayers entrust to us and make some wise investments.

This is why I am particularly proud, as the member for Outremont, to support Bill C–52.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Mr. Speaker, I was rather surprised by the comments of the member for Outremont on the department's transparency. I want to remind him of the situation of a member elected to represent his constituents who asks a minister for information on his department's activities in that riding. This is not an extravagant request. We are elected to represent our constituents in this Parliament and we simply want to have an overview of the situation.

The minister does not tell us he will ensure we get the necessary, and appropriate, information under the circumstances, so as to have an idea of the whole situation. He tells us: I am sorry, but the department simply does not have the human and financial resources required to gather the requested information. I find such behaviour to be unacceptable on the part of a minister. The minister is answering, in this House, to an elected representative asking for information concerning his own riding. If we start challenging the right to information of elected MPs, we will undermine the foundations of our system. Such an answer is tantamount to saying that we will not sue someone because it would cost too much, considering the amount of the fine that will have to be paid. This is totally unacceptable.

I can easily make a connection with the comments made by the member for Outremont at the beginning of his speech when he talked about transparency and the funding of political parties. We do not have contributions of over $100,000 from the Royal Bank or RBC Dominion Security. However, we are not prepared to listen to these contributors more than to our constituents.

Our constituents want to know about federal investments in their riding. How much is the federal government investing? What buildings does it occupy? What are the activities of a given department in our riding? The minister is not answering because he has to do some research. He was elected a year ago, but he still has not managed to put the pieces together. He will not even give us that answer. Rather, he says: No, I cannot provide that information because it is not available in a document. Goodness gracious, let him hire some researchers to do the job!

The minister's position is an attack against the role of a member, who has the legitimate right to ask a minister for information on what his department is doing in the member's riding.

In the past, similar questions were asked concerning other departments and answers were provided. In the case of Supply and Services, which involves the whole issue of procurement, that information is not available. Instead of admonishing us, the hon. member for Outremont should go to his minister and request the same information to see if he can get it.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, I am always amazed at how members of the Bloc Quebecois seem to miss the point.

• (1610)

The purpose of my speech was to explain to the public that this bill is in the best interests of all Canadians. What we are seeking to do is to eliminate duplication and to make government more efficient so that the taxpayers get better value for each dollar they invest.

It is obvious that members of the Bloc Quebecois are unhappy about this and that is why they are trying to attack us today on the issue of transparency when there is actually no such problem in this department. There is a policy regarding access to information and it applies to all departments.

Members of the Bloc are missing the boat today. It hurts them to see a government which advocates a cost–effective federalism, a co–operative federalism, a progressive federalism. It hurts them to see a government which is willing to work in partnership with other levels of government, as we did, for example, with the infrastructure program, as we did last June when we signed a domestic trade agreement with an exception for culture in Quebec. It hurts you because you are not here to work for all Canadians. You are here for one reason, and one reason only, that is to try and reach your very partisan goal: the separation of Quebec.

If, instead of thinking about the separation of Quebec, you began right now to think about improving how things are done in Canada and moving towards a viable progressive federalism, I am sure that taxpayers throughout the province of Quebec would be a lot prouder of your work.

I am a bit disappointed to see that the only members who truly represent the interests of Quebecers are the ones on this side of the House, and I mean the government side.

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I am also very surprised to see the hon. member for Outremont praise Bill C–52. He might think we are progressing, but it seems to me we are not moving very fast. If this is a sign of federalism being profitable, I feel it is being sort of a slowcoach.

It is more than obvious that the public works department is a total failure in terms of openness. It is very difficult to obtain information from the minister. We asked over and over again for information on contracts awarded in our ridings, which is something quite basic I think.

Given all the waste, the patronage and the enormous deficit of this country, which everyone knows about, we must take all possible measures to deal with these problems and with inefficiency. The minister of public works did not see fit to include any provision in this bill which would make his department more efficient. This bill contains minor changes and nothing that would make a real difference.

The decision to amalgamate four services will not make federalism more profitable and will not convince Quebecers to remain in Canada. For heaven's sake, this bill does not even touch on the main problem. That is why we propose that a committee be set up to monitor and supervise operations within the department. We all know that. It is obvious.

When you ask questions to the Minister and hope for answers, you only get systematic rejection. Is that what the federal government calls transparency?

Mr. Duhamel: That is not the question.

Mr. Marchand: It most certainly is, because that is the problem. The problem now with Canada and the federal government is the $533 billion debt and the $40 billion or so deficit. We must control expenses and reduce waste. This is the basic thing to do. This is another example showing that the minister of public works do not wish to do anything in order to get his department in order and curb all the waste and patronage. We would be willing to cooperate, if only we had the proper information. We could work with this department to identify the areas where there is patronage and waste. While government clearly stated it was in favour of transparency, there is none in this bill.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief, because I have already answered. I want to say, as I did several times, that I have a great respect for my colleagues on the other side of the House. I also respect what they represent and why they were elected. However, I feel compelled, at this point, to point out once again that the only problem with the Bloc Quebecois at the present time is that, unfortunately, it is not working in the best interests of the public as a whole.

• (1615)

As my colleague underlined earlier, they have had the opportunity for the last four or five days to go and sit down with the department and discuss the bill that is before us, to discuss some of the problems that they saw in that bill. They refused to do that. So, it is an unwillingness to co–operate. In fact, there was no question.

I simply want to say that it is a shame that those people cannot decide to do their share and work in a co–operative and constructive way with the federal government.

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comment by the hon. member for St. Boniface, who said that the hon. member for Gaspé was always very frank and forthright. I certainly intend to live up to that reputation.

Before I start my speech in this debate on Bill C–52, I would like to remind hon. members opposite that Quebecers follow the debates in the House very closely, and there are even children

among our listeners. I imagine that occasionally they must find what is said here in this House rather hard to take.

Speaking of children, if I may be allowed to digress and take advantage of modern technology, today is my son's birthday, and since I have to work here in Ottawa, I would like to take this opportunity, offered by the cameras and with your permission, Mr. Speaker, to wish him a very happy fourteenth birthday.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Dhaliwal: I hope he is a federalist.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernier (Gaspé): The purpose of the bill before the House today is to amalgamate the former departments—that has happened before— of Public Works and Supply and Services. Public Works Canada was in charge of two other branches, while services were something else, and government services is something else again.

This is just to say that when we amalgamate entities that are criticized for their lack of transparency, that does not automatically make them transparent. To me, this is basically a housekeeping bill. However, it is not at all what we expected. In fact, the party in power, the Liberals, missed out on this one. We are sorry but we cannot support this bill for the reasons I will mention.

The government has missed an opportunity to make the process of awarding contracts more transparent. The government has also missed an opportunity to limit the influence of lobbyists. And again, to do some thorough house–cleaning in its contracting out procedures. That is why the Bloc Quebecois presented the following amendment, moved by the hon. member for Québec–Est. I would like to repeat it, since we have a different audience at this time of the day. The motion reads that: "this House declines to give second reading to Bill C–52, an Act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services, and to amend and repeal certain acts, because the principle of the bill does not provide for a specific code of ethics to be put in place aimed at making transparent the contracting process and the acquisition of all goods and services by the Department of Public Works and Government Services Canada".

When I say there is a lack of transparency and when they tell me that they intend to provide that transparency and make it all nice and consistent, we should remember the principle that one cannot be judge and jury. Bill C–52, as it is now, at page 3 in clause 7, assigns all powers to the minister.

• (1620)

Allow me to read it. Clause 7(1) says:

> In exercising the powers or performing the duties or functions assigned to the Minister under this or any other Act of Parliament, the Minister shall a) investigate and develop services for increasing the efficiency and economy of the public service of Canada;

How can he, in his own bill, creating this department by merging various agencies, be both judge and judged?

What we are asking for, should he intend to do something, is that he does it now, so we can judge what he will be coming up with. I think it is basic. Even my 14–year old son, who has not gone through law school yet, could understand that.

We reject this bill for several reasons. Basically, we want openness. I said it, but I will repeat it again and again. In Quebec, for example, the legislation on political party financing and the very strict rules regarding the awarding of contracts have made us accustomed to a much greater openness than what we can see in the federal government. Even Liberals recognize the shortcomings of the system. I would like to quote from the red book, that I cannot show, page 95, where it says: "We will follow the basic principle that government decisions must be made on the merits of a case rather than according to the political influence of those making the case. We will take an approach of openness in decision–making".

I think they just missed the first opportunity they had to put this into practice. They missed it. If openness had really been their intention, they could have included it in this bill. We play fair, so we will give them another chance, we tell them: "Scene one, take two. Take back your bill, add to it something which will ensure openness and then, we will work with you". That is what we call co–operation, at least in the riding of Gaspé.

Unfortunately, this is not what we hear from members opposite. The government might mean well, but it missed a golden opportunity. It is conceivable that my friends opposite, the Liberal members, are pleased with the system as it is. Maybe the friends of the Liberal Party like it that way. Maybe—

There is another point I would like to make again, even if it was already mentioned by some of my colleagues. I, too, have written to the minister—I worked hard last summer—to try to make him understand that we wanted changes. I tried to understand what was going on within Public Works Canada. I too wrote to the minister to try to find out what were the assets of the federal government in the riding of Gaspé. I also wanted to know about its activities but, just as my colleague from Châteauguay who spoke earlier, I received a letter informing me that it was impossible.

What angered me most was that the letter mentioned the cost of retrieving this information. It was said to be $168,000. However, I was told that this is what it would cost to inform MPs. Am I to understand that informing 295 MPs would cost $168,000? I want to bring to the attention of the members that contracting–out in the federal government is a $5.2 billion industry. And yet, this government refuses to spend $168,000. What percentage is that? I do not have my calculator, but I am

sure that it represents a minute fraction of what it costs to manage a $5.2 billion industry.

And while we are asked to make an act of faith, to write a blank cheque, to give our support, we are denied the very tools we need to do our job.

• (1625)

Is this what you call being transparent? All I can say is that in the riding of Gaspé, this is definitely not transparent.

I would also like to comment on standards governing the awarding of these contracts. As far as I can see, there are no uniform standards. It seems that the only existing rules are internal to each department, but they are easy to get around and, most of all, they are far from being clear. Since there are no uniform rules, no limit on the use of outside resources, contracting–out is taking place in an unhealthy and vague environment.

A modern government should do business the modern way. So far, so good. Contracting–out is one such modern methods. I am not questioning the use of contracting–out, but the fact remains that one has to know how to use this tool and that any new idea can lead to abuse. Hence the need to use contracting–out cautiously so that it will not become an instrument of corruption. I think we should give ourselves the means to oversee contracting–out.

This means that the government must clearly state its policies in that regard and explain how it plans to implement them. To set rules is one thing, but to ensure they are implemented and complied with is another. I see nothing to that effect in here.

This bill clearly missed the point in our view.

There are other inequities. I noted two, the juiciest ones in my opinion, as you can imagine.

For example, I am informed that only 15 per cent of all federal contracts were awarded in Quebec. Fifteen per cent, Mr. Speaker. But there is another figure to which I would like to draw your attention because for us, in Quebec, the Outaouais is a region dear to our hearts. It is an integral part of Quebec but, sadly, according to two thirds of the Quebec electorate, at the federal level, this region is an orphan. I want to tell the people of the Outaouais that only one per cent of all federal contracts awarded in the National Capital Region go to the Quebec side of the Ottawa Valley. Unfortunately for them, they do not have a Bloc Quebecois member to stand up for them. Maybe someday!

These two examples speak volumes, but I could go on, There is a long list, but I can see that time is running out. I will therefore move on and make a few constructive suggestions which, I hope, will help the other side improve on their bill. I have not talked about any clauses because we are asking that the bill be totally reworked.

I have three constructive proposals: first, a political review committee on contracting out; second, a contracting–out code; and third, a consultation process for members, who are, after all, accountable to the people for the budget and for management activities. In this regard, it is very important.

You now ask me: What would be the powers and especially the characteristics of this political committee? It could, for instance, be made up of people who can get involved. What does this mean? It could include experts in government administration processes and members from all political parties.

• (1630)

It would have the power to inform and especially to protect the public interest, since we are all working for the people. It would also have the power to issue regular public reports to ensure government openness, without having to wait for someone to go look somewhere for this report, assuming he can find the right subject. There is no openness, at the present time. The report could be indexed by riding. As far as I know, Gaspé people do not live in Ottawa–Carleton. These things should be straightened out. As my grandmother used to say, "The white socks with the white socks, the black socks with the black socks". Things must be straightened out; we should show respect for the people by putting everything in the right place.

Cases for contracting out should be clear and clearly defined in the bill, which could be used as a working tool by the review committee. Members should be consulted because they are the ones who pass the laws and who must face the people. Since they represent different political parties, they should also be consulted on this kind of thing.

In conclusion, we want a little more openness here in Ottawa. Earlier, some members said that, as sovereignists, we play the bad guys from time to time. But we hope that Canada, which will still be our neighbour when Quebec becomes sovereign, as I firmly believe, will be well run, because in business, what is better than dealing with someone who runs a clean business.

I would like to say something else about the credibility of parliamentarians. As MPs, we stand to gain from this exercise of openness. The red book said that, but it is starting to fade. Very few of its promises seem to be kept.

I want to quote what the red book says, on page 91, about the credibility of parliamentarians: "If government is to play a positive role in society, as it must, honesty and integrity in our political institutions must be restored. The most important asset of government is the confidence it enjoys of the citizens to whom it is accountable." Mr. Speaker, let me say that the French version of the Liberal Party's red book contains a mistake when it says: "—tout en étant comptable de ses actions—" I understand that they meant the English word "accountable", which in

French should be "responsable" or "imputable" instead of "comptable".

So we have to restore the integrity of our political institutions. Before October 26, 1993, the people opposite cared and boasted about their red book. Today, I put it back under their nose and I ask them to use this bill to carry out their promises. It will not cost a lot. I am not asking for $1 billion. I am not asking for $5 billion. I am asking for honesty. Where I come from, honesty is not expensive and, what is more, it is rewarded. Those who are not honest will have to pay for it one day.

To continue, some of our fellow members just mentioned the names of some members who are still here. I would just like to say that perhaps we had five minutes of political fantasy just now, when the member for Outremont mentioned the name of a member in the House. Perhaps he was referring to a time after this mandate. If the member for Outremont is back then, perhaps he can say the name of the person he just mentioned but whom you do not want us to name now.

• (1635)

With that—my voice is giving up, but not my interest—I hope that we will have a chance to talk about this bill here again, but that it will contain what it should then.

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, first of all I should ask the hon. member to carry our best wishes to his son on his birthday. I understand he is 14 years old. I have a 13–year old son at home so I know exactly what that is all about. It is about aspirations. It is about his future. It is about where he is going to be when he finishes his educational process.

My son looks ahead with great anticipation and has all the confidence in the world that he can do whatever he sets his mind to do. So far whatever he has set as his goal, he has been able to achieve it.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that he has great admiration for this country of ours, this Canada of ours. He knows and loves the great province of Quebec, as he does his home province of New Brunswick, as well as every other portion of the country, whether it be east, west, north or south. He considers it all very important and significant.

I have heard the hon. member and his colleagues in the Bloc mention time after time after time, let us do something about duplication of effort. Let us take some action to eliminate some of the duplication. The very bill we are talking about today is to do exactly that. The creation of Public Works and Government Services Canada brings together those four entities formerly known as the Government Telecommunications Agency, Public Works Canada, Supply and Services Canada, and the Translation Bureau.

It is not just a coincidence that they are brought together. Once this full integration is completed and all four entities are brought together under the one Department of Public Works and Government Services, we can look at savings of approximately $180 million a year.

My question to the member across the way concerns the fact that in my riding of Carleton—Charlotte $180 million a year is a lot of money to my constituents. Any savings in that area which can be made in the department we are talking about today, or any other department, is certainly worth while.

While the hon. member talked about a number of other steps in relation and subsequent to this point, does he not feel that the opportunity to save $180 million a year on a regular basis is something that would be supported by the taxpayers of the province of Quebec as well as the taxpayers in every other province?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and his kind wishes regarding my son.

I think that the presence of Bloc Quebecois members, sovereignists and Quebecers is very healthy for the parties opposite. We are the ones who raised the very costly issue of overlap.

• (1640)

We, the sovereignists, have pointed to that problem for so long that members opposite are now beginning to think that we may be right. They are saying: Let us see what it means for us here in our own little world, in our federal departments. I used the word "little" not to refer to the department itself, which is a large one managing large amounts of money, but to say that it is a small step, considering our objective. To eliminate overlap is a monetary measure, but it also involves respect for a nation, a community and a province.

Canada did not listen when Quebec said: Let us manage the way we want what falls within our jurisdiction. We are now in the third period—as the hon. member for Lac–Saint–Jean and the premier of Quebec say in reference to sovereignty. They used to say "the Bloc in Ottawa and the Parti Quebecois in Quebec City". Indeed, we are now in the third period and I am moving along the boards.

We figured out the problem a long time ago, but this government is only beginning to get a grasp of it. But this is not enough. On the top of the savings which it can make in Canada and in Ottawa, how about a little more transparency? When we first

told them to be careful and to eliminate overlap, they said that no such thing existed.

Today, I am giving the government a second piece of advice. I say: Add transparency and it will begin to make more sense. We will continue to give you good ideas and ask you to accept the decision of Quebecers gracefully when they say they are ready to be on their own. I do hope that you will be able to listen to them.

As a Quebecer, I will be happy to visit other provinces and, perhaps, act as a consultant representing Quebec and inform people from other provinces. I see that an hon. member would like to ask me a question. I will be pleased to listen to him.

[*English*]

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the hon. member for Gaspé. I have the honour of serving with him on the fisheries and oceans committee.

I spent most of my life before I became involved in politics working on contracting and specifically providing services in government. This is a good step toward consolidating some of the many government departments, as I am sure members of the Reform know.

If we consolidate, billions of dollars worth of contracts will be accessible to every Canadian under the open bidding system. Right from the computer we will be able to access the number of contracts that are being bid on right across the country, whether it is in Halifax, Vancouver or any other part of the country.

Is the hon. member going to tell the small business people in his riding, the people who are now bidding for contracts, very good companies from Quebec who bid on contracts in Quebec City, Vancouver, Edmonton or Halifax, that he wants to take that opportunity away from them?

What is he going to tell them in his march to become independent? Now they have access to billions of dollars worth of contracts, as this open bidding system consolidates to include other government organizations such as crown corporations. Even contracts and opportunities that exist in other parts of the world like the U.S. or Asia–Pacific are put on its bulletin board.

• (1645)

It creates tremendous opportunities for business people in Quebec, for new people, perhaps his own son who would like to get into business providing services for government, whether it is in construction, whether it is consulting or any other type of service.

What is he going to tell them? That he wants to take that opportunity away from them, the billions of dollars of government contracts they get to bid on competitively on which if they are the low bid and can be shown to qualify they will be awarded the contract? That instead of looking at an expanding market and giving them more opportunities even beyond the borders, limiting them to a smaller market, limiting them to fewer opportunities? What response would the hon. member give to all those small business people in Quebec and those people who do work for government and are involved in government contracting?

They understand the tremendous opportunity which exists and the changes that will come about in the new infrastructure in terms of the information technology and the instantaneous access to that information. As we build that infrastructure these departments can be very important to consolidate the services that people have access to and the contracts and the business opportunities that exist.

I would like to ask the member what his response to them would be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that it will be very difficult to be brief, but I will try to respect the wishes of the Chair.

Two questions were raised by the Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Oceans. First, what about the future of my son and the future of Quebec? The answer is that my son will be delighted to work as an international consultant, if Quebec is a sovereign, different nation.

Second, before we talk about the future, about what will happen in the months and years to come, what about what is happening today? They tell us: If you agree to stay, you will have access to a huge market worth $5.2 billion in contracts.

I said earlier that Quebec only gets 15 per cent. How much more will we have in the future? The rules of transparency do not seem to apply. What explanation does the parliamentary secretary have for the Outaouais region, which gets only 1 per cent, while 99 per cent goes across the river? This does not bode well for the future.

Perhaps if members opposite and the minister agreed with our suggestions to include transparency in the bill, and if they also agreed that the procedure should be more standardized, then we would have some basis for discussion. Meanwhile, Quebec pays more than $28 billion in taxes, and that is a fact. When those $28 billion stay in Quebec instead of going to Ottawa, it will be easier on the gas to go to Quebec City and find out how we can get contracts. In Quebec, the process is open and transparent. It is administered by a public commission. With the $28 billion in taxes we will keep down there and a well–oiled machine to manage the money, it will be marvellous.

[*English*]

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, when our government took office a year ago we made a number of very specific commitments to the Canadian people.

Among them was a commitment to deal with questions of the efficiency of government—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. My profound apologies to the member for Windsor—St. Clair. I neglected to read something I have to read before five o'clock.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Frontenac—Party Fundraising.

[*English*]

Ms. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, among the commitments we made when we came to power was a commitment to deal with the question of the efficiency of government operations, some of which over the past few years and particularly with the last government had become sluggish, fat and really not very efficient at all.

Our government was and remains determined to reassure Canadians that tax dollars are being spent in a manner which is efficient and cost effective and designed to produce the best results for our citizens. More specifically, our government pledged to work for a country whose governments are efficient, innovative and co–operative; a government which will meet the challenge of doing more with less in the new reality; a government which would provide improved service delivery in all areas where we were involved. At the same time we want to reduce the cost of government operations as a way of contributing to deficit reduction.

When we think about it this is a very liberal approach to a very difficult problem. Innovation is clearly necessary in order to uphold liberal principles in tough economic times. Those principles will be upheld because those Liberal campaign promises will be kept.

This government has worked vigorously and successfully over the past year to make good on these commitments. It has done so in a number of ways such as eliminating duplication in government services and building stronger intergovernmental co–operation.

One of the most fruitful areas for improving government efficiency lies in broadening the use of up to date technologies to communicate information and to deliver our services. This government has made continued progress in developing and implementing a number of these money and time saving applications of information technology.

One of the key players in furthering this process, one of the key players in developing new ideas and new applications is the recently formed Department of Public Works and Government Services.

As the government's main common service agency, Public Works and Government Services Canada currently supplies about 70 per cent of federal telecommunication services. An important element of the new department, the government telecommunications and informatics service is a major centre of expertise for these services and a key supplier to the entire federal government.

This department will operate in partnership with the private sector to manage infrastructure services for other government departments. These services can be enhanced and expanded with a view to establishing an integrated government–wide infrastructure. Clearly, Public Works and Government Services Canada has the key leadership role to play in re–engineering and streamlining the government's communications and service delivery system.

I would like to briefly outline a few of the specific applications of advanced technology that have been introduced by Public Works and Government Services Canada and that are already saving the taxpayers of Canada millions of dollars every year.

One of these is the direct deposit method of payment. In his role as Receiver General for Canada, the hon. Minister of Public Works and Government Services must issue approximately 193 million payments every year. In the past these were issued by cheque. These would cover salary payments to government employees and a variety of payments to recipients of government programs such as old age assistance.

Needless to say, this has been traditionally an expensive, although necessary process. In a move to reduce costs and improve these services the department has introduced direct deposit through which funds are deposited directly and electronically to the recipient's bank account.

Direct deposit has proved to be very popular and today more than 30 per cent of payments made by the Receiver General use this method. About three quarters of federal public servants and more than half of our pension recipients are now on direct deposit.

• (1655)

The system saves money for the Canadian taxpayer and is convenient for the recipients of these payments as well. The department estimates that over the past three fiscal years it has achieved savings of $45 million through reduced postage, production and financial costs. Cost savings are only a part of this story. Cost savings in and of themselves while important do not provide the whole picture here.

Direct deposit also eliminates the problem of lost, stolen, destroyed or forged payments. It further eliminates problems attendant to any disruption of postal service for instance. It is convenient, reliable, safe and is environmentally friendly. Direct deposit is an excellent example of an application of elec-

tronic technology that both reduces costs and improves service to the public.

Another example of communications technology introduced by Public Works and Government Services and which has growing application in the federal service is the use of electronic or E–mail. It now links more than 120,000 public servants across the country.

E–mail provides a system for exchanging information that is fast and efficient and that significantly reduces the paper burden within the government. It facilitates quicker decision making and faster service and it saves money, an estimated $55 million per year in time saving and improved efficiency.

Public Works and Government Services has also introduced during the past year a national video conferencing service. This service is now offered to all government departments and agencies at seven Public Works and Government Services sites across the country. Based on the enthusiastic demand for this new service, the department plans to expand to as many as 20 sites in the near future.

A major client of this new service will be Radian, the public service learning and communications network. This network's mandate is to save the public service time and money by encouraging long distance learning and video conferencing throughout the federal government which would then save on the costs associated with travel.

Although still in its early stages of development, this new service shows great potential for improving communications between various government departments across Canada at greatly reduced cost. It responds to the government's goal of cutting costs through the creative application of new technologies.

Members present may recall that in the autumn of last year and the spring of this year, the human resources development committee spent a great deal of time communicating with people across the country in an effort to establish a baseline of concern over the new social service review.

Part of that discussion and consultation employed this innovative new use of technology. I am pleased to say that the first witnesses to testify came from Windsor, Ontario. Instead of spending in excess of $8,000 to bring those witnesses to Ottawa, we were able through the use of this technology to spend substantially less and not to disturb them or have them travel.

The human resources committee will commence travelling on November 14 to all parts of the country in an effort to speak to people in their own locale and to see the situation across the country. While we are there we will continue to use video conferencing reaching even further into the country in order to give everyone an opportunity to be heard on this very important subject.

Through this technology the public works department has allowed us to communicate directly with Canadians and Canadians to communicate back directly with us in a very real form of direct democracy.

This department has also been active in expanding the application of new technologies in its business dealings with thousands of Canadian companies and individuals. As the prime procurement agency of the government, Public Works and Government Services purchases an average of $10 billion of goods and services each year on behalf of as many as 150 federal departments and agencies.

The department has instituted a number of automated systems to make this process more efficient and less costly to the government and to its suppliers. One of these is the recently established open bidding system or OBS.

• (1700)

This system provides an electronic bulletin board as well as a tri–weekly publication called "Government Business Opportunities" which is designed to give Canadian businesses fast and equal access to information about government contracting opportunities.

The adoption of OBS represents a major step toward fulfilling the government commitment to provide a contracting system that is fair, open and transparent. However by reducing the paper burden involved it also saves taxpayers an estimated $3.5 million annually.

This is one further example of how the application of electronic technology cannot only improve services but cut costs as well. Another application of technology in the business field is the department's electronic procurement and settlement system known as EPS. EPS links client departments within government to the suppliers and to a central control system allowing them to do business electronically, including ordering without requisitions, supplier payment without invoices and electronic journal vouchers without paper forms.

When this system is fully in place within the very near future, it will result in massive savings to the government and the taxpayer, estimated in the range of $176 million. It will create even greater savings for private sector suppliers, most of which will be passed along in the form of lower prices for government purchases.

These examples of the steps being taken to improve efficiency and service through new technologies indicate clearly that our government is living up to its commitment in this area. They also indicate the key role that the Department of Public Works and Government Services is playing in the process.

Initiatives such as the one I just described mean even more efficiency in government operations, better services to the

public, better access to the government by the public and less cost to the taxpayer.

Here are even more good reasons why we should pass Bill C–52 so as to give the department a clear, legislative mandate to continue its work in this area.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it always astonishes me when I listen to speeches like the one my colleague has just given about how to save money in government.

We spend so much time in speech in this country talking about a $3.5 million saving from reducing the paper burden. I am sure it could be a lot more than that, and a possible $176 million saving in other efficiencies.

I guess the Liberal government does not get the idea here. We overspend the revenue we take in by $40 billion a year. That is 40,000 million dollars. We have a half a trillion dollar debt load. Our interest payments are well over $40 billion a year.

What really gets me is that the Liberals come up with this much money to actually handle a problem that is this big. I guess my question really is this. Will the $3.5 million saving—I hate to talk about such a small amount here—or $176 million ever be reflected as a reduction in any budget in the government? Past experience shows that none of these budgets has ever been reduced in 20 years.

Where are the efficiencies? Do not come into the House and talk about saving money. You have done nothing but blow money since the day you got here. Would you mind answering the question?

The Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair, would members please, when saying "you", refer to the Chair and not to the member opposite.

Ms. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, I only have eyes for you, sir, I can tell you that. I am happy to speak to my hon. friend through you and to remind my hon. friend that $3.5 million plus $3.5 million plus $3.5 million adds up.

It is one saving on top of another on top of another. We could do what the Reform Party suggested in its campaign and just knock billions off the top indiscriminately, thereby destroying the economy and putting people out on the street. We could do what the governor of Michigan did, for instance, and lob money off the top.

• (1705)

I would like to invite my hon. friend to come to Windsor sometime and we will take him over to Detroit. He can watch people who have suffered under the kind of regime that the Reform Party suggests. He can watch people living in the streets when it is cold and when the weather is inclement. He can watch those things. Or he can watch us save $3.5 million here and $4.5 million there. He can watch us reorganize the government and he can watch us deliver.

This is not the last nine years. This is the beginning of a very long period of time for the Liberal government and a very long period of time of Liberal efficiency. This is the beginning of a new life for Canada.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about the beginning. Let me remind the member that it is almost a year since the election. The beginning was a year go. If the Liberals had been serious about real cuts they could have cut the budget by, let us say, $10 billion.

The Reform Party laid out a $15 billion program to cut the deficit. If it had been implemented, the interest costs on the debt alone, assuming an interest rate of 7 to 10 per cent, could have been $1 billion ahead in the bank just by reducing interests costs by really aggressively attacking the deficit.

We are talking about $3.5 million here, $100 million there. Just by getting the job done the hon. member could save $1 billion.

The Minister of Human Resources Development tabled a discussion paper. He has been working for a whole year and all he can produce is a discussion paper.

When can we expect that we will move beyond these minuscule paper saving propositions that make a minuscule cut? When can we expect the real stuff that is going to prevent the economy from collapsing under the weight of debt and interest that we have to pay?

Ms. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, it is true it has been almost a year. October 25 will be our first anniversary. During that period we have had an opportunity to assess and to see the precise situation in which the government has found itself.

The full integration of this department will result in savings of $180 million and 4,000 full time equivalent jobs between the 1993–94 fiscal year and 1997–98 representing a reduction of about 25 per cent of the current complement.

The emphasis is on reducing overhead through streamlining and eliminating duplication. These targets will not affect the delivery of services but will result in savings of $1 billion over the next few years. This is not chicken feed. It is a lot of money. I am very sorry if we did not do it as quickly as the other side of the House would like.

Everything is simple over there. Somehow you give people guns and they will not shoot each other any more. We will have law and order. Knock 20 per cent off the budget and people starve in the streets and I guess we do not have as many people to feed. That is a very simple view.

Over here where the responsible people live, we can say that we have studied it, we have looked at it and it has only just begun.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to speak to Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts. My colleagues and I in the Bloc Quebecois think that the Liberal government has missed yet another golden opportunity to honour its pontifical promise to make our political institutions transparent.

After the Pearson affair—I think you would do well to listen—and Bill C–43 on registration of lobbyists, now the Liberal government confirms its lack of transparency with Bill C–52.

I have a problem with the bill not because I am against the principle of integrating two departments, but because the bill does not go far enough. Although I have been sitting in this House less than a year, I have enough parliamentary experience to see that such a bill should really go further. Allow me to explain.

• (1710)

It is important that our legislation in this area be stringent. About two weeks ago, I received from the Minister of Public Works a reply to a letter I had written, asking him for information on his department's activities in Berthier—Montcalm. Having been elected in this riding, I wanted to know what was going on there, who was being awarded contracts, whether there was waste, news on buildings and so on.

This request for information from a member of Parliament was entirely legitimate. I will simply read you a short paragraph from the minister's reply. He wrote: "Unfortunately, the information you are looking for is not contained in any one document". To provide you with an answer would require intensive research in the many and varied branches of my department as well as in multiple data banks, the number of which has increased considerably since four separate entities have been merged to form the new Department of Publics Works and Government Services Canada. Moreover, the costs associated with information retrieval and the preparation of reports for members of Parliament could exceed $168,000, and a large part of the work is not computerized. All in all, this task would put an excessive load on the operation of our department".

I wonder, and would it not be ironic if it were the case, if the minister based his calculations on his own hourly rate and add on computer time to get this $168,000 figure. The acme of this department's inconsistency was reached on April 18, when my hon. colleague the member for Laval East received her response to a letter she had sent to the same department asking for a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of businesses located in her riding. In response to that letter, the minister made no reference to the fact that her inquiry would cost $168,000 or some other amount to the taxpayers. He did not say that answering her inquiry would prove impossible because of the number of documents that would need to be analyzed before an answer could be provided to the hon. member.

Nothing of the sort. The minister wrote back stating that the information she had requested was attached. I asked myself whether his department had double standards. Information considered as not overly compromising and of no consequence is released, while the rest is not. I sure hope this is not the case. At any rate, the hon. members opposite who sit on the industry sub–committee on Bill C–43, the lobbyists registration bill, tell me that members of Parliament make the best lobbyists when it comes to obtaining this kind of information.

I note however that this statement does not apply to ministers. I wonder if Government Policy Consultants would not charge less than $168,000 to provide me with an answer to my question. Moreover, I think that an in–depth analysis of certain aspects of the answer received from the department on September 21 is essential. The minister responsible for Supply and Services Canada says that the information I am requesting does not appear in a document per se. Where can the information be found then?

I will give you a few hints. These answers may be in the data bank of some lobby groups very familiar with Parliament Hill. These lobbyists make thousands of dollars a day—up to $10,000 a day in some cases—to advise companies hoping for government contracts. As my colleague from Québec–Est proposed a few days ago, if Public Works and Government Services Canada were to issue monthly reports guaranteeing the federal government's openness in awarding contracts, we could probably, in the long term, save a lot of money and eliminate patronage in that department.

If lobby groups make so much money giving advice and explaining how the system and its institutions work, it is because the system is very complex and not open enough. The members opposite and the minister himself will tell me that merging the Department of Public Works with Supply and Services will simplify things, but I say that Bill C–52 does not provide for any mechanism that would open up that department. Furthermore, this bill will not encourage public servants to denounce cases of shameless waste at the future Department of Public Works and Government Services.

• (1715)

It is not normal that, in 1994, people and the members who represent them are not informed of that department's contracting–out activities in their own ridings. Openness in that depart-

ment appears to be a fine source of patronage. In any case, that is what my grandmother would say in such a situation.

In the red book, the word "openness" appears almost as often as the word "employment"; it is surprising that it is nowhere to be found in Bill C–52, and it is not in Bill C–43 either.

Legislators must look at the goal of openness as a whole. The government's right hand must know what the left hand is doing. Yet, in the red book, they talk about the citizens' confidence in the system, the undue influence of lobbyists; they talk about openness, the sacrosanct integrity, involvement, etc. The red book should not be quoted just for wishful thinking. We need an appropriate legislative policy. Now is the time to take action while we have a bill before us.

Why make laws amounting to half–measures? Bills C–52 and C–43 as they now stand are cases in point and deal with two closely related subjects. There should be a legislative link between the two. Government contracts, procurement and buildings automatically remind us of lobbyists. The Bloc is probably the only party in this House to see that link. But it is there!

The Pearson affair, which this House is very familiar with, shows what happens when you mix government contracts with lobbyists' pressure. Will we prevent similar situations with Bill C–52 before us today or Bill C–43? No, Mr. Speaker, not the way these two bills are now written.

Laws are supposed to mean something and not be just rhetoric, so a law should be passed to change things and not just to put up a smoke screen to hide shameless patronage, like what has been going on in those departments for decades.

Something else that would contribute to the much–desired openness, which is just wishful thinking on the part of the government, could be a reality or well on the way to becoming reality if the financing of political parties was reformed as suggested by the Bloc Quebecois member for Richelieu. But no, we saw the government's true face. It refused the hand that we extended to it on this issue.

Although we could say more about the pretense of openness desired by the government, I will return to Bill C–52 and probably we will have a chance later to talk about this famous openness that the government would like to have. However, it never acts openly when it has the chance.

What we refuse to do is to give second reading to Bill C–52 because the principle of the bill does not provide for a precise code of ethics to make the contracting process transparent and to show how the Department of Public Works and Government Services acquires all the goods and services.

For this purpose, we propose five things that would provide a basis for obtaining this desired transparency. The Bloc's five proposals are as follows: one, create a public supervisory commission; two, a code for contracting out; three, consult all federal MPs; four, make public servants accountable; and five, control advance payments by the government.

Sometimes I hear ministers say that the opposition never makes any proposals. Well, here I am making proposals. Besides, we often make proposals but you do not listen to them. I am giving you some very clear proposals and I will explain them.

Let us take a closer look at these proposals. The first one is to create a public supervisory commission. Among other things, this commission would submit monthly reports on all government contracts that go through the department. With such a system, the frustrating delays currently experienced with requests submitted to the minister under the Access to Information Act would be avoided. These periodic reports would help streamline government operations. This would be a simple, accessible and understandable process.

Finally, this public supervisory commission would have the power to question any vague or obscure contract violating the applicable rules of procedure. This judicial power could also be used in cases of influence–peddling or patronage.

• (1720)

Also, the proposed code for contracting out takes into account the fact that this activity represented a $5.2 billion market for the year 1992–93 alone. Such an important economic sector must be subjected to some government guidelines.

This issue is too important for civil servants, trade contracting firms, as well as Canadians and Quebecers to be taken lightly. In that regard, the Bloc would have liked the bill to set rules, or at least a legal framework compelling the federal government to adhere to specific standards regarding contracting out activities. If the government is prepared to do it for the lobbying industry, which is not a $5.2 billion market, it can also do it for the contracting out sector.

Canadians, unions and management could only win if there were specific rules in that sector. And do not try to tell me that contracting out is a cyclical thing. When such a practice has been in use for ten years, it is there to stay.

I would like it if someone could tell me why parliamentary committees use private printing companies to publish their reports when that service is provided here in the House of Commons.

Then there is the consultation of federal MPs. I believe we are here to represent our constituents. We could be asked to do more, and that would be a good thing. As a third element for transparency, the Bloc Quebecois suggests that all federal members of Parliament should be consulted. This proposal is based on the Liberal commitment to enhance the role of members of Parliament. Hence, it is important to give more responsibilities to members of Parliament and to inform them of the contracts placed by the new department in their ridings. Such consultation outside the House of Commons will provide

members of Parliament the opportunity to monitor and confirm the impact of the bills on which they voted.

Consequently, members of Parliament will not be consulted only in the House of Commons or in parliamentary committees. I was democratically elected to represent the people of my riding of Berthier—Montcalm and I must have all the necessary tools to fulfil my mandate. Information on public spending is one of these tools. How can members of Parliament play their roles adequately if they are not even aware of all government expenditures in their own ridings? Cleanliness starts at home, as we say, but when you do not know what to clean, it is hard to look clean to the public.

I reject the argument used by the minister who claimed that it would cost too much, because I think if members of Parliament were to closely monitor what is going on in their ridings, they could surely find some waste to eliminate. We could quickly come up with the money required to provide this information to members.

Fourth, accountability for public servants. This would be important. Public servants must be responsible and feel accountable to Parliament. We must clearly give more responsibilities to civil servants. No one is in a better position to expose all the awful waste occurring in federal departments. We have to find ways to encourage public servants to denounce such extravagant spending by the government. The right to expose public waste must be addressed by this House and very soon at that.

Since most contracts will be executed by the Department of Public Works and Government Services, it seems to me that Bill C–52 should have covered this issue.

Federal public servants must realize that, as taxpayers, they also pay for unnecessary spending they are aware of.

Here is a good example to justify the cleaning up, which, as I said earlier, should start at home.

I invite the Minister of Public Works and Government Services to visit the back entrance to the Confederation Building to see for himself what is an immoral spending.

Public Works rebuilt the access ramp for handicapped people. Although I completely agree with the principle, I am outraged with the end result. Instead of a simple efficient and functional slope, the contractors have created a huge labyrinth not accessible by wheelchair. Moreover, I am told this non–functional labyrinth cost $170,000.

That shows how some expenses are fit for a transcendental world.

• (1725)

Finally, I would like to say a few words about advance payments by the government. The purpose of this practice by senior officials is to make maximum use of the resources available to a function within a department in order to ensure that the same level of resources will be allocated to that function in the next budget year. Government officials do this because they are afraid of having their annual budget cut if they do not use all the resources available to them in the current year.

The whole issue of advance payments concerns all departments. Moreover, it becomes clear that the Department of Public Works must take the bull by the horns and exert strict control over government expenditures.

While Public Works and Supply and Services have historically been considered the ideal departments for patronage, the new department must now do everything it can to become the department of transparency, and it has to have all the necessary tools to be able to do that.

Again, the Liberal government is watering down this objective and, in this particular case, it is drowning it. Instead of being a watchdog as it should, the Department of Public Works and Government Services is playing an unhealthy game that prevents it from being as transparent as we would like it to be.

Another example that I find appalling concerns some electricians from Public Works Canada. I was outraged when this information was made known to me. It would appear that some electricians keep the copper from the electric wires that they dispose of, melt it and then sell it to pay for the big party they throw at the end of the year. I think this kind of practice is unacceptable in 1994.

Another quick example, Mr. Speaker, because I see that time is running out—

Mr. Duhamel: I want to ask a question.

Mr. Bellehumeur: I will be glad to answer your questions, if I have the time.

The other point I would like to mention concerns something I noticed when I moved into my new office in Ottawa. My 286 and 386 computers were replaced by more efficient and modern systems. In my riding, I have a number of community organizations, women's groups, youth organizations and other groups. They had asked me how to go about buying those old computers from the Canadian government. It is quite difficult, as I found out. It seems that those computers are auctioned off, but that they end up being bought by employees in some departments or their relatives and friends. As a result, taxpayers and community agencies across Canada who would need those computers and

could pay a good price, much to the benefit of the government, never even get a chance.

The reasoned amendment moved by the Bloc Quebecois truly reflects the need for that greater openness all taxpayers in Quebec and the rest of Canada would like to see in that department, which has always been considered the mainstay of patronage under Liberal, Conservative, and other governments alike.

The time has come to put an end to such practices. We should pass appropriate legislation so that openness, and not patronage, prevails in that department. Since past deeds speak to the future, it is sure to remain the patronage department, if this bill is passed. This has to stop. I ask my colleagues on the government side to urge the minister to pay attention to the Official Opposition's point of view.

I will now take my seat so that my colleague from Saint–Boniface can put the question he so badly wants to ask.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South) moved that Bill C–256, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (transfer of income to spouse), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House of Commons to present for debate at second reading my private member's bill, C–256.

Every member of Parliament looks forward to an opportunity to bring before the House matters of importance not only to themselves but to all Canadians. Bill C–256 is a proposal which is foremost about the family and which also has implications for jobs, child care, tax equity and the cost of health, social services and criminal justice.

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of the Family. However, in my view this is not as much a celebration as it is a warning.

In the last 30 years changes in our social and economic environment have been dramatic. Family and social values have clearly eroded. We no longer feel safe in our communities. Demand for social services has expanded beyond our means and family breakdown has become the norm. Everyone knows a lone parent, but did you know that 60 per cent of them are living in poverty?

In 1961, 65 per cent of families with children under six years old had one stay at home parent. In 1991, 30 years later, this type of family structure accounted for only 12 per cent of families. In addition, today more than 70 per cent of preschool children are now in non–parental care arrangements on a regular basis while parents work.

Much of this movement has been caused by economic circumstances. Growth in incomes has been stagnating in real terms since the mid 1970s and younger families have been hit the hardest. Their incomes are in dramatic decline and the incidence of poverty is increasing. For example, among families with a head under age 25 the incidence of poverty nearly doubled from 21 per cent to 37 per cent between 1981 and 1991.

I am therefore extremely pleased that today the Minister for Human Resources Development reaffirmed our commitment to the elimination of child poverty. He has clearly stated that this is our top priority in the restructuring of our social programs.

It should be noted however that as personal home parenting becomes increasingly uneconomic, it is being portrayed as decreasingly desirable. Instead of recognizing that there may be problems with our priorities, we somehow rationalize that the choice is best for the children.

In addition, there are a number of other contributing factors to the family and social ills we are experiencing today. We appear to have designed most of our services to kick in after problems become apparent. By then the need to respond is urgent but the remedial efforts are often unsuccessful.

According to the May 1994 report of the Ontario premier's council on health, well–being and social justice, critical development outcomes are rooted in early experiences and influences. These outcomes include good physical health, the ability to learn, the ability to cope with stress, being able to relate well with others and to have a positive self–esteem.

Where, how and with whom children spend their time in the early years has a major impact on their healthy development. A secure attachment to a nurturing adult is essential and who is better than one of the parents to provide that care.

Dr. Fraser Mustard, chair of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, has long advocated focusing some of our limited resources to children in the first three years of life. Their extensive research shows dramatic links between future problems and poor child care during infancy.

Dr. Mustard cites a 19 year study of early childhood enrichment in the United States. As a result, the group of children had a higher proportion who graduated from high school and went on to college. There was a 50 per cent lower incidence of mental health problems, 40 per cent fewer on welfare, and there were 50 per cent fewer teenage pregnancies.

• (1735)

Dr. Penelope Leach, renowned author on child care, masterfully stated the case when she said: "The real issue is not motherhood or career, but something closer to parenthood and paid work". Today, children are more a part of paid work than of home life. As such, they are currently of secondary importance in our society. Those priorities will have to shift.

The critical importance of quality child care is particularly dramatized by the facts related to young unmarried mothers. Each year over 20,000 unmarried women aged 12 to 19 give birth with the majority choosing to raise the children themselves. As a result, most do not finish their education and are likely to become dependent on subsidized housing and welfare. Their offspring are at a higher risk of being premature or low birth weight, more likely to experience difficulty in school, and more likely to become single parents themselves.

These facts raise serious questions. What has become of the traditional family? Are we fully aware of the potential consequences to our children's future development by having both parents work? Is it really up to governments to take the responsibility for the future development of our children? Has society decided that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is no longer important?

Who would dare say that a stay at home parent does not work? A parent working in the home has chosen a very honourable profession which contributes more to the quality of our society than most jobs. Yet it is a profession which is not specifically compensated in recognition of the value of the work done. That is the reason why I have tabled this bill. It is an attempt to provide a modest financial benefit to families who choose to have one parent work in the home and care for preschool children.

As a consequence of the bill, jobs in the external work force would be freed up for those who urgently need them. In addition, child care spaces would be freed up to partially address the critical shortage we are now experiencing.

Take the example of two working parents with two children in day care with the lower income earning spouse earning $25,000. After income tax, child care expenses and the cost of employment, the net take home pay is less than $100 per week.

Parents in this situation often question why they are sacrificing so much for so little. Their lives are driven by a child care schedule. They rush in the morning to get their child ready, they rush to deliver the children to day care, they rush to work to put in a full day and they cannot delay leaving work because the children must be picked up and taken home to be fed dinner. By the time they settle in the home, it is time to get the children ready for bed. Parents may want to spend family time with children but often it is the case that the children are too tired or not in the mood to play when the parents have the time.

What do parents do when their children are sick? That much stress cannot be helping the family unit. The amount of time that parents and children spend together has dropped by 40 per cent in a single generation. As a rationalization we dreamed up the notion of quality time. However, that implies that to spend a small amount of time with a child is satisfactory if it is quality time whereas if you are around the child all of the time only some of that time is quality time. That kind of thinking is simply flawed.

Economic considerations are important, but in certain circumstances parents are struggling to decide whether the modest take home pay of the lower income earning spouse is worth all the family sacrifices they are making. Although the vast majority of parents do work, a 1991 Decima poll found that 70 per cent of women would choose to provide direct parental care if they could. This bill would provide a financial bridge to assist those parents, and I stress, who would like the option to make that choice.

• (1740)

It should also be noted that our present income tax system in fact discriminates against one income families. The child care expense deduction permits two income families to claim up to $5,000 of child care costs per child under the age of seven regardless of how much income they have. No such deduction is available to one income families due to the false assumption that they have no child care costs.

Child care costs exist not because both spouses work but rather because children exist. The child care expense deduction has an inverse relationship to need. That means that the higher the family income, the higher the savings to the two income family.

Consider also the case where two neighbours each have children. One neighbour can be paid to take care of the children of the other neighbour and vice versa. Each family then gets to claim the child care expense deduction because they care for each other's children. Ironically, however, you do not get any deduction when you care for your own children. This favoured tax treatment may produce financial savings for those who care for the children of others but it does nothing for those who care for their own children.

The child care expense deduction should be means tested and extended to all families to address the profound inequities in our Income Tax Act. This initiative would provide equitable benefits to all families based on financial need. Accordingly, I will

shortly be tabling in the House a motion to effect this change and I hope it will have the support of all hon. members.

Bill C–256 specifically seeks to amend the Income Tax Act to permit one spouse to split up to $25,000 of their income with the spouse working in the home and caring for at least one dependent child who has not commenced full time attendance at school.

As a result of the graduated tax brackets presently in our income tax laws, this would result in a lower tax burden on family income. Depending on the level of incomes and deductions the benefit could be as much as $3,500 per year or about $65 per week.

In the example I cited if instead of forgoing $100 per week of net take home pay it were reduced to only $35 per week the option to have one parent work in the home would be much more attractive to the family. The income split with the spouse working in the home would be treated as self–employed income and as such would not be eligible for unemployment insurance. The income would however qualify for the purchase of RRSPs.

Under the Canada Pension Plan Act this income would not qualify for CPP benefits. I have however tabled in the House Bill C–269 which would change the CPP act to make such earnings pensionable. That change will require approval of two–thirds of the provinces representing 50 per cent of the population, plus Quebec which operates its own Quebec pension plan.

If we truly believe that working in the home and caring for preschool children is an important job, should we also not acknowledge the fairness of providing pension benefits?

The benefits of this bill do not stop there however. This is not just a bill which would give a tax break to some Canadians. If a lower income earner withdraws from the external workforce to work in the home, a job would be freed up or created depending on how we looked at it. With 10.7 per cent of our workforce unemployed the importance of job creation cannot be overstated.

Furthermore the person filling the vacated job will likely have been on UI which can be up to $429 a week, or on welfare which can be up to $663 per week. Under these circumstances the government will in fact be saving on the cost of these social benefits. As well the new taxpayer would not likely have the same level of child care expenses, which means that more tax would be paid by the person on the same job than by the person who formerly held that job.

• (1745)

A further consequence of the bill is the freeing up of child care spaces. In its red book the government has committed to create 50,000 child care spaces per year for three years following the achievement of 3 per cent growth in GDP. Since that growth will be reached this year these 150,000 spaces will be created at a cost of $1.4 billion split between the federal and provincial governments. That represents $9,600 per space per year.

It is also expected that the users will pay $2,400 per year for the space. Therefore, in total each of these spaces will cost $12,000. That is a fair indicator of just how much value should be attributed to caring for a child in the home.

While it is certainly true that more day care provision would increase the number of mothers in the external workforce, it is also true that more financial help with the costs of being a parent would reduce that number no matter how much affordable day care was available. In the long term it is crucial for us to realize that direct parental care will also contribute to savings in the areas of health, social programs and criminal justice.

Each year it costs literally billions of dollars to respond to the problems rooted in poor child development. Today we face serious challenges related to the family which are complex. We must however remember that there are no simple solutions. We need a range of initiatives spanning both preventive and remedial approaches. Bill C–256 represents an important preventive approach which recognizes the value of work in the home, creates jobs and provides child care spaces.

Since introduction of the bill over 160 members of Parliament have indicated their support for having the bill referred to committee. In addition, thousands of Canadians across the country have told us through letters and petitions that they want to see the subject matter of the bill pursued.

In the year of the family I believe the House of Commons should embrace every possible opportunity to examine initiatives which may help Canadian families to raise our children who are of course our future.

Private members' bills require unanimous consent of the House at second reading in order to proceed to the next stage. Such consent is very rarely achieved but the value of the process is the extensive dialogue generated not only in the House but also among Canadians interested in the subject matter.

This morning I had the opportunity to speak with the Minister of Human Resources Development about the issue of benefits for those who give care. I have his assurance that the subject matter of Bill C–256 can be addressed as part of the review of the social programs outlined in his discussion paper tabled today in the House of Commons. This will allow a broader consideration of the issues and the options to Bill C–256.

One such option to spousal income splitting is the creation of a caregiver tax credit which would be available to those Canadians who provide care directly rather than relying on extensive social services. Caregivers would include those who care for preschool children in the home or who care for the disabled, the chronically ill, or seniors requiring continuous care. These

Canadians have put their family members first, ahead of their own interests, and they should be recognized.

I am grateful for the opportunity to continue the fight on behalf of parents and all caregivers who provide care in the home. The dialogue has just begun. I thank all hon. members for their interest and their support.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to take part in this debate concerning families and particularly the twin roles played by many mothers as both educator and provider. I will thus limit my speech to families with children of school and pre–school age.

The figures on working women are constantly changing. For example, in 1969, only 30 per cent of both parents had a job, whereas in 1990, that figure had soared to 71 per cent. Thus we see that a large majority of mothers in two–parent families are now on the job market. In my opinion, this is due mainly to the financial requirements of the family. Canada wide, in 1991, 4.1 per cent of double income families had an income under the low income level.

If it were not for the spouse's wages, the rate of low income families would have been close to 15 per cent. The situation was more serious for two–parent families with children under 13. Indeed, in 1987, 12.6 per cent of them had an income under the low income level, whereas if the parent mainly responsible for child care, usually the mother, had not had a job, that figure would have been as high as 25 per cent.

So we see how vitally important it is for a large number of families that mothers work outside the home. However, this presence on the job market is threatened by some factors, including poor child care services. A background document produced by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1994 revealed that, according to data from 1988, child care problems can have an effect on parents participation in the workforce and on their productivity.

It also said that those problems could affect the productivity of mothers or their participation in the workforce three times more than fathers. So, we see that families need the work of mothers and that it must be supported by adequate child care services. A second explanation of the increased participation of women in the workforce is their desire of fulfilment through a career. Women now represent the majority of B.A. holders. So, they naturally feel the need to apply the knowledge that they received during their studies.

This CACSW document provided the very conclusive results of a poll conducted on female teenagers from across Canada. Almost 90 per cent of girls in the 8th, 9th and 10th grades expected to work full time ten years down the road. Also, more than half firmly believed that they would work for pay long after completing their studies. So, women work to address the financial needs of their families and because they want to and can contribute to the development of society.

Having done this very brief overview of the participation of mothers in the workforce, let us examine the bill before us. This bill provides for the distribution of income among spouses, from the bread–winner to the spouse staying at home to take care of a child who does not go to school full time. The real purposes of this legislation are to create employment and free up daycare spaces, to give credit to homemakers and to enhance the quality of life for families.

Before I comment on these, allow me to review briefly the monetary situation of women living as part of a couple. In 1991, in 75 per cent of all two–income families, the men were earning much more than their spouses. Therefore, in most cases, the recipient of part of the spousal income would be the woman. I will analyze the bill with this in mind.

We do not agree with some of the intent of this bill when it comes to lowering the high unemployment level and dealing with the problems resulting from the shortage of spaces in daycare centres. Of course, these problems are real and we have denounced them repeatedly. However, they must not be used as the basis of an argument against women. Quite the opposite. We should acknowledge the problems of mothers who stay home and take the necessary action to make sure they are economically and socially equal. Women who stay home feel isolated and lack social support. They are affected by the lack of contacts with other adults.

• (1755)

They are also strangers to the influence networks that are so vital to job search. We know that 75 per cent of all women who find jobs have access to a network. That is just as true in politics as it is in other areas.

We also know that the immediate result of years devoted to housekeeping and children is a considerable loss of income and various problems with re–entry into the labour force: the women need updating of skills and retraining; they have no relevant experience.

Finally, when children leave, mothers have to face the empty nest syndrome. It is true for those who are still married, but much more so for women who also face a divorce or a separation. Their emotional problems will greatly increase their ordeal before they can get back on their feet.

This bill seeks to increase the number of women staying at home. Who would benefit from such a measure? Neither women nor society in general, which would be deprived of their positive contributions. On the other hand, when we consider that families need the mother's salary, we must conclude that the proposal of the member for Mississauga–South is intended only for families

where the father's salary is the highest of the two. The male bourgeois dream lives on.

What about the situation of women who are victims of conjugal violence? We know how determining is the control exercised over the victims in this kind of relationship. The bill provides for the spouse who works to share his income. How and when would this be accomplished? There are reasons to fear that this situation would tighten even more the financial and emotional control exerted by an abusive man over the woman who shares his life. We must be careful not to make matters worse for women with this legislation.

I tried to briefly explain the reasons why I oppose Bill C–256. I am sure the author of the bill had good intentions and was committed to improving the situation of these families. However, I think the considered changes will not do so. The evolution of society is closely linked to the improvement of the condition of women and what women want is greater financial independence. They want their specificity to be recognized, as well as their contribution to the life of their community. They want to be equal, and equality is achieved through independence, not subjugation, whether financial or otherwise.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly to the bill and express my views on the importance of the initiative of my colleague.

Those in the House who know me will know how very strongly I feel that the work I do in Parliament and on behalf of my constituents is extremely important. The work all of us do as members of Parliament is important and valuable to the country. We should never downgrade that work.

I have had a previous career in my life to which I give even more importance. That has been raising three children fortunately with, so far it seems, very good success. I will never stop saying that has been the most important thing I have done in my life. I was fortunate enough to be raising my children at a time when economically we had the choice, or I certainly had the choice without feeling I was depriving my family by staying home and raising them.

That is a choice many women do not have these days. As the member for Québec has said, the majority of women with young children are now in the workforce. Whether women raise their children on a full time basis at home or before and after completing a full day's work, it does not change the significant economic value of the work they do in raising their children and keeping their home, which receives absolutely no recognition in society.

That is the fundamental issue my colleague's bill is attempting to address. I suspect my colleague has motivations for the bill that I would not necessarily share, including encouraging more women to stay home and look after their children.

● (1800)

What I do want to encourage, however, is choice for women. I want to ensure that whatever choice they make is valued by society and its economic worth recognized.

What happens now is that through family law across this country we have recognized family income and family assets accumulated during a marriage as joint and divisible assets. Unfortunately we only recognize that in reality when the marriage breaks up.

We have all followed the Thibaudeau case very carefully, the taxability of child support payments. We all know very well that there are large numbers of parents raising children after a divorce who do not receive the support payments to which they are entitled.

The fact is we do virtually nothing while a marriage is intact, when a couple are raising children together to acknowledge that the stay at home parent is contributing as fully to the economic well–being of the family as the parent in the workforce earning an income.

This is one way of trying to recognize that. I think it is important that we have this discussion because in the last few years I have increasingly heard resentment from women who are fully occupied and working full time raising three or more children. They resent that they are forgoing income to make that important contribution to the lives of their children and I believe to society. Yet because they made that choice, from their reduced income they are required to contribute to support children of other parents who choose otherwise.

That kind of resentment between women in society is not helpful to the equality of women, but it is a fact. It is a fact that will only be changed when we really address how to recognize the economic value of the contribution women make as mothers and homemakers.

This bill before us may not be a perfect solution to that but it is at least the start of discussions. The result of not recognizing the economic value of that work is far reaching and lasts a lifetime. It is a major contributor to the poverty of women that they interrupt a career, interrupt the opportunity to build a career either for a short or long period of time and they never recoup. Even if they go back into their career they never recoup economically.

As a society we want the next generation to be born, yet we penalize women who are the only half of our race capable of producing that next generation.

As I said, some of these are not the arguments of my colleagues presenting this bill. However, they are certainly mine. The result is that poverty is a women's issue and this is a cause of it. That very important work they do in child bearing and child rearing has no economic value in our society and that has repercussions throughout the workplace. It means that when women do go into paid work they tend to be slotted into the kind of work that most closely resembles mothering, looking after the needs of somebody else. Therefore, we underpay that kind

of work in the paid workforce that most resembles whatever comes closest to the mothering and supportive role. Therefore, we create pink collar ghettos in the workforce as well.

I honestly think that is only going to change when we do start addressing and valuing economically the work of women in raising children and creating a home.

• (1805)

I said it lasts throughout a lifetime. One of the things I find extremely attractive about this bill is that it gives women the opportunity to provide for their own financial security in retirement. It gives them the opportunity to contribute to their own pension plan. One of the major causes of poverty among women and particularly of elderly women is that they have never had or have had limited opportunities to contribute to pension plans.

For a number of reasons the motivation behind this bill is a positive one. We also have to address in our economic accounting how we value the work of women. There is a move afoot to have the census include valuing as employment the work that women do as volunteers or at home. I support that and I hope we will do that.

There will be all kinds of economic arguments as to why we cannot do what this bill proposes. We have to start fundamentally questioning how we can perpetuate a tax system that requires depriving some women of economic recognition for the important work they do. I do not suspect we will resolve that today or in the next few months but I hope this bill has made a lot of members of the House start to think about it. I see the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance sitting close by. I hope he is listening because he is in a position to start having a positive influence in that direction.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak on Bill C–256 presented by the hon. member for Mississauga South.

This bill would allow one spouse to split their earned income with a spouse who is working in the home and caring for a dependent child who is not yet enrolled in full time school.

This bill responds to the growing demands of Canadians that recognition be given to those who care for their children at home.

I am pleased to speak to this bill as an MP who has chosen to be recognized as a homemaker in my previous occupation. I have not felt isolated or deprived in that role. I am pleased to speak to this bill during national family week and in this, the International Year of the Family.

The initiatives presented in this bill would meet three important criteria. It provides parents with the option of keeping one parent at home during the early formative years of a child's life with a tax benefit recognizing the contribution as being significant. Income splitting is an important first step forward in recognizing the financial needs of families with young children. It would allow the spouse at home to be eligible for certain pension benefits such as RRSPs.

The most important objective of this bill is that it would reintroduce choice in the realm of child care so parents can have the freedom to make decisions that are in their best interest and in the best interest of their child.

Currently the system favours those who use day care by the tax incentives provided to the spouse earning the lower income. Consequently those who have one spouse stay at home do not have the equivalent tax deductions for providing the service themselves. Coincidentally, with the high taxes they pay single income families with one spouse at home are technically subsidizing those who have two incomes and use day care along with the tax deductions.

The Reform Party considers the family to be the fundamental social and economic building block of Canadian society. We also believe that parents are the number one choice when it comes to providing the best possible care for their children. This view is also supported by the majority of Canadians.

An Angus Reid poll published in *Maclean's* magazine in June of this year stated that according to all respondents 68 per cent agree that the best type of family in which to raise children has two heterosexual parents with one at work and one at home.

Unfortunately, the majority of Canadians cannot realize this desired ideal because of the limited choice in the area of taxation given to those who stay at home.

• (1810)

As a matter of fact, there is an unfair bias within the current federal tax system against two parent single income families in Canada. Currently, the lower income earner in a dual income family can claim under the child care expense deduction a maximum tax deduction of $5,000 for a child under seven years of age, while $3,000 per child is permitted as a deductible expense for children aged seven to fourteen.

Reform supports many Canadian parents' belief that by allowing a child care taxable benefit to working parents the federal government in essence is advocating dual income families in Canada and in so doing creating an unfair financial situation for stay at home parents.

This government has further aggravated this situation by advocating a commitment to increase the number of day care spaces every time the economy grows by 3 per cent or more. This is a commitment it will have to honour despite the fact that it will only further increase the inequities toward those who

elect to have one parent stay at home to provide personal care for their child.

No move has been made by this government to address this serious inequality which currently exists. Therefore, the bill introduced by my hon. colleague is a very positive step in the right direction.

Until such a time as a system of flat tax can be implemented the Reform Party supports the concept of income splitting between legally married couples. No other measure of tax relief would affect the family so greatly under our current system as the ability to split income and lower the resultant tax burden. The tax savings would be particularly meaningful when one spouse is working as a full time care giver to their children.

Regardless of the employment situation of the husband and wife, the marriage union will be recognized in tax law as an equal economic partnership. Should the flat rate income tax proposal presently being considered by the Reform Party be implemented, income splitting would become largely irrelevant because individually or collectively a couple would pay the same tax.

It is also important to counter some of the criticism launched against reformers by those who claim that supporting such policies is simply a means of trying to turn back the clock and keep women at home. Quite the contrary. We are simply responding to the desires of a large number of Canadian families that would like to stay at home to care for their children if they so chose without being unfairly disadvantaged financially by federal tax laws.

We believe that if implemented correctly, measures such as income splitting will allow those parents who are forced to work because of finances the option to stay at home and care for their children.

In a recent survey conducted by Angus Reid 57 per cent of respondents thought it would be good news if the government would provide some type of financial assistance to help one parent in a two parent family stay home to care for their children.

Income splitting would have several strong advantages to those involved and some spinoff benefits for others. First, it would help alleviate the excess tax burden experienced by those single income families with one spouse at home to care for their children. Even with a maximum of $25,000 of split income it would allow the spouse at home to receive proper benefit in terms of income and participate in simple pension benefits such as RRSPs. The tax burden on the family would be lessened, allowing for more disposable income to be spent on the very real needs of raising a family today.

Second, it would also have spinoff benefits in the area of employment and day care space availability. There is a very real need among single parents for both day care spaces and potential employment. If the spouse of a two income family leaves their job to care for their child at home this opens up a job for someone else and also creates a day care space. A single parent who wants to get off any sort of social assistance needs both of these possibilities to do so. These are very real needs for the single parent and simply creating day care spaces is only half the solution. Income splitting could provide for all components necessary in the equation.

The bill does have one apparent weakness in that it limits the deduction to those with preschool children at home. I would advocate that the bill be considered for amendment in that the eligibility criteria be extended to include those spouses who stay home to manage the affairs of the home with children who are in school. This is also an important area of parental care.

As critic of family issues I have heard from numerous Canadians across Canada regarding the issue of recognition of those who stay at home to provide care for their own children. It is also an issue in my own riding.

• (1815)

Let me read from two letters I received from two of my constituents. Mrs. Andrea Jones in Coquitlam wrote to me after I was first elected, sharing her concerns on the present status of the Canadian family.

She is a stay at home mother with a toddler to care for. Her husband is employed but they are finding it very tough to make ends meet. Andrea asked for equality to be implemented within the present tax system that does not discriminate against single income families. I quote from her letter:

> I understand the terrible financial mess this country is in, but I strongly feel that the subsidies enjoyed by two–income families discredits the hard work homemakers do in support of their children, husbands and community.

Andrea Jones and her husband are not asking for special treatment, just fair and equal treatment.

Sandra Boleak from Port Coquitlam also wrote to me this past spring about the need for the government to recognize the important work of those who stay at home in support of the family.

Sandra and Len have four children at home under the age of six. Sandra left her full time, good paying job in 1989 to look after her family. Since then, it has been difficult financially and the sacrifice they are making to keep one parent at home is real. She states in her letter:

> When will stay at home parents' jobs be recognized and respected? Why can my husband not write me off as a caregiver as well as claim the spousal amount?

The dilemma facing parents who have exercised this choice is that they are disadvantaged taxwise for doing so. They have

chosen the preferred child raising option of Canadians and yet pay higher taxes on their earnings because of it.

There is a real need to entrench within government policy and give full recognition to the importance of family in our society. The issue of child poverty is rooted not in the issue of women's rights or even of children's rights but in the issue of the strength of families.

Government policies can actually detract from the importance of family role. It is refreshing to see a slight reversal of this trend from the government side. Perhaps this will send a loud message with a purpose to give the family back its prominence and priority within our society, and give them back the freedom to choose.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette–Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to support the hon. member's bill. I may add I am not so naive as to expect the Canadian tax system and the general public to support this kind of bill. However, before we have legislation supported by the majority of the people and the members in this House, we must first have some time for discussion.

In fact, this bill gives us an opportunity to look at our tax policies and consider how the Act could be amended. It may well be that at Finance or National Revenue, this kind of legislation is seen as a considerable loss of revenue. I must point out that this would only be in the short term. If we look at pension funds in Canada and the Canada Pension Plan, all the supplements paid to the spouse who was unable to take advantage of a private pension plan are so many expenditures for the Canadian government.

I think we should take a much broader view of this bill. We can take the short term view but we can also take the longer view, and I am thinking of the economic spin–offs.

As the hon. member mentioned earlier, I also think this bill raises the whole issue of recognizing the value of work done in the home, work that has a social value in Canada.

• (1820)

At some point we can put a price tag on these social values. Our tax system should be able to recognize that cost, although personally, I think that women or men who decide to stay home do so as a matter of choice or personal emancipation. There are people who function extremely well in the home, although unfortunately, I am not one of them. I notice my colleagues are smiling, but I think we must recognize the value of work done in the home.

I would even say that in this initial bill, perhaps we should have considered all children, not only children of pre–school age who are still at home. In the current context, all levels of government and Canadian society as a whole urge children to take some responsibility for caring for their parents and grandparents.

When care is given to a child, a teenager, an adult or an elderly person, there is an intrinsic social value that should be recognized. I think it is the right time to start this debate on the value of the Canadian family and the individual. I think it is the right time and also the right week, since this is National Family Week. My family includes my parents, grandparents, children, spouse and in–laws. They will be glad to hear that!

I think it is high time, when we are talking about updating all our social programs in this country as well as a review of our tax system in the short, medium and long term, I think it is high time to get this debate going. I may be naive, but I believe that Canadians across the country will be very pleased to have an opportunity to discuss this value and to ensure perhaps that we can create a very just society, one that will be even more just and progressive than it is now.

[*English*]

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate. I would like to thank the hon. member for Mississauga South for raising these issues through Bill C–256.

While I appreciate the intent of the bill I have some serious concerns with the proposal. I would like to bring to the attention of the House and the very many members who are interested in this three concerns.

First, I believe it would reduce tax revenues at a time when our fiscal position precludes any erosion of the tax base. Second, I do not think the proposed amendments to the Income Tax Act will deliver the anticipated benefits. Third, this bill could have negative consequences that may not have been anticipated by its sponsor.

Parents among us will know that raising young children entails unique expense. I personally fit into one of those families where one parent works and we have two young children at home. Expenses can put significant pressure on a family's income. Fortunately these expenses are recognized by the Income Tax Act. For example the child tax benefit provides financial assistance for low and middle income families with children. A supplement of $213 is provided for each dependent child under seven.

This measure is directed particularly to those families where one spouse stays at home to care for preschool children. Tax relief is also provided to working families through the child care expense deduction which helps to offset day care costs. Recognizing that the cost of child care is higher for preschool children the limits on the deduction are higher for children below age seven.

• (1825)

This bill proposes additional measures to assist families with preschool children. Under the proposed bill families could reduce their tax burdens by transferring $25,000 from a working spouse to a spouse who is managing the family home and is caring for at least one preschool child.

The bill is intended to provide several benefits for families with young children. As I understand it the intent of the bill is that many spouses with low incomes could then afford to quit their jobs, stay at home and care for their children. This would reduce the family's child care expenses, free up day care spaces, and create additional employment. The hon. member suggests that all this would happen at no material cost to the government.

Let me suggest some revenue losses. The revenue losses associated with this proposed measure would actually be substantial for both levels of government. In fact the Department of Finance estimates that the revenue losses for federal and provincial government could approach $1 billion annually.

Here let me remind all members of Canada's fiscal challenge. On a per capita basis we are one of the most indebted nations in the industrial world. That national debt built up by governments spending more than they earned limits our ability to create new jobs and sustain economic growth. It pushes up interest rates, hampering investment, and hindering our ability to succeed and grow in a world that grows more competitive with every passing day.

In short, any measure before us must be evaluated in terms of whether it adds to our deficit and the tax burden it imposes on all Canadians. Unfortunately the proposal would likely do just that. To implement Bill C–256 without affecting our financial position, we would either have to increase other taxes or find corresponding expenditure reductions elsewhere. Ironically, these revenue losses would occur because the proposed measures would not solely benefit those families to which they are directed.

In particular tax benefits would flow to families not currently saddled with day care costs. Instead thousands of families where one spouse already stays at home to provide care for young children would automatically receive the tax savings. In these cases no additional day care spaces and no additional jobs would be freed up.

In addition, revenue losses could occur if Bill C–256 increases the tax benefits to working couples without actually changing their working status. For example, consider what would happen if proposed tax savings were greater than the value of the child care expense deduction they currently claim. Some two–earner families might then forgo claiming the child care expense deduction to remain eligible for the measure proposed in Bill C–256.

There are other unintended consequences that passing this bill could impose. Among them is the fact that eventually families which benefited from the proposed measure would suffer a significant drop in disposable income.

The income drop would occur when their children began full time attendance at school. At that point these families would no longer be eligible to split the income of the higher earning spouse. The resulting tax increase would reduce their disposable income.

Significantly, the income drop would arrive when the family could least afford it. Again, as parents among us will know the costs of raising children increases as the children grow older.

Of course one could argue that to cover these increased expenses the stay at home spouse could merely go out and find a job. Unfortunately as the 1.5 million–plus unemployed will tell you it is not all that easy to rejoin the labour force, particularly for someone re–entering the workforce after a protracted absence during which skills have either been diminished or become obsolete.

In conclusion, the issue of support for families and especially for children is one that the Minister of Human Resource Development is considering as part of his wide–ranging proposals for renewal of our social safety net. We should not undertake this process with legislation that could well miss the mark.

While the intent of Bill C–256 is admirable, I believe its flaws severely outweigh its benefits.

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, it is almost 6.30. The hon. member for Mississauga South will close the debate.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank all hon. members who took part in the debate. It is obviously very important that we have this exchange of ideas.

The one area that I have to comment on is the intervention of the parliamentary secretary. The parliamentary secretary unfortunately took an early memo that was prepared by staff and signed by the minister and sent to me using a billion dollar figure. Subsequent to that we have had numerous meetings to discuss the real finances.

If we compare what the real finances are to what the parliamentary secretary has said we find a substantial difference.

In fact the billion dollar figure assumes that every stay at home parent who is presently there would take advantage of this bill but nobody else would, in which case it is a full drain. It also does not eliminate all those parents that either make too little

and are in the lower tax brackets or too much to even qualify. That reduced the figure to about $500 million.

They gave no credit for the creation of child care spaces. I wonder whether or not the parliamentary secretary would agree that if the government is prepared to spend $12,000 per space to create child care spaces, some credit ought to be generated by those who free up those spaces.

The government used figures when it discussed with me in the worst possible case. This is the fiscally responsible thing to do. I hoped there would be some movement, some understanding that in fact there is real value for work in the home to be recognized. It is an honourable profession. Some tax reform is going to be necessary sooner or later. I want to assure the House that I for one am not going to stop fighting on behalf of all caregivers, whether they be parents working in the home, the seniors, the chronically ill or the disabled.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

PARTY FUNDRAISING

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, last March, when I supported the motion of the hon. member for Richelieu on the financing of political parties by individual contributions only, I said then that attitudes had changed and that people were now willing to accept major changes in the way political parties were funded.

This is still my opinion and, even though the motion from my colleague was defeated, many among the hon. members of this House are willing to democratize our electoral system.

The vote was significant, since 85 members from all political parties sided with the hon. member for Richelieu and asked for a modernization and cleaning up of our political practices. They, too, wanted an end to an influence peddling which is always unsound in a democracy. They no longer accept that conflicts of interest interfere in Canadian political life. Like the hon. member for Richelieu, they asked this House to legislate, once and for all, on the financing of federal political parties to limit contributions to private individuals.

That was their reason for supporting the motion. They will not be able to do what some Liberal members from Quebec did the last time, that is reject the motion offhand or abstain, like the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine, refusing to take side. This is a disgraceful and unforgivable behaviour, especially coming from Quebecers familiar with the provincial legislation and in a good position to judge its effectiveness as a basic means of political democratization—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Does the hon. parliamentary secretary wish to raise a point of order? I am sorry, points of order are not allowed during adjournment proceedings. The hon. member can go on.

• (1835)

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I recognize in you an upright and honest man who assumes the responsibilities of his position. That is to say that if those members have voted against the motion, it is because they still support the slush funds, rewards for services rendered and permanent conflicts of interest.

Those members see nothing wrong in the fact that T'Ang Management Limited, a company on which we have no information, gives generously—and I would ask the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands to listen carefully to this—$216 000 to a political party present in this House. They see nothing wrong in the fact that the Royal Bank of Canada and the Toronto Dominion Bank gave this year $192,300 to the Conservative Party and $166,300 to the Liberal Party. Those members approve the contributions made by Dominion Securities, Wood Gundy and Richardson Greenshields, who gave three quarters of a million dollars to the two old political parties, that is $447,700 to the Conservatives and $304,500 to the Liberals opposite.

And this is only the tip of the iceberg. Mr. Speaker, if you will give me just a few seconds, because you have sort of cut my time earlier. Canadians are not taken in. They know full well that a political party who receives thousands and thousands of dollars from those financiers will have to give them thousands and thousands of services at the expense of the collective wellbeing.

In conclusion, we often hear that members of Parliament have no credibility left. It is aberrations like these that kill our credibility. As a member whose hands are free, I resent these malversations by members who collect hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars from one source.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as I told the member for Frontenac, I have great trust in your ability in the Chair, but the problem is that in the course of his remarks he commented on the way one hon. member voted and this is contrary to the Standing Orders of the House. I am quite sure that it is not allowed.

In any event, I have the pleasure to answer a question he raised in this House a few days ago. I respect the vote of the members who supported the setting of a $5000 ceiling on private contributions to federal political parties as well as the limitation of financing by corporations. However, the motion presented by his colleague and put to the vote on September 20, 1994 was

rejected by the majority of members in this House and I believe that he too respects the decision of the House.

The motion raises two important questions. The first one is whether private individuals should be the only ones allowed to make contributions to federal parties. The Canada Elections Act sets no restriction as to the kind of person allowed to contribute to a registered political party, but prohibits contributions from foreign sources.

Therefore, except for foreign sources, any individual, corporation or union may contribute to a registered party. He wants to change this because in Quebec the law is different. I believe that this is not a good enough reason to change the federal legislation, especially since we are having no problem whatsoever with it.

This question has already been looked into in the past. The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, in short the Lortie Commission, recommended against prohibiting contributions from corporations, unions and other organizations, except if they came from foreign sources. The commission's conclusion was based, first, on the role that historically organizations such as unions and corporations have played in the Canadian political process, and, second, the danger to divert to third parties funds which otherwise would have gone to political parties; and finally, the possibility that restrictions might be challenged under the Charter.

The second question was whether the contributions to political parties should be limited to $5000. The hon. members will have noticed that the Canada Elections Act sets no such limit. However, the Lortie Commission recommended against setting a limit on contributions to registered political parties because, as it said: "There is no compelling evidence that the number and value of important contributions may lead to influence peddling". Moreover, it would be extremely difficult to enforce such a limit.

While considering the two questions raised by the motion, the hon. members should bear in mind that the Canada Elections Act already contains numerous safeguards protecting our electoral system.

I am sorry that time does not allow me to explain what they are, but I am certain that if the hon. member attends the proceedings of the Standing Committee on procedure and House affairs when we review the Canada Elections Act in the near future, he will be able to hear a lot of explanations on this subject.

The Deputy Speaker: I will look into the question raised by the hon. parliamentary secretary and, if necessary, I will get back to the House on this point.

Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.42 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 6, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS BY PRIME MINISTER—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Roberval last Friday, September 30, 1994, concerning comments made by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister on September 28, 1994.

In his presentation, the hon. member for Roberval claimed that the replies made by the Prime Minister during Question Period were contradictory. This, he argued, impeded the opposition in the discharge of their duties, since the nature of the answers given by the Prime Minister changed a particular line of questioning followed by the Leader of the Opposition. Quoting from *Erskine May*, the hon. member held that such action constituted a contempt of the House.

[*English*]

To support his contention, the hon. member pointed to the exchanges which took place on September 29 between the hon. member for Sherbrooke and the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and the Deputy Prime Minister during question period, as well as the point of order raised by the hon. member for Sherbrooke following question period.

The hon. member for Roberval also submitted that, in his view, as the behaviour of the Prime Minister constituted an obstruction of the House, the matter should be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, where the answers and the behaviour of the Prime Minister could be reviewed and witnesses summoned.

[*Translation*]

Joseph Maingot, in his book entitled *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* at page 205, notes that if a member of the House has admitted to deliberately misleading the House or through his or her conduct in some other concrete, tangible way has become a subject of a question of privilege, then that member would probably forthwith be the subject of a motion for contempt. Maingot goes on to quote Speaker Michener's famous ruling in the Pallett privilege case of June 19, 1959. At that time Speaker Michener stated in part:

> Simple justice requires that no hon. member should have to submit to investigation of his conduct by the House or a committee until he has been charged with an offence.

In his May 5, 1987, ruling at page 5766 of the *Debates* Speaker Fraser said something which is apt in our current circumstance. He stated:

> I would remind the House, however, that a direct charge or accusation against a member may be made only by way of a substantive motion of which the usual notice is required. This is another long-standing practice designed to avoid judgment by innuendo and to prevent the overextended use of our absolute privilege of freedom of speech.

[*English*]

I now want to address the allegation of the hon. member for Roberval that the Prime Minister's answers misled the House and whether in the specific circumstances a contempt has taken place.

[*Translation*]

I have carefully examined the exchanges which took place on September 28, 29 and 30, especially during the Question Periods of those days. It is clear to me that there is disagreement among members over the facts surrounding the issue. And furthermore, no evidence has been presented to support the contention that the Prime Minister deliberately misled the House.

[*English*]

The chief government whip quoted from Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation 31(1) which states:

> A dispute arising between two members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

● (1010)

Speaker Fraser noted on December 4, 1986 at *Debates* page 1792:

> Differences of opinion with respect to fact and details are not infrequent in the House and do not necessarily constitute a breach of privilege.

[*Translation*]

There are numerous other rulings, such as those of Speaker Lamoureux on February 3, 1971; November 16, 1971; and March 2, 1973; as well as those of Speaker Fraser on June 1, 1987, and finally, December 16, 1988, which amply demonstrate that this is a long-held view of the Chair.

In light of the arguments put forward and the decisions of my predecessors, I must conclude that the matter before us is a dispute as to facts and does not constitute the basis of a question of privilege.

I thank hon. members for their contributions.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), the government's response to 11 petitions.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the government is taking three important initiatives to fulfil our red book promises on environmental assessment.

[*Translation*]

First, the government will proclaim the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. This means that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency will be up and running in January.

[*English*]

Second, the government will publish in the next issue of the *Canada Gazette* a complete list of new, greener environmental regulations required to implement the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. These regulations follow one year of intensive consultation with the provinces, territories, business and environmentalists.

In parenthesis I might add that the legislation follows seven years of intensive consultation. I want to personally thank not only my parliamentary secretary who has done yeoman's service in moving a very complicated file forward but also and most particularly the team headed by Michel Dorais which worked very hard and very long for many years on this issue.

Third, I wish to advise the House that the government is proposing three amendments to the environmental assessment act. The first amendment will entrench in federal law the principle of one project–one assessment. The second amendment will guarantee the public the funding necessary to take part in major environmental assessments. The third amendment will require a decision by cabinet in response to any recommendations of independent review panels.

[*Translation*]

With the new agency, the new regulations and the new amendments, the government is moving to implement our election promises on environmental assessment.

The federal government intends to proclaim the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act which was conceived and developed by the Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition in the fall of 1989. When the bill was in preparation, my hon. colleague said and I quote: "This law will surely be the best law of its kind in the world".

I would like to take the opportunity on this memorable occasion to congratulate the hon. member for Lac Saint–Jean for his role in the development of this Canadian law. I also want to commend the hon. member for his support, even during the recent election, when he said on *Le Point*, and I quote: "There is also the federal government's jurisdiction which must be respected".

I await the support of the hon. member for Lac Saint–Jean, to whom the environment is more important than petty jurisdictional quarrels between different levels of government.

• (1015)

[*English*]

Members on all sides of the House understand that environmental issues go beyond partisan political bickering. Members on all sides of the House know that whatever is thrown into Hamilton harbour eventually finds its way to Sept–Iles, dans le fleuve Saint–Laurent.

[*Translation*]

Neither the fish in the St. Lawrence nor the migratory birds on the Prairies carry passports.

As every Canadian knows, the process of environmental assessment in Canada has, in the last decade, become mired in controversy.

[*English*]

Business is unhappy because the current process has become unbelievably complicated and unpredictable. Environmental groups are unhappy because the process is haphazard, arbitrary and incomplete. The public is unhappy with the current process because it drags on forever and the public interest is sometimes lost in squabbling among jurisdictions and various interest groups.

[*Translation*]

Today's announcement will change that. We are strengthening environmental assessment, and we are also making assessment of projects fairer, less complicated, less costly and more transparent. The new system will ensure that the environmental effects of projects are considered before these projects are approved, will encourage sustainable development and will require that transboundary issues be considered.

[*English*]

What we are putting in place are practical and effective rules that everyone can understand from the start. We are getting rid of a system where clarity and sometimes lack of clarity have resulted in many court actions.

We are going to have a straightforward, streamlined approach. Small scale routine matters will be dealt with through a simple screening process. Big projects or environmentally sensitive projects will undergo a comprehensive study.

[*Translation*]

The new regime introduces the concept of mediation to see if environmental issues surrounding a project can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction by consensus.

[*English*]

For the first time we are introducing the concept of mediation, in the hopes that some environmental differences might be resolved by the parties without the necessity of long and arduous procedures.

[*Translation*]

These first three steps—screening, comprehensive study and mediation—will eliminate the headaches and the waste and the bureaucracy that have resulted in so much time being wasted on minor or easily resolved issues.

[*English*]

That means that a project will reach the stage of review by an independent public panel if there are difficult environmental issues that cannot be resolved by any other means.

When the environmental impact is important enough to be subject to an independent public review, the new rules allow for the public to be fully involved and the new rules mean a more rigorous assessment of the projects. For all projects we want everything out in the open and we want to ensure that the public interest is paramount.

[*Translation*]

With one of the new amendments, when a review panel makes recommendations, no individual cabinet minister will have the power to accept, reject or change those recommendations. Only the government as a whole will have that authority.

[*English*]

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act recognizes the importance of federal–provincial co–operation and promotes harmonization of regimes. I am working closely with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and with ministers in each and every province. Indeed over the course of the last few days I have been in touch with every provincial environment minister to assure him or her that it is our intention to work collaboratively. We need to continue a co–operative approach, a common sense approach to environmental assessment.

[*Translation*]

The government believes that the actions I am announcing are fair and forceful. To be absolutely certain, we shall have a one–year monitoring program. We want to make sure that the new law and the new policies do not place an unnecessary burden on industry. We also want to guarantee that no projects with significant environmental impact slip through the cracks.

• (1020)

[*English*]

The new rules recognize the unique and historic responsibilities of aboriginal people for the stewardship of their traditional lands. Today's actions give Canada what we believe is one of the world's best environmental assessment systems. The whole point is to make the best informed decisions and to make environmental thinking a fundamental part of the planning of any project.

The aim is to prevent environmental damage rather than clean up after the fact.

[*Translation*]

Sound environmental thinking is essential to international competitiveness and, even more so, it is central to the legacy we leave our children.

What we must do now is try to strengthen the environmental assessment of projects under federal jurisdiction. What we need to do next is find ways to improve how we assess all new policies and programs of the federal government. We must, and we will, clean up our own act. In the months ahead, we shall be announcing further policies for the ongoing greening of government.

[*English*]

It has been seven long years since the Leader of the Opposition first conceived of the idea of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. My hope is that future actions to create a healthier environment can come much more quickly.

We need to do everything we can as members of Parliament and as Canadians to honour our environmental heritage and to honour our responsibility to future generations. I believe that today's announcement is a step in that direction.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of the Environment and Deputy Prime Minister has announced a decision by her department that affects all those concerned with projects that have an environmental impact. This announcement is consistent with the centralizing approach that drives the federal government and indeed sustains it.

The minister is preparing to proclaim the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which would allow the federal government to interfere in areas of provincial jurisdiction. This act, and the related regulations, authorizes the federal government to block projects that are industrial in nature or that relate to provincial trade. Once again, the federal government has gone right ahead and meddled in someone else's area of jurisdiction. Its cavalier attitude is a sign that this new era of so–called co–operation is ultimately just so much window dressing.

When the minister points out that one of the amendments to the act is the principle of one assessment per project, she seems to be disregarding the system already in place in Quebec, which has its own environmental assessment agency. The federal government's action is all the more unacceptable because Quebec's assessment process is recognized as one of the best of its kind. It is credible, well established and has demonstrated its effectiveness.

Seven hundred and forty–five projects have gone through the assessment process since 1980. Two hundred and ninety projects are at various stages of the process and assessments are completed on twenty–five major projects a year. The reinforcement of the federal environmental assessment role will lead to dissension and conflict, sole responsibility for which will rest with the federal government, the very one who wanted to put an end to the provinces' vacillation where environmental assessment was concerned.

With no regard for the process in Quebec and the specific situation in each of the provinces, the federal government has stepped in and imposed a uniform system for all the provinces that adds nothing to what we in Quebec have been doing, with considerable success, for 15 years now. It is therefore not surprising that the minister makes no mention of the provinces' satisfaction with the new regulations being introduced.

• (1025)

This duplication, I need hardly repeat, is completely unproductive. Regulations in hand, the Minister of the Environment wishes to work with each province towards harmonization. The question is whether it will be based on federal or on provincial regulations.

Even more amazing, officials from Quebec and the other provinces have been working with federal officials for a year now on a harmonization project designed to define more clearly the environmental responsibilities of the two levels of government. These discussions, which are still ongoing, deal with the environmental assessment process in particular. With this sort of attitude on the part of the federal government, harmonization is headed nowhere.

Despite the minister's apparent goodwill, the act places environmental assessment under federal jurisdiction. There will be no delegation of responsibilities to the provinces, because a federal assessment is required, even if one has been done by the province. At best, an assessment could be conducted jointly with a province, theoretically anyway, since in practice the federal government would retain final responsibility for the process. As it has the right to participate in the appointment of the chairperson and to determine the mandate of the review panel, whose reports it wants to see, the federal government has exclusive authority in this area.

There is therefore a considerable contradiction between the spirit of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The existing equivalence agreements allow the provinces to settle certain pollution problems without the involvement of the federal government. This will not be the case here. The federal government is not interested in delegating this authority to the provinces.

The Minister of the Environment thinks that industry will be thrilled with this federal initiative. She is quite mistaken.

Last February, the director of the Centre patronal de l'environnement du Québec denounced the Environment minister's wish to make the environmental assessment process more rigorous. This group including more than 50 of Quebec's largest businesses and some 15 associations endorsed a request by the provinces to amend the federal law to provide for mutual recognition of assessments ordered by either level of government.

The Quebec industry is wary of federal legislation because it duplicates provincial legislation, which causes delays and can discourage private sector investment. So it is rather premature to maintain that the industry will applaud the federal regulations.

There is no question that the environmental impact of projects must be assessed in any society. Governments, businesses and conglomerates no longer undertake major building or development projects affecting waterways without first assessing their environmental impact. Such environmental assessments must be rigorous and methodical with a view to sustainable development.

However, the federal government's attitude toward environmental assessments suggests that confrontation with the provinces is the starting point for promulgating the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

If the new regulations to be published soon in the *Gazette officielle du Québec* reflect our apprehensions, this government has shown its usual intransigence and we can only denounce this practice.

Quebec, which has been a leader in environmental assessments in Canada and acted with exemplary consistency and rigour, will thus continue to assure Quebecers of an open, effective and full process.

From Quebec's viewpoint, the federal minister's initiative has nothing to do with better environmental management. It only appears to be an unjustified intervention in an area already very well managed by the Quebec government. This is another concrete proof of the federal government's ability and eagerness to create duplication and increase costs.

• (1030)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, for those who are a little bit vague about what the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act really is, it is an information gathering process. That is really what we are talking about. It is used to predict potential environmental impacts on future projects.

The old act was passed by the previous government. However, it was somewhat like a eunuch; it was there in body but it was not very productive because the regulations were not there. I am pleased to see that we are finally getting to the point where we have the regulations coming down.

The problem with the old bill was that there were a number of exemptions. Hopefully these exemptions, for example radioactive waste and exports of oil and gas and hydroelectric projects, will be covered in the regulations.

It has taken us seven years to get where we are today and I am really pleased that we are here. I do have some concerns but they are hard to address because we do not have the regulations in hand as yet. There have to be clearly spelled out rules on what is and what is not subject to these rules.

One major problem is the federal–provincial overlap which the minister has addressed. Until we get rid of this turf war about whose ground it is, federal or provincial, we will be forever fighting about what goes on. The Kemano project is a good example. In some areas people said: "It is clearly provincial" and other people said: "No, it is federal because fisheries are involved". This has to be clarified. For example right now Alberta has an agreement in place but it is really agreeing to agree. We have a long way to go.

In terms of the process, I understand from the minister that on minor or fairly simple projects, it will go along quite easily. It is when we get into the contentious ones that we really get into the glue.

My riding of Comox—Alberni includes Clayoquot Sound. I have been part of the process over the last 10 years. It was sitting on the back burner and then heat started to rise to the point where it was really boiling a couple of years ago. I was able to watch the different processes, the round tables, the square tables, the oval tables. It was open and transparent. However, it became very clear to some people at the table that the process was not going to solve their problem, so they walked away from the process.

We need to have open, clear dialogue. We have to realize that if the agenda of particular people is not going to be solved and they walk away from the table that the government is going to have to step in. That is a double–edged sword because the previous government ruled that in Kemano no environmental assessment was required. We have paid dearly for that in B.C. because we have been fighting for the last number of years. Business is mad, the environmental community is mad, the fishermen are wild and the public is confused.

That is what happened by going the wrong way. In the Clayoquot Sound decision basically the full spectrum of ideas were there. The provincial government stepped in and said: "This is where it is". I believe that was a good ruling.

The government is on tender ground on this one. If it goes to cabinet after the review that is fine. It would be highly dangerous if the government then ignored that review and went off on another track.

In summary, we have to wait until we see the regulations and really have a chance to look at them because that is really what is going to make it work. I look forward to having a look at them and moving ahead.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

I am wondering if I could seek unanimous consent of the House for two minutes to respond as the New Democratic environment critic and as the critic in the previous House who sat through much of the creation of Bill C–13. I would like unanimous consent of the House to have two minutes.

• (1035)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the Minister of the Environment has chosen to use Statements by Ministers to proclaim the act today. I think it is an important use of the House to take this route today.

I am also very pleased to see that the act has finally been proclaimed after the amount of time it took in development.

The act has the potential to be the most important environmental and economic legislation that this country has at this time. For that reason I was happy to participate in its development and now to see it proclaimed.

I am disappointed of course that the process has taken so long to get us to this point but in hindsight it is understandable. We all knew that the regulatory process was going to slow us down. It has. We tried to address that in the committee but now that we have that under wraps, I am happy to see it has moved along. In addition to the amendments that the minister outlined she will be presenting to the House this morning I would like to indicate that I think there is a need to further amend the regulatory process and involve members of the House and Parliament to a greater extent than the process. I will be working to see that that happens.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest to the minister that in keeping with her comments about the aboriginal rights and the stewardship of their traditional land that she consider applying the new process to the situation in Labrador and the Innu at this time.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–282, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (medical expenses—disabled senior citizens).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the objective of this bill is to reduce income tax for disabled seniors with extra medical expenses. Under the current law the first $1,614 or 3 per cent of net income is required to be spent before you can take it into account for income tax purposes.

This bill would make it possible for all eligible medical expenses from the very first dollar to be effectively income deductible for disabled seniors. I believe there is a need to do that.

While disabled seniors have higher medical expenses than others they generally have lower income than other people. Paying out of pocket medical expenses is therefore a heavier burden for this group of people, disabled seniors, than for others. This bill is a step in the direction of easing that burden.

In that context I have much pleasure in having the bill introduced at this time.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

That notwithstanding any order of the House, the report deadline for phase II of the order of reference to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development on February 8, 1994, government business No. 4, be extended to February 6, 1995, and

That the committee be empowered to authorize radio and television broadcasting of any of its proceedings.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

• (1040)

PETITIONS

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to table a petition from several of my constituents who humbly pray that Parliament not repeal or amend section 241 of the Criminal Code in any way to uphold the Supreme Court of Canada's decision of September 30, 1993, to disallow assisted suicide or euthanasia.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification) moved:

That this House take note of the progress made to date on the government's forthcoming reform of social security programs and of the views expressed by Canadians with regard to this reform.

He said: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by expressing my appreciation to House leaders of all parties in the House for their agreement in helping to organize this first major debate where we have an opportunity to begin to express our views as parliamentarians.

I have been a parliamentarian for over 20 years. I have always had a deep abiding belief and faith that this is the place where people prevail, not the self–appointed experts and commentators and people who rush to the mikes before they read reports. This is the place where people gain their voice. This is the place where each of us has an opportunity to speak on behalf of our constituents, who really are what makes this country work, to go beyond and around and through the smokescreens and static and noise that we often hear in terms of the immediate surrounding corridors of Parliament Hill and get back to where people really have an opportunity to decide.

The debate that we will engage in for the next day or two is really the first step in inviting Canadians to fully participate. After all, what we are debating are decisions that affect themselves, their families, their children, their training, their jobs, their hopes and their opportunities.

It is not a time to impose top–down decisions, to rush to the barricades with quick answers, but to really say let us give people a chance to become involved in a real way and to express their concerns and aspirations. That is why Parliament is so important. That is why the parliamentary committee will undertake this very monumental task. I extend my appreciation to the members of that committee for the work that they will undertake over the next several months in crossing this country and inviting Canadians to become part of the democratic process.

I hope what we can do today is start that dialogue with Canadians by reflecting for a moment or two on those moments that each of us finds as public servants where certain things happen to us, where we come across an experience, a certain happening, an event that defines for us what the issues are all about, that really begins to explain to us what is happening in our country.

I would like to begin this morning by giving members a brief account of my own sort of sense of epiphany of that happening on an early morning during the last campaign when I was knocking on doors on a very modest street in the Fort Rouge area of my district. When I came down the street I saw a woman leave a house with her briefcase and walk out. As I went up to the door I was greeted by a young man in his early twenties. Behind him was his wife and a young child maybe seven or eight months old.

Before I got to the normal introduction of who I am he said: "You don't have to say anything, Mr. Axworthy, I know why you are here. That woman who just left is my social worker. She comes to my house every two weeks to check up and make sure I am living up to all the rules so I will get my next cheque". He said: "I have been unemployed for 18 months and it is driving me crazy. I have a young family. I want to give them some hope and I need work to do that. I am going to vote for you this time because I am putting my hope in you, Mr. Chrétien and the party to make a difference for me. I know there are no guarantees. I know there are no easy solutions, but I am giving you a chance to show what you can do".

• (1045)

Today we are launching what we can do to begin to restore that sense of hope for hundreds of thousands of Canadians. We can make a difference. We can break away from the tired, old conventional wisdoms. We can begin to look at programs that have been in place for 30 or 40 years which served a valuable purpose but no longer work as well.

We can reach out and talk to those three million Canadians who presently exist on some form of assistance, be it unemployment insurance, social assistance, or some other benefit. They are the ones who really want the change. Forget all the academics with their foundation grants seen on television who have the best answers as to how the system works. Talk to the people who are there now. Ask them if they want change and you will get 100 per cent approval saying: "Let's make a change. It is essential. Let's do something for ourselves".

That young man in my riding did not want a cheque. He wanted a job. He wanted a chance to put his talents to work as an individual. If we write those individuals 100 times or 1,000 times in each community across this country it adds up to a much stronger nation and then we can say to the world: "We have the best trained workforce in the world". We will attract the needed investment, create the required new products, and will develop the innovation we have if we put our trust and faith in investing in the people of this country. That is what this reform and these proposals are all about: trusting and investing in people and giving them a chance.

I hope we will use the debate in the next day or two to draw upon those experiences of small businesses that want to hire people but because of a whole series of rules cannot get workers when they need them. We have a social assistance system that tells a disabled Canadian: "You declare yourself unemployable in order to get a benefit". We are wasting the incredible pool of talent of four million Canadians who want to work if they are given the chance.

Over the next day or two let us talk about the children in this country. Over a million of them live in poverty because there is not proper child care, because there are not proper work opportunities for their parents, because there is no child support system to make sure the custodial parent does not have to raise them by themselves.

Let us talk about those experiences we see every day in our constituencies. Let us break through the fog, the mist and the smokescreens that have been created by those who have a vested interest in the way things are. Let us talk to people who want to change things to make things better and improve our social security system.

I rise today in that spirit of reform, of change, of looking for ideas and inviting Canadians to participate. I call on my colleagues in the House to join in a crusade to attempt to make a difference. Let us give Canadians the chance to define once again who they are and what they can be in this country of the 1990s and into the next century.

We do not want things the way they used to be. We are not living in some nostalgia about the good old days because nostalgia will not help that young man get a job. Harking back to the good old days will not restore the opportunity for young children to get nurturing, proper nutrition and proper care. That is why we must take up this mission together.

[*Translation*]

Together we must find immediate solutions for all Canadians. Canadians are proud of their social security system, but it is clear that times have changed. Our system no longer meets requirements; the time has come to take action. Too many children live in poverty and this reality goes beyond all jurisdictions. To us, poor children are poor children whether they live in Gaspé or Medicine Hat.

• (1050)

The status quo is not an option. Changes are needed now. Some people do not want us to do, change or cut anything. Others ask us to spend more on social programs. We are also asked to eliminate the deficit. We always have to deal with contradictory requests.

I think that most Canadians would like us to make adjustments but to act carefully and intelligently. They want a new social pact for the coming decades, long–term jobs for them and their children. I think that our first responsibility as a government, as members of the House of Commons, is to look for ways to deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment.

[*English*]

We must do this carefully, deliberately, attentively. We must listen to the great wide voice of Canadians. Those who recommend we come in with an axe in our hands to chop, cut, slash and burn are not listening to Canadians. They are not listening to Canadians who say: "Reform, don't destroy, don't break down. Reform, do it with change, have a new blueprint". The reason is very clear. There are some sobering new facts in the Canada of today.

About 10 years ago, before I was asked to go on sabbatical in the opposition, I was the minister of employment. I have a comparison as to what was happening then and what is happening now. When I was minister of employment about 10 or 12 per cent of those who were on unemployment insurance used the system frequently, every year. Today over 40 per cent of UI users are on that program virtually every single year.

That clearly demonstrates something has fundamentally changed in the workplace. It is not simply a matter of a few people abusing the system. It means there has been an underlying revolution in the way people work in this country. Many of our traditional industries no longer provide the same employment opportunities. They are declining. People are being caught up and are being washed away from the mainstream.

That is why we must make changes. We must help them find ways back into the employment market, find ways back into the labour market. We must equip them with new tools. That is why simply having a benefit program and writing a cheque every month is not sufficient. People need to have opportunities to become more literate, to learn French, English, or mathematics so they can begin to understand the new kinds of work.

All of us get our cars repaired. Have you looked under the hood of your car recently? No longer is it a simple carburettor with a little gas and air going through it. Now there is a computer attached to it. People in the car repair sector say there are 10,000 jobs missing in Canada because we do not have trained automobile technicians with the skills to adapt to that new technology now found in our automobiles.

People ask where the jobs are. Jobs are lost in this country every day because we simply do not have the people to pass the test. Yet on the other side of the ledger there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who want to work but do not have the skills or abilities to pass that test.

People have said to me: "I saw somebody last night from one of the social groups who asked where the jobs are". Last year 170,000 people came into Canada under our immigration program on an employment authorization because there were not sufficient people in this country with the skills we require for our economy.

People I recently met with in the software industry said there are 15,000 potential jobs in this country in the next five years but Canadians are not trained to meet those jobs. At the same time people say: "Don't put a cent into training. Don't transfer resources into where it really counts. Keep people on unemployment insurance". Is that what we really want? Is that the hope for Canadians, to stay on UI year after year? Or do we want to say to them and their kids: "We are going to give you some hope and a chance to get a job that really means something".

• (1055)

In the unemployment insurance system there is an interesting figure we should pay some attention to. Last year 14 per cent of the companies were responsible for close to 40 per cent of the UI payouts. That means that over time because of the existing system a variety of companies, both public and private, have used the UI system not to help people get jobs or make a transition but simply to pad the payroll.

A whole series of layoffs are designed to meet the duration of benefits under the unemployment insurance system. There is a massive cost subsidization taking place from one industry to another, from one region to another. They are basically saying that does not help the other regions develop their economies.

It creates a reliance upon the system and people say: "If we can get 30 or 40 weeks, if we can lay off our workers for June and July—which many school boards do—and we can save some money, then let us do it". What they do not say is that some person down the street, perhaps a short order cook in a restaurant, is paying a premium every week to pay for that layoff when it is not necessary. That is not fair. It kills jobs. As a result, we have seen the premiums double or triple in the last six or seven years.

Is that the kind of system we want to protect? Is that the kind of system those who say not to touch the programs want to maintain, a system that does not reward work but rewards dependency? I do not think Canadians want that. They want us to take a different look at things.

Let us take a moment to look at the whole question of another change going on in our country. Fifty per cent of the jobs over the next five years are going to require a post–secondary education. In fact, statistics over the last year indicate there was a 17 per cent growth in jobs for people who had a post–secondary education or better. On the other side of the coin there was a 19 per cent loss of jobs for those who had less than a post–secondary education.

In the meantime we continue to see dropout rates of 15, 20, 30 per cent depending on the region. Young people who know they are facing a radically different workplace and require radically different skills are dropping out of school. They will become the next generation of people who find themselves pushed to the sidelines.

One of the key issues is how to increase those opportunities in accessibility. That is what the green paper talks about. It talks about that re–equipment. We are saying if we can look at the unemployment insurance system, take money that is exclusively paid for benefits and turn it into an employment service fund, then we can offer those people a chance to go back to school, a chance to become literate, a chance to get good counselling, a chance to have a job corps for older workers, a chance once again to put their talents to work.

We are jointly funding an experiment in New Brunswick. It is the New Brunswick job corps for older workers. Up to now a seasonal worker in that area had no hope, especially when there was no more seasonal work when forestry declined. Now we are putting close to 2,000 workers into reforestation. We are rebuilding the natural resource, creating a wealth and resource base for the next generation. People involved in that project say that once again they have a reason to put their boots on in the morning. They have something that gives real value to what they are doing. That is why we need those resources.

We are saying very clearly in the paper that this will give us an opportunity for new partnerships. As much as we are talking in the paper about changing the programs we are also changing the way government should work. We are saying that the most effective role of government is to put resources into the hands of people and let them make choices. We have an opportunity to develop new partnerships with the provinces, business, labour and local communities.

• (1100)

Two weeks ago I signed agreements with representatives of the North York Board of Education, Niagara Community College, labour and business representatives in the electrical industry. We are putting up 25 cents of every training dollar—not a full dollar like we pay in other places—which is matched by the employees, employers and the province to provide new apprenticeship places for close to 300 or 400 young people so they can begin getting those new skills.

That is what I mean by partnership. That is what I mean by decentralizing decision making. That is what I mean by once again giving people a chance to make decisions in their own communities: by decentralizing the system, by government working in a different way as a facilitator, an enabler, by breaking down the bureaucracies, the hierarchies and by once again restoring at the local level, the business level and the shop level the chance to make decisions for your own self–improvement, your own self–sufficiency.

That is what this paper is all about. It is about a new way of governing that gives real power to people. It is not power to bureaucracies but real power back to the people to make decisions for themselves.

[*Translation*]

Some accuse us of taking a centralizing approach. I would like to know what is the basis for that assertion, what page of the document are they referring to? I will tell you what page. On page 27 of the green book, we undertake to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each level of government consistent with the Constitution. On page 40, we propose transferring funds and responsibilities to the provinces.

On page 61, we give the provinces the possibility of opting out in the fields of education and student assistance. On page 73, we propose making social assistance legislation more flexible in order to finance Quebec's APPORT program and relinquish decision–making authority to that province. On page 76, we propose a block fund for social assistance to give the provinces more control and flexibility.

Throughout the document we talk about co–operation, about opting out, about flexibility and decentralization. These are not the words of a centralizing government but the characteristics of a new, dynamic federalism.

[*English*]

Let us focus for just a moment on how that applies to the area of higher education. I have heard certain members wax eloquent about how this is some form of intrusion. It shows that they neither know their history nor have read the document.

Since World War II the federal government has supported the educational efforts of the provinces. We did so because, as the national government, we recognized that good education is one of the foundations of a good economy. We also have to ensure that there is equity in all parts of Canada; that a student in Newfoundland gets the same treatment as a student in Ontario or British Columbia. We also recognize that the provinces which also have a responsibility would need support to expand the system to ensure that there was opportunity.

For example we spend close to $1 billion on student assistance. At the present time, with the clear right to opt out, we would simply transfer the funds and the provinces would implement their own system. Quebec and the Northwest Territories have availed themselves of that. We also have a transfer system that was established in 1977 where we transfer moneys to the provinces by tax points and by cash.

What is happening under the existing rules that have been in place since 1977? As the revenue to the provinces grows because of the growth in the economy and the population, they get more money, they get more revenue. It is an invisible endowment from the federal government to the provinces to help them with education. It is a permanent commitment to support them.

• (1105)

Some provincial treasurers may not be prepared to admit it, because they keep getting $200 or $300 million more every year in additional revenue. That is okay. We made the deal. The corollary is that as the revenue goes up with the tax points, the cash begins to go down because on a constant basis there is an escalator clause.

Under the existing rules we could see the reduction of those cash transfers over the next 10 years. That does not mean a loss in revenue because the revenue to the provinces is going up at the same time. It means that the cash directly attached to students and others disappears into provincial treasuries.

We are saying that before we let that vacuum exist, before the money disappears, before it is reduced, let us see if we can do something creative. Let us see if we can do something to substantially broaden accessibility for students across Canada. Let us recognize that tuition rates have been going up every single year under the existing system by 10 per cent per year. They have doubled over the last five years across Canada. Students need some help to meet that problem.

We also have another major issue. People who are presently in the workplace do not have any financial assistance to go back to school. They do not have a program for them. Unless they are on social assistance or UI there is no training assistance. They have great difficulty getting eligibility for university.

They want to go back to school. The woman today who is a seamstress has a dream of becoming a fashion designer. A car mechanic may want to become an engineer. It is our job to help them do that. We are facing continuous learning. That is why we are saying before the cash transfer ratchets down year by year, let us take hold of it and use it to lever another $3 billion back into higher education.

Let us put a lot more money back in the system. Let us make a much broader, wider system of grants and loans available to students of all kinds everywhere. They can get access to our system on a basis where they can repay the money according to income. It would not be like the present system where they repay like a mortgage system with flat rates regardless of what their income is or if they have income or not, but they should pay according to their income.

That to me is a proposition. It is an idea that we want to place before the provinces. If they want to opt out of that new system that is their business. We clearly say in the paper, even though a few have not read it, that if the provinces want to do it they have the right to do it, no arguments. Let us do something to substantially broaden accessibility for young people.

Let us broaden accessibility for people in the work force. Let us give every Canadian a chance to be continuous learners throughout the course of their lives and therefore substantially enrich and broaden the wealth and experience and knowledge of this country as a whole.

We also have to take a look at the social security system. Once again it seems that people have forgotten their history slightly. We have a cost shared system. The Government of Canada pays about $5 billion for tax benefits directed to children. We also have about $7.7 billion that is cost shared with the provinces to help them pay for their social assistance programs.

One of the problems is that over the years a whole system of rules has built up. The rules say that if somebody on social assistance wants to go back to work, have their chance at a job—it may be a minimum wage job, a starting job—we ask that we tax back 75 per cent of their income. They are only provincial rules, but under the Canada assistance plan rules, we do not permit provinces to invest in learning, job creation, training as a result of CAP.

It may have been a rule that made sense back in the sixties when social assistance was only dealing with a small proportion of the population, but we are talking about three million people now. We are talking about half of those on social assistance being employable. We are not talking about the most vulnerable

who have no opportunity at all. We are talking about half the people on social assistance, people who are employable if they are given a chance, if they are given some support.

• (1110)

That is why one of the key proposals in our paper is to provide new flexible rules so provinces can begin to establish their programs to enable people to go back to work. Over the summer we have been signing a series of strategic initiatives with six or seven provinces in a spirit of co–operation to provide them the ability and the resources to innovate.

In my province of Manitoba we have a new program for single parents where they will run the program, not the bureaucrats or social workers. They will have their own centre where they will develop their own child care programs, their own training programs, their own employment programs. Once again it is based on the principle of decentralizing, putting resources in people's hands, working in partnerships.

In Rimouski a couple of weeks ago we, as the federal government, became a partner with a women's group, Ficelles, the local CEGEP, and the local regional development authority, to provide a new centre of resource for women on social assistance to create their own jobs, to create their own employment, to start their own businesses.

Once again we have presented a new principle. It is not the federal government, not provincial government landing on top of them. We are partners with them in the small town of Rimouski where we have said to these women that they will be responsible for their own development and we will give them resource and help.

[*Translation*]

We will make job creation easier. We will make it easier to develop new approaches to job creation. This is the way the government should work in the future.

[*English*]

That is why we proposed changes in the way we deliver our social security system and in particular to look at the way the rules apply to those with disabilities. Why should they have to declare themselves as unemployable. Just think of the enormous number of job opportunities there are out there for people who have incredible skills but have to sign a piece of paper saying they cannot put any of that to use.

Disabled organizations across the country are saying that benefits should be split from social services and something different should be done. We are putting that on the table for discussion with the provinces.

Our own vocational rehabilitation program is one way of getting away from the sheltered workshop and into giving resources to individuals to make that change.

Similarly, we say this is an opportunity, and maybe the most important opportunity, to come together as a country to take care of children. Let us begin to mobilize all resources; federal government, provincial governments, business, labour, community organizations, people that say they are no longer prepared to accept a million children living in poverty.

Let us give ourselves a goal to bring the provinces together in co–operation to bring that level down 30, 40, 50 per cent in the next 10 years. Let us really go to work.

Through the proposals in this paper there is a way, partly by giving their parents a chance to work. The best way of dealing with child poverty is a job for the parents. Give them the resources to find that job. Break down the rules that prevent them from getting jobs. Create work out there that they can find.

Another way we present in the green paper is the new program of child support. We can work again federally and provincially to make sure that those parents who have been separated and no longer receive support from non–custodial parents have a much tougher enforcement system. If that does not work let us take a look at the program now being introduced in other countries for a minimum basis of child support and let government help people to get those payments back. We could reduce our social welfare costs by 10 or 15 per cent if we had a decent, effective support system.

My colleague, the Minister of Justice, within a matter of weeks will be presenting the results of federal–provincial discussions to initiate a new child support system and I hope all members here will support that initiative.

Finally, we must also look at how we can begin to put together a program or a system that will enable us to provide an income base for children partly because they do not receive enough. The combination of federal–provincial benefits does not give children enough support.

There is an interesting conference this weekend, Prime Minister, that I know you are interested in, where we have groups of child specialists from across the country who have clearly established the connection between early child development in the first couple of years, and what happens to an adult later on.

• (1115)

We can directly relate nutrition to bad health when we are adults. We can directly relate nurturing and support to problems in the court. When we have great arguments in this House about getting tough with young offenders, we should start with children who are two or three years old because many of them are not getting it due to lack of income.

I recall meeting with people from the National Association of Food Banks. I asked what is the one single thing that we can do for children in this country. The answer was get some more money in their hands. That is why we have to combine those benefits and go to work to do it.

I understand this will not be easy. We have to really rely upon full scale co–operation by all levels of government. That is why we will be appealing to our colleagues. For those governments that say they do not want to participate they are condemning the children of those provinces to serious problems in the future. They are creating problems for the future. That is why it is going to be so essential that we spend the next couple of years mobilizing a good will and tapping into the potential for goodwill which I think exists in this country. I think Canadians want to help their kids. I think we have now come to a recognition that it is time we made this a national priority.

This government will take the leadership with our provincial colleagues to put that first on the agenda and make sure that the next generation of children will not suffer the same problems as this generation of children.

That is the point of this debate. That is the reason for getting ideas out and getting a dialogue going. I welcome them. I do not expect everyone is going to agree with us. I would be surprised if they did. However, there are some good examples.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): I have been around for 30 years.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I always agree with the Prime Minister.

Bob White, head of the Canadian Labour Congress, put out what I thought was a positive statement. He said: "I do not agree with parts of the report. I take exception to some of the issues on unemployment insurance, but I am prepared to engage in a constructive debate. I am prepared to put my ideas and those of my membership on the table". That is the right spirit, not total rejection, not angry rhetoric without substance, not the kind of posturing that we see from so many who say we cannot do anything.

Mr. Silye: Not cheap shots.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Not cheap shots. That is a good example. I am glad the member from the Reform Party said that because I saw his leader on television last night who had a string of cheap shots, one after the other. I hope he will pass this along.

Before I conclude, let us deal with one other very important element of this proposal which is this clear linkage that exists between proposals for social reform and how it affects the broader economy.

The Prime Minister announced in Quebec City about two and a half weeks ago that this is one part of a broad national agenda the government wants to put forward. In about 10 days or so the Minister of Finance will be putting forward a paper on economic growth and fiscal requirements. That will be followed by another paper by the Minister of Industry concerning job creation and how to stimulate private sector growth and activity. They are all linked together. They are all part of the same effort to get people back to work and to restructure the fundamentals of this country.

In doing so, that is one reason why we also have to address the fiscal reality of the country. For those who simply say do not make cuts and do not touch the budget, they are not living in the real world. We all know that everybody has to take a hard look at where we spend the money. The Leader of the Opposition said that he does not believe we can do more with less.

I suppose having been a member of the Mulroney government for nine years I can understand why he would have that philosophy. It did less with more. That was its problem. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will be able to overcome his particular disadvantage having been nurtured under that government which when he participated did not have social reform in an open participatory way but did it by stealth. Does the member of that government recall that he was responsible as a member of that cabinet for major slashing of the unemployment insurance program, clawbacks to senior citizen pensions, major changes on higher education, all of those? Now he is the great defender of the status quo. No wonder, look at the status quo he created. Who wants his status quo?

• (1120)

Talk about a leopard changing his spots. How about a leopard with all kinds of coloured spots, you never know which one defines who the leopard is; change parties, change spots, change positions, change philosophies. It does not matter. It is a new interchangeable system that we are in these days.

What we are saying very clearly, and it is outlined on page 23 of the book, is that there is a fiscal parameter that we have to work with. In the February 1994 budget it stated that we would make changes to unemployment insurance which would realize $2.2 billion in savings which we have recycled back into other programs and into reducing the premium to create jobs in this country.

We also announced that we would hold transfer payments at the 1993–94 level and that would gain a saving of $1.5 billion.

We are already talking in the area of $5 billion. We made that very clear. I have indicated that as a result of these changes that we are proposing in the paper, a restructuring, I would like to see another target of 10 per cent in cuts in unemployment insurance so we can again use the money to create the literacy programs, the educational programs, the training programs, the job employment programs and the reduction of premium programs so that we can get Canadians back to work. We have said that very explicitly, very clearly.

The one question that we cannot answer yet is what is the result of the program review. The Minister of Finance has set targets for every department. The Prime Minister has said every department will have a program review. We are all looking at how we can eliminate duplication, how we can eliminate waste and how we can change programs. There is a lot of it to be done.

That is one reason why I think that we are prepared with provinces to do a lot of guichets uniques, to co–locate, to eliminate a lot of excess. We are working with provinces now. There is money to be saved.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): We have signed an agreement with every one of them but one.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): That is right. That is one reason we have put on the table a new labour market agreement with the provinces which talks about transferring responsibility, which talks about rationalizing programs, which talks about transferring money for training to the provinces so that we can provide a much clearer definition of responsibilities. We can save money on that but the decision has not been taken yet.

That is why we have a consultation, a budget process that will start with the department of finance, a committee of finance, a consultation on social review, and those decisions will be taken. When they are taken we will make them clear. We will make them public. We cannot announce what we have not decided.

I know members opposite sometimes do that. I know they like to speculate. There is even the odd newspaper reporter or two who get into that sort of frenzy, saying: "I think I know what I believe", and therefore prints on the front page of a newspaper.

The fact of the matter is we believe that we have to have as part of this exercise a recognition and a responsibility to have fiscal stability in this country. If we do not, then what is clear is that our social policy decisions will not be made by Canadians. They will be made by bond dealers in New York. They will start telling us.

Right now if we look at the expenditure pattern, we spend close to $40 billion on these programs that we are talking about and about $40 billion on the interest. If we do not make changes in the programs and reallocate in 10 years time we will be spending $50 billion on interest and $29 billion on social programs. I think all Canadians regardless of political stripe recognize that something has to be done.

That is why we are prepared to try to face up to those responsibilities in a clear, sound way, not by simply saying take $15 billion, slash every program in sight, do not try to reform, do not try to make them better, simply cut the programs. That is not the way to do it. Canadians did not elect us to do that. They elected us to use our intelligence and our creative powers to make better programs, not simply to break down existing programs. There is a major difference in that approach.

Those are the options and choices that we have in this green paper. That is the kind of discussion and dialogue that we have to begin to generate beginning today in this House, to show Canadians that we can face new realities, that we can use our best creative powers to come up with better ideas, that we are open and listening and that Parliament is the real forum for this country. It is the crucible where these kinds of answers and solutions will be found, not in the think tanks, not in the interest groups, but here in Parliament where we represent the people.

We can do it right. I fully expect that there will be some difference of opinion. I do not know whether the debate today will immediately result in a consensus but if it does not then I hope we will have those differences expressed in the most constructive way possible, in a way that really gives people a sense that Parliament can work positively, progressively, constructively and not simply become a forum for going after one another.

• (1125)

That is the kind of spirit that we have to create. I am going to use a story that I have used many times. I see that the members from the Reform Party are getting impatient. I guess they do not like staying in Parliament too long. There is no problem in the future for that, four years and they will be gone.

This is a little story that really summarizes what I hope will infuse the spirit of debate in this House and throughout the country. It happened in New Brunswick where I visited a small training program for women on social assistance. It was set up jointly by the federal and provincial governments.

I was talking to the women in that program and asked them how it was working. One of the women said: "I was not too sure, it is darn hard coming back to school but after five or six months I realized how important it was because a couple of days ago, I was able to help my seven–year old daughter with her homework. For the first time I was able to show that we were now able to work together as a mother and a child".

She said: "I wrote a little saying. I hope that you will tell other Canadians how important it is. As a result of the kind of experience I have had here", the kind of thing that we are promoting in this green book, an effort to find new ways of getting people some hope and dignity, "never be afraid to reach for the moon because even if you miss, you will be among the stars".

Today, with this green paper we are asking Canadians to reach for the moon.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, no one in the Official Opposition is denying the need to do something to help out those of the less fortunate of our fellow citizens, who are in difficulty.

The current economic and financial situation has driven these people to live in fear and anxiety and, in that sense, I am in full agreement with the minister's diagnosis.

I think that when it comes to being sensitive to the situation of the disadvantaged, the minister has retained his progressive, left–wing tradition. The problem is that the cure is a right–wing one. While the diagnosis is left–wing, the cure is right–wing. I am not saying that the minister's heart is not in the right place, on the contrary. The problem is that his wallet is not in the same place, as a Liberal minister. Now that he has become minister, he finds himself in a peculiar situation, stuck between a Finance Minister and a Prime Minister whose primary objective is to reduce the deficit and the debt on the backs of the disadvantaged.

Take this speech for example. If you take away the rhetoric, finer feelings, hand on the heart, you realize nonetheless that the official objective of the minister, as stated in the first pages of the consultation paper, is to cut social program expenditures, to effect the massive cut all right–wing circles, all employers and all the business community have been wanting to see for a generation. And now this minister with a progressive background has been chosen by the right to do the job.

Here is this minister who just related to us, with sincerity I think, how sad he felt when, one morning, as he was going door to door visiting constituents in his riding, he met this young couple in which the man was out of work and the woman was also at home. The young man told the minister how much he wished in himself that changes could be made to improve his situation, to help him find a job in particular.

But besides sympathizing with this young man's difficulties, should the minister not have told him: "Look, I sympathize but my government is about to cut $15 billion in social expenditures over the next five years"?

• (1130)

If the minister had wanted to be straightforward with this young man, that is what he would have told him. He should have informed him that, in addition to the $7.5 billion in cuts already announced in last year's budget, more cuts are planned, which I will discuss later.

How can one make a progressive–sounding speech, how can one claim to base social program reform on a desire for expansion, after having coldly decided to cut $15 billion over five years in the funds allocated to social programs? I am not making this up; the minister has described very clearly right from the beginning, on page 23 of the discussion paper, the context in which this reform is to take place. He very clearly ties it to a budgetary transaction, a spending–cut exercise.

Let me quote two excerpts from page 23: "Reform of social security cannot be contemplated in isolation from the fiscal realities facing governments in Canada". And a little further: "And existing expenditures must be brought under control and in some instances reduced". There it is in black and white.

We all heard the budget speech, in which this minister's colleague, the Minister of Finance, announced a $2.4 billion reduction in social expenditures, in particular unemployment insurance expenditures. It was also announced in the budget that the upcoming social security reform was going to take place as part of an expenditure reduction plan.

I think it is obvious that this exercise lies within a framework of spending cuts on social programs. In fact, when you read through the document and get to the essential and sectorial aspects of the reform, you note that the underlying motivation throughout is to reduce the level of protection afforded to those in need.

Worse yet, in my opinion, is the philosophy behind the minister's approach. This is evident from, first, his attitude regarding the unemployed. Perhaps not for the minister, who would gladly do the opposite of what he is doing, but for his government at least, this attitude is expressed in the paper before us: the unemployed are guilty. Here we have a government going through a financial crisis, as we know. Everyone agrees that we are facing some kind of public finance mess, a mortgage on our young people's future, a burden already weighing down adults in their daily activities. With the deficit almost out of control as it is, it is obvious that the government is confronted with an enormous problem and that it is aware of it.

So, expenditures have to be reduced. The deficit must be brought under control. How? By looking for someone to blame. Why are we facing a crisis? Why, in a rich and highly industrialized country like Canada, blessed with so many natural resources, a hard–working population and lots of capital, does the federal government find itself in such a position? There has to be a culprit. Maybe it is the government, which spends too much on its operations. No, says the Minister of Finance, it is not the government's operating expenditures. But we know that, in fact, there are billions of dollars to be saved there.

Is the problem this overlapping between the various levels of governments, the duplication of programs and the waste of energy and resources? No, the government is not trying to save one penny in that area either. A tax reform might be in order. Do we have a consistent and rational tax system? Should it not be reviewed, harmonized and drastically changed? For example,

should we not eliminate unfair tax irritants? I know that there is not enough money to be saved there to solve the problem of public finance, but the issue of family trusts is a bad symbol for taxpayers. Tax shelters which continue to benefit rich Canadians do not represent an astronomical amount of money, but they are important symbols in terms of tax fairness, at a time when the government is asking all taxpayers to tighten their belt. Yet, the minister did not see anything wrong there either.

Instead, the minister sees the culprits to be those who will be targeted by his measures, namely the unemployed and the poorest, who are already the most affected by the current crisis. This, in my opinion, is the most unacceptable side of the philosophy underlying the minister's approach.

• (1135)

The other attitude which I find just as despicable is this belief that the unemployed are unemployed by choice. The government seems to think that Quebecers and Canadians who are currently unemployed, who suffer from anxiety because they are without work, who feel they are losing their dignity as citizens, fathers and mothers, and who are losing hope about their future, live this situation by choice. The government seems to think that what these people need is a good scare to force them to find work. This is what is so unpleasant in the minister's attitude. Why is that? It is because no jobs are being created.

There is nothing in this agenda to make us think that the government will implement job creation measures. There is no employment policy. Yet, that word is everywhere in the document. But it is a euphemism used to conceal the reality and the reality is that there are no incentives to promote job creation.

This government has no creative spirit; it has not made any effort and it has not allocated any money to generate some enthusiasm in Canada and in Quebec to put people to work and to create jobs. No. It seems that those without jobs are in that situation by choice, because they are lazy.

The minister thinks that by making their plight even worse and by making these people even more distressed, he will force them to find jobs. But those jobs simply do not exist and that is the fundamental flaw in the minister's reform and philosophy.

On the subject of philosophy, let me quote an unbelievable principle stated on page 26 of the discussion paper. It says: "A social security system that is financially unsustainable is a dead end. Therefore, social security reform must in part entail making difficult choices about the best use of available funds". With that statement, the government is introducing a new concept for social programs designed to help people with special needs: cost effectiveness. From now on, social programs will have to be cost effective.

This is what the discussion paper is all about. The minister is trying to ensure cost effectiveness, not as regards government programs, operating expenditures, taxation or inefficiencies resulting from overlapping, but in social programs. Government management is not cost effective, but the unemployed will have to be, even though they have no jobs.

There is another aspect of this document, and its spirit, which is truly unacceptable. It is the fact that this whole exercise is a sham. The government is not being honest. Let me give you two obvious examples. First, the minister, who was supposed to prepare an action plan, decided, even if it will take longer, perhaps a year, to hold consultations. Consequently, he drafts a so–called discussion paper, which he is careful not to label a policy statement, so as to always be able to argue that nothing has been decided and that this is still the consultation stage.

It contains some unacceptable things that will make people jump. So when questioned in the House or by journalists or in consultation sessions where people get excited and upset and concerned, he is prepared to say, "Do not worry. These are not decisions; this is only a consultation. I will listen to what you have to say and take it into consideration; then a decision will be made." That is how the discussion paper is presented.

In fact, thanks to a leak published in the *Toronto Star* yesterday, we now know that this minister and his colleague in Finance have already decided, regardless of the outcome of the "consultation", that a further $7.5 billion will be cut from social programs within five years.

That is particularly odious for the people, the members of Parliament, the media and everyone who will be involved in this vast phony consultation. Yes, members of Parliament can go for five weeks throughout Canada to hear people's grievances, suggestions and reactions to this document, this "discussion paper"; members of Parliament can go around, political commentators can comment, the poor can always hope, MPs can always talk, but the decision has been made.

• (1140)

Whatever happens, whatever people say about these consultations, a further $7.5 billion will be cut and no one on the government side has denied it. It took a fortunate leak, I would say, from the *Toronto Star* for us to learn that this cut has been decided. Furthermore, it was also decided to keep it secret. The leaked Cabinet document shows that the two ministers got together secretly, shut the door and swore that this decision would remain secret and that they would hide it, letting people naively believe that this document is only a discussion paper.

[*English*]

I remember a sentence which has been credited to former President Theodore Roosevelt. I think he said it in a speech: "Speak nicely, speak sweetly, but carry a big stick". I think the minister should be associated with the same sentence. Maybe change it a little: "Speak with compassion, but carry a big knife". That is what he is doing in this exercise.

[*Translation*]

That is the first deceptive thing: the decision has already been made. The kind, intelligent, friendly minister will attend many consultation meetings and listen to people, pretending to take in what they say. He may take notes when people tell him not to cut this or that, but the minister will have to keep himself from laughing when he thinks that the decision has already been made and he is faced with the credulity of people who will fall for the consultation exercise.

The other deceptive thing is the minister's incredible distortion of the words "decentralization" and "centralization". The minister tells us: "This is an exercise in democracy. The federal government is sometimes accused of being distant and remote from the people, preoccupied with overly theoretical matters; the federal government will get closer to the people, it will establish direct contact with them, it will become populist. We will now have a populist federal government, something like what the Reform Party wants. A government that will get closer to the people, issue cheques directly to them, establish bursary programs that will issue cheques directly to them and will dictate standards for welfare, and when it comes to occupational training, will select programs with local groups, municipalities and individuals; a government that will democratize and decentralize." That is how the minister describes what he wants to do.

What is actually going on? In fact, the federal government has decided to do without the provinces. I remind the government, which tends to forget, that this country has a Constitution established by the founders 125 years ago as a framework for how this country should run. The founders of this country and their successors realized that it takes two levels of government, one to look after things that are closer to the people and which it is better placed to do so, namely the provincial governments, and the federal government to look after foreign affairs, defence, the currency and so on. That was the spirit which guided the Constitution that is binding on everyone.

Now the minister wants us to believe that the federal government is in a better position than the provinces to manage social problems, to look after problems in people's daily lives, in education, in health, which will come later, as we shall see, and especially in social welfare.

So as I was saying, the terms are being misused because what the minister is actually trying to do is to centralize. He is trying to reduce the provinces' role to an insignificant contribution to community life. He wants the federal government to run everything, to so dominate that the provinces will be unable to stop it from centralizing.

Behind this plan is the desire to redefine the federal government's role for the future. Finally the masks are falling. Clearly, the federal government intends to take the provinces' place in fields reserved to them by the Constitution, as they were always meant to be.

• (1145)

For example, you can see that this government is trying to sideline the Quebec state which is such a thorn for Ottawa. It is done in an underhanded way which I find very disturbing. We will have to keep this in mind while reviewing this proposal in the House today, tomorrow and in the weeks to come.

Mr. Speaker, if you allow me, I would like to briefly go over three or four particular elements of the reform as they relate to specific target groups. Let us start with unemployment insurance. The minister gives two options, clearly stating where his preference lies. One of the options is totally unacceptable, he tells us, since it would mean cuts everywhere. In other words, what he really means is that there is no choice, we have to choose the second option because the first one is simply too horrible.

He is asking us to choose between pneumonia and tuberculosis. Well then, let us reject tuberculosis, that leaves us with pneumonia. What kind of pneumonia? It is the second option, the one preferred by the minister, that is to say a two–tier system, one for people who are out of work occasionally, not very often, maybe even never, that is to say a regular system and then, there will be another one for people who are often unemployed. For those who are nearly never out of work, the UI program does not change. They may never need UI benefits, but they will still have to pay premiums, probably at a higher level, since there will be a ceiling put on them.

The other tier will deal with people who really need unemployment insurance and for whom it was originally created, namely unemployed workers, the real ones whom the minister so tactfully calls frequent beneficiaries. These people are going to get less. They are going to be forced to work for community action programs. They may even be forced to go back to school.

Benefits are going to be lower, premiums higher. It will not be much fun to be unemployed once the system is revamped by the minister. People will be so unhappy, things will go so badly for them, they will be so worried that, or so the minister thinks, they will go out and get a job, a job that does not exist. The truth is, those who are really in need, those who are most vulnerable are getting squeezed. This is where the minister is going to cut and get the billions of dollars he needs for the finance minister.

Who is going to be hurt? Who is the most often out of work? Young people fresh out of school are having a difficult time finding work. Single mothers, seasonal workers, people over 50, people my age who suddenly find themselves unemployed after 25 years in the same job and who do not know what else to do, these are the people who are going to be hurt by the minister's reform.

Beyond the tactful language of bureaucrats using such incomprehensible terms as adjustment programs and frequent beneficiaries, what we must read is that those who really need unemployment insurance, who depend on it, will from now on be virtually cut off from it; their benefits will be lower and they will get less coverage.

Women are another group which will get hurt. We all know how hard they had to fight and must still do to reach a minimum of financial independence, since you cannot have equal opportunities without financial independence. What do we find in the minister's reform? He will tell us that it is only an idea, a strange idea for sure; as a matter of fact, he wonders why it is even in there. It could not be his doing, it must come from one of his officials.

People will reject it, but we know full well that things have already been decided. If a woman loses her job, her husband's income is taken into account to determine whether or not she qualifies for UI. As we know, men usually earn more than their spouses. Women who lose their jobs are treated as second class citizens, they will be penalized for having a husband who makes money. They will receive either no UI benefits or significantly lower ones.

This is a clear case of discrimination. I believe that if this was to be challenged in the Supreme Court under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it would be ruled unconstitutional. Then there are the students. The minister went after them with a vengeance. He must really hate them to treat them the way he does in his reform. Let us look at Quebec. The situation is even worse in the rest of Canada. They are talking about cuts in federal transfer payments to the provinces for post–secondary education to the tune of $2,600,000,000. Due to a complicated formula, that means that Quebec will get $300 million less; bear in mind that it is a lot worse in other parts of the country.

• (1150)

But for Quebec, $300 million means quite a shortfall for post–secondary education programs. The minister himself admits, with rare candour, that these cuts will probably lead to higher tuition fees. According to some quick forecast, they will probably double. If Quebec gets $300 million less for post–secondary education, the government and universities will have to double, some say even triple, tuition fees. And it will be worse in the rest of the country. If Canadian students think things are tough now, wait until they see what this reform means for them.

The Minister has recognized that it will create somewhat of a problem. That is obvious. For example, tuition fees at Laval University in Quebec city are now $3,000 and will easily rise to $8,000 with this reform and the impact will be disastrous for students. The Minister says they will find a solution, they will lend money and implement a grants and loans program so that we can help students who will have to put up with the increased tuition fees. What does this mean?

It means, for example, that under post–reform conditions, a student going through law school, as I did, will leave the university owing the government approximately $25,000. And that will be one debt among others because the student will have to borrow elsewhere to buy a car or for other reasons. For a Ph.D, the debt load will easily reach $50,000.

It means this reform reopens the whole issue of accessibility to higher education for students who are not wealthy. In Quebec, we have been fighting for equal access for twenty years now. I know it is the same in the rest of Canada. For twenty years, people have been fighting for a system ensuring equal access to higher education. There was a time in Quebec when only the chosen few could attend university or obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree. Only those lucky enough to be born in a rich family had access to that. The others did not study, there were no schools for them. Only wealthy families could send their children to university. Twenty years ago, we changed all that. We fought a social battle and we invested considerable funds. That is one thing we are proud of, it is one of the great achievements of Quebec and the federal reform proposed by the Minister will bring us right back to the starting line. Only rich people, sons and daughters of wealthy families, will have the opportunity to attend university if a program such as this one is implemented.

What is even worse, what adds insult to injury is that Bill C–28 dealing with the Student Loans Program, a bill we fought against vigorously, a bill the Bloc Quebecois denounced, but one that was adopted in spite of everything because we had a majority against us in this House. Bill C–28 extends the implementation of the standards the federal government can impose upon provinces wishing to withdraw from that Student Loans Program. From now on, a province withdrawing from the program must implement a new program in all points similar to the federal program. In other words, because Bill C–28 was adopted, on top of restricting access to higher education, this reform will give the federal government the power to determine who will study and what they will study in each of the provinces, including Quebec. The federal government will be in a position to dictate standards and design curricula by controlling those who want to study.

This is a very real danger from what I have seen by perusing briefly the reform document we received only yesterday. You can say the Minister surely has devised other solutions to give students access to education. Yes he certainly has. He suggests they use their RRSPs to pay for their schooling. He suggests that students pay their tuition fees with their RRSPs. How fantastic! One must be a complete stranger to reality to imagine that RRSPs would be an alternative for students. I know very few students who own a RRSP. For that, you have to be part of a rich family or one who owns a family trust.

You could reply that perhaps the Minister meant the parents, that perhaps he will convince the Minister of Finance, who plans to tax RRSPs, to allow parents to use their own RRSPs for their children's education. I see two main problems there. RRSPs were not designed for such a purpose. They were meant to ensure a certain financial security to families, to middle-class people who work, so that they can have at least a minimum security for the future.

• (1155)

So if, out of their generosity, because parents always want the best for their children, parents are forced to use their RRSPs for their children's education, of course children will get a higher education, but the parents will no longer have a retirement fund. That is the kind of situation the Minister is creating for families.

Furthermore, we must admit that not everybody owns a RRSP. One has to be able to afford it and, again, that applies to a chosen few. So it is absolutely incredible that they would propose the RRSPs as a solution.

An hon. member: They are laughing to our faces.

Mr. Bouchard: Right! They are laughing at us.

Let me conclude. The intention of the Minister and of the government goes far beyond this social reform. The Minister wants to change the position of the federal government in Canada, to restructure the relations between the central government, the provinces and the people.

When the Minister says they will create direct links between the federal level and the citizens who will take advantage of the various programs, manpower training programs for example, when he says they will deal directly with local stakeholders, communities, municipalities, businesses, etc., he is in fact saying they will go over the head of provincial governments. So he is truly asking the most fundamental question. The question he is asking is the fundamental one.

What the minister and the government are telling us with this reform is that there are too many levels of government, one too many in fact, the provincial level. They are telling us Quebecers that the redundant level of government is the one in Quebec City and that, from now on, Ottawa should manage everything.

I do not know what people in other provinces think of all this, but we should know shortly when our friend, the Leader of the Reform Party, takes the floor to give his view on the reform. However, I doubt that provincial governments across Canada would accept to bow down and make way for the imperialistic and centralizing aspirations of the federal government.

For us in Quebec—and I do not speak solely for sovereignists, but for all Quebecers—the main entity is the Quebec State, which we used to call the province of Quebec. It is this government that we want to entrust with the power to make fundamental decisions regarding the future of Quebec, regarding the definition of policies which will shape our soul and identity, regarding the design of education programs, regarding the relationship between social and job-creating measures, because without any close tie between the two no reform of social programs can succeed, and this is the main flaw of this reform. It cannot tie what needs to be tied, it cannot make the gears mesh together. There is no synergy, no cohesion. The definition of social programs must tie into a definition of job creation, but the reform does not do that. It would be possible only in a nation where there is a single level of government, and this is why the minister wants a single government, he wants to seize the powers he does not have to complete his reform.

In Quebec, we want the same thing. We want a government which will make all the decisions that concern it, a government able to mesh social demands and job creation. We want a cohesive state, a machine that works.

[*English*]

I would like to conclude with this. It appears to me that this reform is trying to achieve the reshaping of Canada, to achieve some kind of hegemony for the federal government wherein the provincial governments would have a very limited role, a policy which would state that the federal government would stamp the instructions.

For example, it would be possible for the minister to make sure that social and economic policies would be meshed together so as to produce a synergy, a coherence. It is not possible now; we all know it. The minister has in front of him provincial governments, and in Quebec a very strong provincial government determined to defend its position.

This government would like to push the provincial governments aside. To me and to those in Quebec it means that the message is that there is one government too many in the country and that this government would like to have only one, the federal government. We in Quebec believe that it should be one government in Quebec.

I do not know exactly, but it might be that the rest of Canada would like to reshape its relationship with the federal government.

• (1200)

It might be that there is a fundamental need in the rest of Canada to redefine social programs in a way which would go along the lines of the minister. I am quite ready to respect that. I think we should let them do it, but they should not impose their views on Quebec because we have different views.

It appears to me that if the minister has his way with the cabinet and the government party, and if this reform is enacted, if we have the additional cut of $7.5 billion announced in the Toronto *Star* yesterday, it means that we are due for a long and historical confrontation again.

The Prime Minister will ride again as a federal fighter against Quebec and we will have a long, very negative, unproductive fight between the two levels of government. We in Quebec are not ready to do that again. We have gone through that for thirty years now. It would be unhealthy to begin again.

I think we should respect our different orientations. We should be able to sit down and recognize that it is a law of nature and necessity to accept that we go our way. That is my conclusion.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express on behalf of my colleagues and millions of Canadians profound disappointment in the social policy discussion paper tabled by the minister in this House and presented to Canadians.

The government has been in office for almost a year. It promised an action plan to reform Canada's frayed and overburdened social safety net. I remind the House it was an action plan that was to have resulted in legislation this fall. Instead it has produced a discussion paper listing various proposals without any clear plan of action by the government to meet the very real needs of the young, the old, the sick and the poor, without any clear commitment on the part of the government to get to the root of the problem of any real reform in the social safety net.

As a discussion paper the document is severely flawed because the options it offers are limited and vague and because there is no information on the costs of proposed programs. Since affordability under the current circumstances is a key criterion the absence of price tags and detailed cost estimates vaguely undermines the discussion paper's usefulness as a consultation document.

What is so tragic is that the real discussion of social policy and social reform has been going on in this country for years among ordinary people, among taxpayers, among certain academics, among the victims of the systems, among real reformers, but not among Liberals.

The federal government is not really in a position to lead a discussion on social reform. It simply needs to get in on the discussion which is already far advanced. Since the government's social policy review falls so far short of what was promised and expected, it falls to other members of this House to do three things.

First, we need to make clear to the minister what is unacceptable about the current operations of social programs in Canada. We need to spend some time on the unacceptability of the status quo. Second, we need to enunciate the principles of genuine social reform that should be applied to the hodge podge of proposals in this paper, principles that would form the basis of a real action plan in the months and years ahead. Third, we need to challenge the minister to address the root of the problem in reforming the social safety net, namely the over centralization of power and responsibility in Ottawa.

• (1205)

Allow me to respond to the minister's proposals under these three headings. First, on the unacceptability of the status quo, Canadians are committed not just in their heads but in their hearts to helping their fellow citizens in need. In a country such as ours it is simply not acceptable for children to be growing up without adequate food, housing, care or education.

It is not acceptable for senior citizens to be living out their years with inadequate care and resources. It is not acceptable for sick people to wait on longer and longer hospital waiting lists for fewer and fewer hospital beds. It is not acceptable for hundreds of thousands of able bodied working Canadians to be chronically unemployed and underemployed.

It is not acceptable that the billions of hard earned taxpayers' dollars that Canadians generously provide to the three levels of government every year for social spending are so mishandled that the basic needs of individuals and families are not met. It is not acceptable that the government respond to the needs of today by forcing the cost on to the Canadians of tomorrow through massive public borrowing. Growing public debts only contribute to the impoverishment of future Canadians.

Finally, it is not acceptable for a government that has been in office for a year to respond not with an action plan but with an inaction plan that will at best serve the government as an excuse for further delays. It is not acceptable that the paper fails to provide the cost estimates that are essential to a meaningful discussion. It is not acceptable that the major areas of social policy, including old age pensions and health care, both of which are in deep financial trouble, are being put off to some future date. It is not acceptable that legislation flowing from the discussion paper may take years to reach the House.

I want to impress upon the minister and his colleagues the unacceptability of the status quo.

Let me turn to principles of real reform. Allow me to list three principles of real social reform which would allow us to separate the wheat from the chaff in this paper and to separate those proposals which merely perpetuate or tinker with the status quo from those which would really meet the needs of the young, the old, the sick, the poor or the unemployed.

The first principle, social spending, in particular transfers to individuals, should be targeted to those among us who are most in need. Universality, where universality has come to mean that the taxpayers should pay 100 per cent of the bills for social services 100 per cent of the time regardless of the resources available or the financial status of the individual being served, should be abolished as a principle in the design of social programs. This traditional definition of universality is a Liberal invention whose wastefulness has ensured its extinction.

Traditional universality should be replaced by the principle of universal access to public support provided a real need exists and can be demonstrated. In days gone by the principal objection to needs based public support was that it required individuals to complete a means test. Today with the universality of the income tax form, targeted social spending is administratively feasible as well as desirable from a policy standpoint.

The grab bag of proposals that the minister has presented us with includes a couple of items that pay lip services to targeting social benefits to those in need such as the proposal for a targeted child benefit. However, if the minister were really serious about targeting social spending he would have included in his discussion paper figures and charts to illustrate how much of social spending is currently being transferred to people in various income categories including people who do not need it and how that social spending should be retargeted.

The Reform Party has conducted scores and scores of public discussions on targeted social spending. This is hardly a new subject, but the public is not stupid. In such meetings it asks hard questions: "Show us the current distribution of government transfers to individuals and households for OAS, for UIC and for Canada assistance. Who gets what? What households at what income get what benefits? Only then can we tell you whether the current distribution is fair or wasteful or needs to be tipped more to those in lower income brackets". We cannot have a proper discussion of targeted social spending without that data, yet the minister's paper fails to provide those.

• (1210)

The second principle, social programs should be financially sustainable. Social spending overall should be on a pay as you go basis, not continually financed through deficit spending. This means that the current levels of social spending must be reduced since the federal deficit cannot be eliminated solely through cost cutting in other areas of spending. Continued deficits simply impoverish future Canadians and ensure their dependence on an unravelling social safety net which is not financable in the future.

Transfers of wealth from better off Canadians to those who are truly in need are clearly well supported by Canadians but transfers from future Canadians to current Canadians through public debt are not, nor are inefficiencies and wasteful uses of taxpayers' money, nor are fraud and abuse.

In some cases the tax system should be used to recover all or some of publicly funded financial assistance provided the persons or households whose income levels exceed specified levels. This could include, for instance, relatively well off individuals who temporarily receive benefits between jobs.

If the government were serious about ensuring the financial sustainability of social programs it should have done two things. First, the discussion paper should have included the cost of the various alternatives and should have compared those with the cost of existing programs. Its failure to do this is the biggest single flaw in the document.

How can Canadians have meaningful discussions of alternative proposals when they have no idea of what they will truly cost?

The minister is still not adjusted to the fiscal realities of the 1990s. It is the 1990s, not the 1960s. It is irresponsible in the public arena and particularly in this Chamber where we are spending $110 million more per day than we collect in revenues.

It is irresponsible to propose anything, any policy option, without answering the three basic fiscal questions, what will it cost, where will you get the money, and why do we not spend less.

Second, the government should have established clear spending priorities, not just for social spending, but for the entire federal government. I have to wonder where those priorities are when the government proposes ending federal funding to post-secondary education while still spending billions of dollars to subsidize businesses, special interest groups and crown corporations.

Finally, in questioning the commitment of the government to financially sustainable social programs I note the absence of any clear plan to target and reduce social spending by the amounts required to meet the government's own deficit targets.

The third principle, the meaning of social needs should be personalized, privatized and decentralized so that individual families, communities and lower levels of government, not the federal government, are the primary actors. The best way to determine and respond to real needs is through empowerment at the personal family and community level. Big programs managed by central governments are enormously inefficient at getting the right help to the right people at the right time, enormously wasteful of taxpayers' resources and generosity.

Shared jurisdictions and shared cost programs must be eliminated. They lessen accountability for results, reduce the incentive to be cost efficient, breed bureaucracy, reduce flexibility and inhibit the application of common sense.

The patchwork of overlapping rigid bureaucratic social programs must evolve toward a single access point, enabling people in need to seek assistance through the empowerment of individuals and community oriented caseworkers. The empowerment of individuals and families is to be particularly encouraged because such empowerment reduces dependence on the state.

The distribution of federal transfers in support of education through vouchers is to be encouraged because it empowers individuals. The strengthening of families through more generous tax credits for the support of children is to be encouraged because the family is better able to meet the needs of children than any government. The single biggest cause of child poverty is family breakdown. To reduce child poverty, strengthen the family.

The delivery of social services by the level of government closest to the people and most responsive to the people, most accountable to the people, is to be encouraged. This requires recognition by the federal government that it is not now, nor has it ever been, nor will it ever be, the government closest to the people.

• (1215)

The minister said in his statement earlier today that he has a commitment to decentralization. It is to be believed because it is written down in this green paper. The two pages he mentioned incidentally are dividing pages, just dividers.

Why should the provinces or anyone believe that assertion of commitment to decentralization because it is written in this paper when it is written in the Constitution of Canada that the responsibility for health, education and social assistance belongs to the provinces? That has not deterred the federal government from involving itself in centralizing programs in those areas through the use of its spending power.

If the government were really serious about decentralizing social programs, empowering individuals and freeing them from the iron grip of bureaucracy, it would have included specific options for turning over more responsibility, not just entering into administrative arrangements, for program delivery to communities, private organizations, and other levels of government.

I might add that in no area is the unwillingness of the federal government to decentralize power more evident than in the field of health care which is not even discussed in this paper. The total health care bill for Canada last year was $70 billion. Of that total 48 per cent was picked up by the provinces and local governments, 28 per cent by individuals and by private insurance companies, and less than 24 per cent by the federal government. Yet it is the federal government that presumes to dictate the terms of service and financing in the health care field for all other players, a position which prevents rather than facilitates genuine health care reform.

The federal government professes to be just a partner in health care. In reality it has become a junior, junior partner. But it always acts like the senior partner which is why the provinces and the public are so sceptical about government's professed interest in new partnership arrangements.

In conclusion I want to spend a couple of moments on getting to the root of the problem in social reform. I challenge the minister to reveal to the House the real reason he has presented a discussion paper rather than an action plan.

The reason is that he has been unable to reach substantive agreement with the provinces, the governments to which the Constitution assigns primary responsibility for health, education and welfare, the governments without whose support and co–operation meaningful social reform is impossible.

I challenge the minister to reveal to the House the real reason he has been unable to get the co–operation of the provinces in a substantive way. The reason is that his government is committed to status quo federalism, that his government and his leader are not committed to a rapid and substantive decentralization of power, particularly in the areas of health, education, social assistance and social insurance.

Until the federal government does become committed to such a decentralization, most of which can be done within the existing Constitution, I predict that status quo federalism will lead to nothing but the perpetuation of an unacceptable status quo with respect to Canada's social safety net.

Who will lose? It will not be the political elite and the special interests that support and feed off the current centralized system, but the young, the old, the sick, the poor, the unemployed, the taxpayers of today and the taxpayers of tomorrow.

My colleagues and I intend to challenge the minister to play catch–up ball, to move beyond vague discussions to real reform. We intend to challenge the minister to provide a detailed cost analysis of any options he proposes and set the social spending priorities. We cannot have a discussion without that material.

Above all, my colleagues and I intend to challenge the minister and the Prime Minister to get to the root of the problem of reforming the social safety net, namely 30 years of over-centralization of the power and responsibility for meeting social needs in the hands of the federal government.

• (1220)

Hon. Ethel Blondin–Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth)): Mr. Speaker, investing in people is the government's number one priority in this exercise of social security review. It is stated:

> In the economy of the 1990s, it is information and knowledge–based industries that are providing the foundation for jobs and economic growth. Canadians must have the skills, opportunities, and knowledge to meet the demands of the new job market.

This is directly from the red book. By Canadians we mean all Canadians: aboriginal peoples fighting against the odds; youth making the transition from school to the workforce; sole parents balancing family and employment needs; women and their children struggling; and Canadians who find themselves in transition between jobs, some for short periods but many and frequently for too long are displaced out of their jobs; and displaced older workers looking for hope in the form of a new opportunity, perhaps a new job. These are the Canadians we promised to help in the red book.

These goals have not changed and we are now looking at how best to achieve them. The discussion paper released yesterday gives Canadians a chance to debate what is necessary, what is possible with the resources available to us. Our government has identified employability as a fundamental goal of social programming. As the National Anti–Poverty Organization has correctly noted, the best social security for an individual is a decent job paying decent wages.

The response has been swift to the document tabled. I must say I have had the opportunity to meet with some good people this very day and over the last day or so who have responded. I met this morning, for instance, with Jonathan Murphy of the Social Planning Council of Edmonton. I quote what he said:

> We are supportive of the emphasis on training and breaking the cycle of unemployment. There are 40,000 children in Edmonton growing up in poverty. The extended child benefit program will help them. We must maintain national standards for a social safety net. We have a real fear of separate agendas which would undermine national goals for Canadians.

These are the expressions of people. I have also had the opportunity to meet with the aboriginal leaders because we are engaging in and embarking on a process for the aboriginal people by which they will participate. We are working hard to achieve a process they all agree to.

Having said that, we now know that technological change has altered the look of a decent job beyond recognition. Consider the future that lies before a young woman of 18. Perhaps she is just starting a community college program this year. Can anyone predict the skills she will need in the workplace of the year 2030? Of course not. What we can predict is that her education will not end when she graduates from college. She will need to keep learning. In fact the means to social security is not simply a job today; it is the ability to get a job at any one point in anyone's life. That depends on developing and enhancing skills all through life.

Let me go to what the leader of our country has to say on the whole issue. In Quebec City on September 18 the Prime Minister outlined four key components of the government's job and growth agenda. Quite clearly we cannot operate in isolation on any massive reform and expect to have the answers to all the questions. However, listen to this. The first is reforming social security. The second is ensuring a healthy fiscal climate. The third is reviewing government programs and priorities. These sound like some of the things the government is undertaking, quite clearly. The fourth is strengthening the performance of the Canadian economy in investment, innovation and trade.

• (1225)

Members should know that the Prime Minister is embarking on a trade mission to China with a delegation. These are things he has stated and these are things we are living up to on a daily basis. We are working hard to draw in the support and confidence of all Canadians.

Not only are we undertaking government programs, services, and reviews of policies, programs and services, but we are essentially appealing to the public to build the confidence, the trust, to ensure that we do not engage in empty evangelism, that we do not create false hope and that we are in fact doing things that will result in substantive moves for people to improve the quality of their lives.

With the time available to me in the debate today I want to focus on how large a part of social security reform evolves around learning for children, for youth, for adults; learning in our cities, towns and most isolated communities; learning for everyone; and learning for life.

Everyone here understands that learning is the key to employability. The willingness to work hard no longer guarantees a job. The fact that a person has an education is no longer a guarantee, but it is better than having nothing which guarantees nothing, almost for sure, no opportunities. Competition from other countries and automation have ensured that the new jobs in our economy demand a higher and broader set of skills. People who stop their education early limit their employability. People who keep learning improve it.

Since the second world war federal contributions have helped build and operate an extensive and accessible system of post–secondary education. This government has continued those efforts.

In April we launched our youth employment and learning strategy. One element of the strategy was a series of improvements to student aid. How did we improve the Canada student loans program? It was, first, by increasing the weekly loan limits for full time students by 57 per cent; by raising the ceiling on loans for part time students to $4,000; and by creating opportunities, special opportunities grants that will provide an extra $3,000 to single parents pursuing their studies part time.

For students with disabilities and women in Ph.D. programs we will be offering a national program of deferred grants for the first time that will help high need students who would otherwise face extremely high debt loads on graduation. At the same time we realize that the educational status quo has problems.

The traditional distinctions between community colleges and universities tend to raise barriers that may no longer be relevant. We need to examine the way in which learning is structured and the support available.

Having mentioned the status quo, I cannot emphasize enough that we know the status quo is not an option, that things cannot remain the same. Whatever our political stripe, whatever our concern or constituencies, we know as a country that we have an obligation to look at change. We have to be able to change things so that every Canadian who is drawn into the debate and every Canadian who benefits from the debate will know that we have done the right thing by not burying our heads in the sand and turning away from the greatest opportunity to have courage to change for the country, to change for the people, to change for poor children, to change for the people who are unemployed cyclically, to change for the people on intergenerational unemployment insurance, intergenerational poverty laden with social assistance. It is a very difficult situation.

We cannot avoid the opportunity to have the courage and the vision to engage in a debate in earnest with no hidden agendas, with no weasel words or sneakiness, to go out there and ask the people and consult with them; not to prescribe, not to come in with an ironclad and iron fisted approach that says this is our way and this is the way we are going to do it. The way we want to engage in this debate is to be honest and open and to appeal to the public to recognize that there has to be an opportunity to make a difference with their consensus and with their consultation.

• (1230)

We have received a great many letters from people who have told us just how difficult the idea of turning lifelong learning into reality can be. For many, of course, the issue is money. The discussion paper offers ideas to fund post–secondary education. It considers the method of improving access for people who want to upgrade their skills. It recognizes that we have a role in supporting post–secondary education. We must continue to do so.

The discussion paper recognizes that the federal government provides core funding for the post–secondary system through tax points. As members will recall the budget earlier this year called for the federal government to reduce cash transfers. We have already told the provinces and territories that funding for post–secondary education will return to the level of $2.1 billion in 1996 and 1997. It might best serve the public to know what we spend money on.

Quite clearly federal expenditures on social security programs should be stated as such. We spend a total of $38.7 billion. We spend $12.4 billion on UI regular benefits. For UI developmental uses we spend $1.9 billion. Employment programs, the consolidated revenue fund has $1.4 billion. For vocational rehabilitation for disabled persons we spend $0.2 billion. Child tax benefits, $5.1 billion. The Canada assistance plan yields $8.2 billion. Canada student loans $0.5 billion. Post–secondary education, established programs financing, $6.1 billion. UI administration $1.2 billion. UI maternity, parental adoption and sickness benefits $1.7 billion. This of course does not include seniors. The review we are talking about excludes a whole section.

Something else the public might find extremely interesting is that under the social assistance to heads of households we have a listing of percentages. Those people who are unemployed but are employable, who would work if there was the opportunity, are 45 per cent. Lone parents constitute 28 per cent. Disabled 20 per cent and others 7 per cent. These are statistics that I think people need to be aware of in dealing with the whole issue of reform. People want to know where the money is going and what it is being spent on.

One thing we should also make the public very aware of is very clearly and simply the objectives for the reform stated clearly here in this document. The first is jobs, helping Canadians get and keep work by ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills to compete with the best labour forces in the world, support for those most vulnerable, those who feel that we are undertaking this reform on the backs of the poor.

Hear me now. In this document it is stated that we would provide support for those most vulnerable. That of course includes the poor. Providing income support for those in need while fostering independence, self–confidence and initiatives

and starting to tackle child poverty. Affordability cannot be avoided. Making sure that the social security system is within our means and more efficiently managed with a real commitment to end waste and abuse. This quite clearly addresses some of the concerns that have been stated to date. It has not been long but we have had some response.

How can we make the best use of this money? Broadening student access and the whole issue of learning. Broadening student access is the best way. Tuition fees by the provinces and territories have moved the cost of education back to the students.

The paper offers an interesting option, end the cash transfer for institutional support quickly and expand student loan opportunities instead. We estimate that a $500 million student aid program would make accessible $2 billion in loans every year. The target for that money could be older students who want to add to their skills and people who want to retrain as well. There are other options to help finance their education. For example, another idea that is being tossed about is using the moneys accumulated in registered retirement savings plans. Another option is the income contingent repayment plan.

• (1235)

Many of us have heard from constituents who have graduated but who are having a difficult time repaying their student loans. People are not reluctant to contribute to their own well–being, to their own promotion and their own development. However, they want to engage in a process that will be simpler, more equitable, fairer and more reasonable. We agree with that. We think that there is a way that can be done and we want to hear from people about that. If they have found work it may not pay well enough initially to make ends meet. That is a major concern.

Income contingent repayment works well in Australia and New Zealand. It permits people to repay their loans on the basis of their incomes. They also permit the use of limited public funds to meet emerging priorities. Partnerships with the federal government and the private sector are key to this approach. These options improve employability on the base of a shared responsibility and shared contribution.

I understand that the time for debate is not as long as we would all like so I am going to skip over to some of the things that I feel are really essential. As I indicated earlier, we are looking at engaging in a process with the aboriginal First Nations group. We need to establish a process that we all agree to. We continue to do that but I think something that we really need to emphasize is the role that my constituents play.

I, like any other member in the House, have a constituency, the Northwest Territories. We have a post–secondary education system of learning called Arctic College. If you ever want to tour the college campus you will have to bring your mukluks or your sneakers, Mr. Speaker, because the campus is three million square kilometres. It is spread throughout the north. My hon. colleague, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, knows only too well how difficult and how long it takes to traverse and how inclement the conditions can be up there.

That brings me to the reason for this reform. I have had the opportunity to discuss with the aboriginal peoples. Each of these objectives, as I stated initially, is going to meet the needs and priorities of aboriginal people if we have a process that they can engage in. Aboriginal peoples want education and training opportunities like all Canadians. As the situation stands now, the aboriginal unemployment rate is approximately twice the Canadian average rate. Almost half of all aboriginal adults have incomes of less than $10,000.

According to the 1990 aboriginal peoples surveyed, the social assistance dependency rate for registered Indians on reserve was over 41 per cent. The dependency rate for registered Indians off reserve was 57 per cent. The dependency rate for the population as a whole for Canadians other than aboriginal populations was only 7 per cent.

The aboriginal population is very young. Its birth rate is twice the Canadian average. Among the Inuit 43 per cent are under 15 years old. In recent years strides have been made in improving education for this young population. The good news is that we have resolved to do something about the problems that we have. There are many partnerships being forged and many efforts being undertaken by First Nations themselves. The number of status Indians enrolled in post–secondary education institutions nearly doubled in the five years between 1986 and 1991. This is an overall increase of approximately 22,000 students who are currently in post–secondary education, according to my colleague, the minister of Indian and northern affairs. That is something that we are all proud of and we all want to continue to make work effectively.

• (1240)

The enrolment of on–reserve children in kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools has increased from 72 per cent of school age children in 1960–61 to 91 per cent in 1990–91. The federal government's head start program will also create a unique opportunity. We will see the positive results as healthier, stronger and more confident aboriginal children entering their school years. However, much remains to be done.

No segment of the Canadian population faces a more glaring need for effective social policy measures, enhanced opportunities, reducing barriers, investing in people, addressing specific individual and community needs than does the aboriginal population.

The government has taken a number of steps to assist in developing and assessing the implications of social security reform for aboriginal peoples. The objective is to establish an inclusive approach in consultation an in co–ordination with aboriginal peoples.

We will be participating and ensuring—myself specifically, along with the minister and the government—meaningful aboriginal involvement in the social security reform process in the upcoming months. Social security reform can provide aboriginal peoples with a unique opportunity to foster effective delivery of social services that will have an immediate impact on their communities.

The governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories for instance have launched a strategic initiative to help social assistance recipients. Investing in people will provide them with counselling, career and employment development, life skills, on the job experience and education.

By creating opportunities and reducing dependency, we can work toward building upon the hope and promise of Canada's youth, both within and outside the aboriginal communities. I commend the Government of the Northwest Territories for the steps they are taking to help northerners to better themselves. They have undertaken their own track and I am sure they will integrate their views into this.

I would like to conclude by saying that this is not just about one Canadian, one organization, one special interest group. This is about the direction in which our country will go. This is about the way we want to see the quality of life affected for every child in this country. This is about the way that we as a a government want to reinvent the direction in which government goes to serve the public, to serve every Canadian.

This is the way we want to balance those elements we have all talked about from all sides of the House. It is about jobs, about affordability and about vulnerability, not to avoid the people who most need our help, but to provide reform for all of our country and for every Canadian. We welcome their participation.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question to the hon. member in her capacity as a woman and as the status of women critic. I would like to know what she thinks of the Minister's proposal that unemployment insurance benefits be reduced and based on family income in the case of the frequently unemployed.

We all know that it is mostly women who hold temporary and part–time jobs. I would like to ask the member if she does not see these measures as being regressive for women's financial equality.

Another aspect of the Minister's proposals suggesting that the benefits be based on family income is that a woman's benefits will be subordinate to her spouse's income. Does the hon. member not feel we are still treating women as citizens of—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I want to remind colleagues that following the interventions by member we are subject to a 10–minute question or comment period.

[*Translation*]

With your permission, would the hon. member please be good enough to repeat her question. I will not count the time.

Mrs. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what the hon. member thinks as a woman and as the status of women critic. I would like to know her opinion on the minister's proposal that unemployment insurance benefits be reduced and based on family income in the case of the frequently unemployed.

• (1245)

We all know that it is mostly women who hold temporary and part–time jobs. Is the hon. member not of the opinion that these measures would bring women's financial equality backwards?

I would also like to hear the views of the hon. member on the Minister's proposal that the family income be taken into account when establishing the level of benefits. Does she not think it is a regressive measure showing that women are still second class citizens?

[*English*]

Ms. Blondin–Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member took the opportunity to ask a question. She makes remarks about the unemployment insurance changes proposed and also about family income and support.

Those are subjects for debate and consultation. Those are matters on which we are asking the public to give us their views. We are engaging in a public process. I am sure she has her own specific views.

I would like to allow the public to make up its mind. I will be dealing, as I indicated, with aboriginal women, friendship centres, the four national aboriginal groups, northerners, Canadians from all parts of the country. I will be meeting with people in Kamloops tomorrow. I will be listening, as should the other parties be listening to the public.

I mentioned in my speech this is not prescriptive. We are not going to tell people what it should be. We want to ask them for their responses to the proposals we have put out there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte–Marie): Mr. Speaker, I know there will be consultations, but nevertheless, members on the government side do make proposals.

We heard speeches by the hon. member and the Minister. We would like to know, since I imagine they have a very clear position on this, what the hon. member thinks of the proposal that women's unemployment benefits could be based on their spouse's income. Could the hon. member tell us what she thinks of that? Does she agree or not with the fact that from now on women would no longer be treated as equal to men because, since their spouse would have a higher income, their benefits would decrease? If we ask Canadians for their opinion, I think they will want to know what their representatives think of these proposals.

As the hon. member is also a Cabinet member, I suppose she participated in the discussions and she surely has an opinion on this measure. I do not ask for her views on the other points, but only on this particular one. What is her position? Does she approve of that proposal?

[*English*]

Ms. Blondin–Andrew: Mr. Speaker, as the elected member for Western Arctic my constituents will know, as should my colleague, that I have not had the opportunity to go across my constituency to consult with them.

I will be having a town hall meeting next week and will be able to come back to the member and tell him, I am sure, there are divergent views on what has been proposed. There will be peculiarities to different people that have certain opinions about the proposals that we have put forward.

My view is that we are looking for opportunities for all Canadians. Not all women and men have spouses. For those who have that question will be dealt with when we have concluded the consultations.

I am not going to get drawn in on a broad, massive move that the government has taken on one issue. I am going to allow the debate to proceed and keep my opinions to myself until I have democratically consulted with my constituents.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that the member was unable to answer, or even to defend what is in the document which is supposed to be a discussion paper, because the provisions which the member for Quebec has referred to are totally unacceptable. That the government even thought that unemployment benefits for women could take the family income into consideration is totally unacceptable and a step backwards that the entire population, for that matter, would certainly not let happen.

• (1250)

Since January, the government has been trying to convince us that there was an emergency in this country. It did not talk about that during the election campaign, but suddenly, in January, the minister of Human Resources Development announced that what was most pressing, most urgent for the development of Canada and its future was a social program reform. A wide reform which should extend to the whole country.

What has happened since that time? The committee on human resources development was given a mandate to consult Canadians on their views. The committee was expected to table its report quickly, on March 25, so that the minister could put his work plan on the table as early as April and the legislation could be passed swiftly in the fall, in order to finally address that urgent problem.

Surprise! The committee on human resources development started its work and had only two weeks to rapidly consult a number of groups and experts. But during that time, the government, without any consulting, decided to cut unemployment benefits and to include in the budget cuts totalling $7.4 billion over three years and affecting social programs, i.e. unemployment insurance, the Canada Assistance Plan and established programs financing.

But that was not all. Bombarded with questions, Mr. Martin, the minister, said that he expected additional cuts in the reform undertaken by his colleague. The cat got out of the bag yesterday morning, just in time to colour what is not an action plan any more, but rather a pale green discussion paper, as some reporters have said.

So, the cat that got out of the bag is that over and above the $7.4 billion cuts already voted and included in the budget, the government would cut at least another $7 billion by the year 1999. And yet, there is no rush now. We now have plenty of time to consult the public. There is no action plan any more, only a discussion paper. Why? Because what was urgent was cutting without consulting, without caring about who would be brutally affected, including those children who are said today to be the biggest concern of the government. What a shame! I have to use parliamentary language.

The point I want to make this morning is that this discussion paper, which is supposed to launch a sweeping reform, this discussion paper called *Improving Social Security in Canada*, does not augur well, either for the people who need it or for the provinces, which are now responsible for all of these areas except unemployment insurance.

• (1255)

It should be said loud and clear, and we will say it again, that this is not a program for people, whether they are unemployed, about to lose their jobs, need an income, are on welfare, or are first–time job seekers. It is not a program for people in need, for

the poor and destitute. It is a program for a government that wants to cut spending, a government that does not have the guts to introduce tax reforms—my colleagues will elaborate—a government that is afraid to tell Employment and Immigration Canada that it cannot ride roughshod over Canadians. The program aims to centralize, and generous though the minister may seem, his idea of decentralizing is travelling around the country and signing programs himself.

This reform is definitely not for people. Let us consider very briefly some of the most frequently quoted reasons for proceeding with this so–called urgent reform. One word we hear constantly is backlog. Programs have a tremendous backlog. Backlog of what? They do not really say, but the impression is that there are too many unemployed for UI to handle. The government calls this a social security program, but everyone will agree that the best social security for people who are able to work is a job. This program has no employment plan, and whenever it refers to what it will do for people who need jobs, it says it will give them the means to look for one.

We are going to turn the unemployed into job seekers. This is not job creation but job search. They say there is a backlog because the economy is changing. Yes, it is changing, and it is changing very quickly. What kind of work does this new economy produce? It produces work that is less permanent. All industrialized countries agree that market globalization, technological change, and changes in family patterns are phenomena that have a major impact on society and employment.

Are these dynamics understood? Hardly. Does the government realize that the main problem—and we do not know how long this will last—is that except for the lucky ones with steady jobs whose numbers are decreasing, jobs are becoming less and less permanent and are held for increasingly shorter periods? Does it realize that there is pressure to reduce the number of unions and thus lessen pressures on the labour market?

The fact facing most people who are employed and all those people who are looking for work is that, in most cases, the jobs available are short–term jobs, either by their nature or because it may be difficult to stay in a particular job. When people say the problem is the backlog, it seems to me there is a backlog in the thinking of those who produced this document, a failure to realize that spending cuts and the old programs the Liberals were never able to implement after trying to do so on so many previous occasions are not the answer. A new approach is needed to deal with these problems.

• (1300)

They were not able to negotiate or legislate any solution, and I will give one example. Parliamentarians who—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. In this House, members may not use exhibits to prove their point. I realize that today we have a working paper which members on both sides of the House will want to use to read a few quotes. However, the Chair cannot allow the use of other exhibits or, taking the extreme case if a member were to use the document we are discussing today, as an exhibit, I think the Chair would have to intervene. That is not the case right now, and I hope it will stay that way. This is a very important subject for the country, and I hope we can have a debate that is both vigorous and respectful of our Standing Orders.

I would not have interrupted the hon. member otherwise, but I wanted to make this point. The hon. member may proceed.

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I hope I may name the document, a working paper that never had the privilege of being tabled not in this Parliament but in 1973, and was never to progress beyond the colour orange. In fact it was known as the orange paper. Released in 1973 and prepared at the behest of Minister Marc Lalonde, it contained some very interesting items.

Hon. members opposite may wish to read them. I do not agree with everything the paper says, but it is interesting reading. The document attempted to formulate proposals for a social security policy for Canada. In addition to employment, and the paper discusses opportunities for employment, it examined ways of providing Canadians and their families with a consistent income security system. The objective was to define a social policy for Canada.

That perspective is sadly lacking in the green, I would say frosty green, paper. It does not even exist. There is no concern for what happens to people. Their only concern is what happens to the budget, this after refusing to review the tax system and increase revenues, instead of shamelessly cutting social spending.

They have another excuse for introducing reforms. Or, should I say, conducting consultations on reforms, because they are not in such a hurry, they have legislated cuts and, of course, there will be more. In any case, they said the cuts would be announced in the Finance minister's budget. So we are going to have consultations without knowing the extent of these cuts. In other words, Canadians know we are going to have consultations, but on what? The government says it will be about change, and Quebecers are starting to realize what has to be changed.

The other excuse is the lack of flexibility. That is a good one! I know the situation in Quebec, where I worked for awhile. In Quebec, people who have been involved in the fight against poverty and unemployment know how difficult it is because of a lack of flexibility in federal programs and the Canada Assistance Plan.

• (1305)

Allow me to give an extremely significant example: during its first term, the Parti Quebecois decided to help low–income families and individuals stay in the workplace and avoid yielding to the very comprehensible temptation, considering their income, to rely on social assistance. Therefore, the Parti Quebecois decided to raise their income by giving them a supplement

according to their individual and family needs among other things. That program was called SUPRET at the time.

When they came to office the Liberals modified that program because of practical difficulties that had nothing to do with its content. That program later became the APPORT.

What is most inadmissible is that the program did not qualify for a 50 per cent reimbursement under the Canada Assistance Plan because the beneficiaries did not, of course, pass the revenue test since they earned more than the authorized minimum.

That situation went on for years while the province of Quebec—at that time it was still called the province though it is less and less called that way now—tried, to fight against poverty within the system. But we would always come up against the rigidity of the system. Yes, the CAP supported 50 per cent of the costs, but only if the government encouraged these people to stay on social assistance. This is one example of the system's rigidity, but there are many others.

So when we are told that the situation is urgent and that we need a reform because of the rigidity of the system, I fully agree and we should proceed immediately. Except that the government does not have to make a consultation that will last two years before addressing the problems for which he is responsible.

Other reasons have been given, but since time does not stand still, I will leave it up to my colleagues to speak to improvements in education. This is clearly within the jurisdiction of Quebec, or within provincial jurisdiction, in the case of other provinces.

I will conclude by speaking about childhood poverty but first I would like to come back to the proposed options.

In order to convince Canadians that they should accept the cuts it preferred, the government explains that from now on there should be two categories of UI beneficiaries. Obviously the goal is to save money. There would be two categories: the occasional unemployed and those who are frequently unemployed.

The goal is to reduce costs while providing some assistance. We will listen to the consultation but I can tell you that my mind is made up about the system proposed. I believe it will be unacceptable for the following reason: people who hold a job for a long time in a company and lose it when the company closes its doors or because of a recession like the last one in 1981–82, are precisely those who join the ranks of the unemployed. In many cases the unemployed in 1981–82 have been unable to find another job. Since then, many of them have had only odd jobs and the others are on social assistance. Those of 1989–90 who had been spared by the first recession have now joined their ranks.

• (1310)

These people had not turned to unemployment insurance in the past but they are now trapped in the unemployment–odd jobs–social assistance cycle. Why? Because the major problem, the main problem is employment. I will conclude by talking about employment. In order to help those people—because they need help, and the Liberal document of Mr. Lalonde came to the same conclusion in 1973—what must we do? We must provide good career counselling services for all people who turn to unemployment insurance.

Do you know something, Mr. Speaker, I was completely astonished because in his document the minister said: Yes, we should have good counselling services. Is that not infuriating? He is the minister in charge! What is stopping him, administratively speaking, from taking the necessary steps and creating a good counselling service? There is no need for a two–year consultation process or for an act of Parliament to create good counselling services. The idea was already in the air in 1973. Anyone moderately intelligent knows that when someone is down on his luck, you give him a few months to get back on his feet but first of all, you must help him. What is waiting for him or her? Retraining or job creation support or, rather do we think that the market is sufficient? Beyond that what is there?

There is nothing else, those are the hard facts of life. So how come they suddenly realize that their unemployment period should be used for retraining? We have been saying the same thing for decades. All of a sudden, in a document of some urgency, which says softly that this is urgent, we are rediscovering the need for retraining, yet Quebec has been asking for years to be given full control over job training.

I am running out of time. I have only two minutes left, so I will say: we will come back to that. The proposed reform is not a reform, and neither will it end childhood poverty. Quebec has been through a totally unacceptable situation. In 1965, René Lévesque, then minister of Family and Social Welfare, said during a federal–provincial conference that Quebec wanted to take charge of family allowances in order to use them in a poverty prevention policy.

He said: "The Quebec government is setting up a new social security policy which will involve not only a reorganization of the programs it presently manages, but also the inclusion of reappropriated federal programs which will achieve their full effectiveness only once they are integrated and, if necessary, reviewed in order to be fully coordinated and tailored to the needs of the people they are intended for. Such an integration is necessary because of the obvious necessity to view social measures as an integral part of our general policy on social and economic development".

So spoke René Lévesque, a federalist, in 1965. He argued that the programs would be fully effective only when integrated. Quebec had a plan to integrate all the elements. With this program, this proposed reform, the central government is proposing a Canada where Ottawa pulls all the strings.

• (1315)

It might be the future of Canada, although we are going to fight to keep the present Constitution which recognizes that provinces have jurisdiction over everything, except unemployment insurance. In Quebec, the project requires the approval of the people who want control over their future.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of the hon. member as well as the one from her leader, the Leader of the Opposition. I find it strange that they should talk about real life, a life rather difficult for many Canadians, without ever mentioning the fact that, today, 25 per cent of children are born to families living below the poverty line. The Leader of the Opposition did not say a word about that. I think it is a national disgrace and, like a majority of the population, I am dismayed by it.

They also talked about students. They said that education was a provincial matter, but the Leader of the Opposition never acknowledged the fact that 40 per cent of young Quebecers never finish their secondary education. This is a tragedy. We know that in industrialized nations like Japan, 95 per cent of their young people graduate from high school. We know that South Korea has the highest per capita number of PhDs.

The Leader of the Opposition did not talk of the high rate of suicide among the young people of Quebec. In this in–depth debate we want to undertake with the people of Canada, the only concern of the opposition, and I found that regrettable, is that we do not mention the reality of life for young Quebecers or Canadians.

I also want to talk about job training. There are 25,000 jobs, 80,000 jobs that remain unfilled in Quebec and Canada through lack of job training. They only talked about university graduates who are a mere 12 per cent of young people. Nothing is said about job training. I am under the impression that the Bloc Quebecois is forgetting the large majority of Quebecers who want real jobs and long term positions.

What we want is to develop specifically designed programs for each region, that is what we heard constituents ask for during both the federal and provincial campaigns. When the federal government gets involved and offers various programs in order to interest young people in training, it wants these young people to take these courses locally. We are prepared to co–operate with local schools or CEGEPs, but not necessarily in large centres like Quebec City and Montreal, where most of the Bloc members come from.

I think we must insist on the fact that, if it is true that reality must be taken into account, we must also acknowledge the failure of the programs and services intended for those who are really in need. As I said before, we must consider the condition of young people, students and single parent families. Those people are not forgotten in our society. Unfortunately, the Bloc quebecois did not say a word yet about them.

In conclusion, I would like to hear the comments of a former minister from the Parti Quebecois. She had the chance to rectify the situation in Quebec and to ensure that young people had better occupational training or better chances to complete their high school. To think that today close to 40 per cent of young Quebecers drop out of high school. What a failure compared to the situation in the rest of the world.

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for allowing me to go on with my speech. I would like to add that members opposite are all from the West Island but you. We are glad to have you here.

• (1320)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I am sure you will still want to address your comments to the Chair. The member for Mercier has the floor.

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I will not do it again.

I must say that Quebec wanted for quite a while to get control of family allowances—first with René Lévesque in 1965 and then with Castonguay in 1971—because big families were creating a specific problem at the time, and also because the Quebec government was not comfortable with the federal policy. These ministers, federalists and Liberals, wanted to apply a policy aimed at preventing childhood poverty, but were not allowed to do it.

I must add something. The minister's task force was especially interested in preventing poverty among children. It found that the countries which succeeded in preventing childhood poverty were those that applied the policy favoured by René Lévesque and Castonguay, that is to give family allowances to all families instead of waiting for them to be on welfare before helping their children. It is a system which has kept children and family prisoners of poverty; we have been wanting to change it for a long time. The first thing to do to change the system would have been to get control over family allowances, which we were unable to obtain.

When it comes to rigidity and child poverty in Quebec, we can tell you all about it. You caused it with your system. Compare—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. We must have a vigourous debate, but we must avoid constantly engaging in personal attacks, which lowers the debate below the level we are accustomed to in the House of Commons. The member for Mercier.

Mrs. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I will watch my language.

I was saying that Canada was reprimanded for not doing enough for children and its policy is clearly to be blamed for it. It is against this very policy that Quebec ministers fought, trying to give families universal allowances in order to prevent child poverty.

An hon. member: You were a minister in the Parti Quebecois government.

Mrs. Lalonde: That is right, and I am proud of it. I was the minister responsible for the status of women. I too was able to see how rigid the Canada Assistance Plan is; we had to scrape around to find enough money to create day care centres. As you know, Mr. Speaker, daycare is for children under five and child care for children over five.

The Canada Assistance Plan paid 50 per cent of day care expenses, but not private day care expenses—we had plenty of these establishments in Quebec—or child care services provided by schools to prevent children from dropping out.

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I must say that it is a great honour, as the member for the Quebec riding of Outremont, to speak in favour of the reform unveiled today by the Minister of Human Resources Development. It is a major step, an essential one, one we cannot avoid.

It is with pleasure that I stand today in this House since, as I have mentioned previously, the Official Opposition acts according to a self–serving policy and not a policy aimed at helping Canadians in general and even less Quebecers.

On this side of the House, we take the interests of all Canadians to heart and, as far as we, Liberals members from Quebec, are concerned, I must say that we are working relentlessly to ensure Quebec has a voice in this forum, a highly–democratic one at that, where I am particularly proud to rise in support of this fundamental reform, as I said earlier.

• (1325)

Our society has changed considerably over the past five decades. Following the Second World War, the very nature of the work on the job market is constantly changing. Technological changes, globalization of international markets and the need for environmental protection have shaken the job market, especially in the industrialized world.

A great many industries have undergone substantial restructuring, while others completely disappeared. As a result, several traditional job types were eliminated and replaced by news ones that often require higher education levels and, of course, much more specialized skills. On the whole, workers are unemployed more often, as you may have noticed. Unfortunately, they are also out of work for longer periods.

It should be pointed out that the way things work in the family unit has also changed considerably these past few years. Nowadays, in most families, both parents work outside of home. Nowadays, women have entered massively into the labour market and make a major contribution to our gross national product. There is also a larger number of single–parent families and, more often than not, the head of these families are women.

For one reason or another, these women all too often end up in a situation of vulnerability, if not plain poverty. Like my hon. colleague from Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine said, the sad reality is that, as a direct result of lone parenthood, the category of people hardest hit by poverty is that of children. In Canada today —this is important to note—one child out of five is living in poverty, which I must say is totally unacceptable in a society such as ours, a so–called free and democratic society.

We absolutely must find answers to these problems. And let me tell you that, with our approach as government, we will find solutions and we will find them not in isolation, but all together as a society, the Canadian society. Over the years, successive Liberal governments have put in place, and I am very proud of this achievement, a social security system that reflected our values as Canadians. I can quote a number of examples. Take for instance values such as compassion, equal opportunity and protection for persons in need.

Such values are basic principles that my party, the Liberal Party, has always promoted, and I am quite proud of that. However, social programs did not keep up with the fundamental changes that have occurred in the Canadian economy, technology, family, global competition and our financial situation. It is also obvious that the public authorities have spent beyond their means these past decades. There has been some kind of international surge of government interference.

Unfortunately, we must face the tough reality that today's governments cannot longer afford the luxury of spending. This is a reality we must work with. At the present time, the size of our national debt seriously undermines our ability to pay for services and—it must be recognized—ultimately slows down the Canadian economy as a whole.

• (1330)

It must be pointed out that the federal government spends $38.7 billion a year on unemployment insurance, employment programs, social assistance, post–secondary education, child tax benefits, and on programs for the handicapped.

Despite all this money, we must come to the harsh conclusion that our system does not serve the Canadian people adequately. We must find ways to spend our money—taxpayers' money in fact—in a wiser, more cost–effective way.

The provincial governments also recognize the need for reform. Several of them have already started improving their own social programs. Recently, in a speech he gave in Quebec City on September 18, the Prime Minister perfectly summed up this government's approach when he said this: "Our objective is to put in place a social security system that will protect the most vulnerable and give all Canadians equal chances of developing their potential, living fully and experiencing the dignity of work".

I fully support these principles underlying the reform undertaken by the Minister of Human Resources Development, and I am confident that the Canadian people will also fully support these principles.

In fact, the mandate we, as parliamentarians, received from the Canadian population as a whole is fairly simple: we must help people to become more independent and—I know that we often go back to this—to live in dignity.

That is exactly what is proposed in the discussion paper, the so–called green book before us today. This green book, which is submitted to all Canadians, outlines problems as well as solutions, essentially in three major areas of social security: employment, learning and security itself.

We all know that, for most families, and I think that this should be stressed, a good job is the best form of social security and a guarantee of dignity—a fundamental human value—for those who have jobs, who earn a living.

That is why the federal government will spend $3.3 billion this year on various job training and development programs. Provided they reduce people's dependency on unemployment insurance and social assistance, these programs are—it goes without saying—a good investment for this government. However, current programs and services as we know them no longer fulfil their mandates.

We will probably get better results by offering new employment development services at the local level. The objective is simple: provide new opportunities, help Canadians find jobs and especially—this should be the ultimate goal—help people keep the jobs they found.

Governments could manage these programs more efficiently by focusing more on local needs.

• (1335)

We must create closer partnerships with the provinces. I stress the word "partnership" because the green book as a whole essentially reflects—I will come back to that a little later—a renewed, modern federalism adapted to today's needs, that is, based on partnership. We need partnerships with the provinces, with the private sector, with volunteer organizations, to better serve the population and especially to eliminate waste and duplication. You are now in a position to understand that—to use a common expression—the cat is out of the bag.

We have before us a paper reflecting an open, flexible federalism aimed at making the most of this system of government in the interest of all Canadians. So you can see why the members of the Official Opposition are—as we often say—lashing out. Since they desperately want Quebec to separate, it goes without saying that enhanced federalism undermines their plans, which is why they lack objectivity.

To go back to unemployment insurance, it must be pointed out that, in the beginning, this program was supposed to help people who had lost their jobs by providing temporary income support. In fact, unemployment insurance was simply, as the term implies, a form of insurance. However, in the new economic environment, our social programs must do more than just issue a benefit cheque. They must also give the unemployed a chance to get and keep a job, as I said.

Let us look at some statistics. Last year, 13 per cent of the unemployed had been without work for a year or more. This is three times what the long–term unemployment rate was in 1976. Furthermore, and this is even more disturbing and difficult to accept, nearly 40 per cent of recipients had made at least three applications for unemployment insurance in the previous five years.

In fact, for too many of them, unemployment insurance has become a treadmill that they cannot escape, which I find most unfortunate. People who are frequently unemployed need practical help which, too often, they cannot obtain. Furthermore, many people, especially women and the young, who hold unconventional jobs do not even qualify for unemployment insurance. This is a very serious shortcoming.

We can no longer afford a system that lets people work 12 weeks and collect UI for the rest of the year. This is a hard fact but it is reality. People who are frequently unemployed must be offered practical help and strong measures to enable them to find a job and, as I said before and keep repeating, to hold it.

With a trained labour force, our cities will no doubt attract investments and new jobs much more easily. The government can provide the necessary tools, but we must seek appropriate solutions together, and this question of working together and partnership keeps coming up.

I emphasize that social program reform is a mutual responsibility. We must pay special attention to how we spend and not just how much. The discussion paper, which I call the green paper, of course, proposes two approaches for reforming unemployment insurance.

The first approach is a new two–tier unemployment insurance plan. For occasional claimants who use the system less, the plan would continue to operate as before and provide the same parental, sickness, maternity and adoption benefits.

• (1340)

Frequent claimants who face what I would call a chronic unemployment problem would be entitled to what can be called adjustment insurance. These benefits could be lower, but beneficiaries would have access to more active measures to find work or to acquire training that will eventually lead to a steady job.

The second approach to UI reform involves adapting the present UI system that we know. This approach would treat occasional and frequent claimants the same way. The period of employment required to be eligible for benefits could be longer or the benefit period could be shorter.

Also, the amount of benefits paid could be reduced. I emphasize that when I talk about unemployment insurance reform, it must be said that these are proposals we are making in the green paper and of course we are counting on the public consultation to follow, beginning in November, if my memory serves me, to find out what all Canadians think about the options we are proposing. This is not a policy that will be followed with legislation; it is a discussion paper.

The second point in the green paper of course concerns post–secondary education. As we well know, education in Canada is exclusively in provincial or territorial jurisdiction; however, we must be reasonable and realistic. We must recognize that since Confederation, the federal government has supported post–secondary education because of the basic connection between education and employment.

This support has helped build the system of universities and colleges that we know today in Canada and of which we are so proud. Now, the big new challenge facing higher education, basically, is access. Our system must educate and train many more people than in the past. Training must also be better suited to the new jobs. I think it is important to point out that in the past three years, the number of jobs offered to university graduates increased by 17 per cent, while the number of jobs offered to people who had not graduated fell by 19 per cent.

The idea that only children and young adults have to learn is outdated, since each and every one of us now has to accept the idea of learning as part of life. With continuing education, we can keep a state–of–the–art labour force and a dynamic economy. Canadians must be able to benefit from better opportunities for education and training throughout their working life.

The system must also be modernized so as not to restrict access to education and training, both for young people who are beginning their career and for workers who want to follow developments in the new economy. As you know, the federal government provides over $8 billion a year for post–secondary education, through student loans or transfers to the provinces. The value of the federal contribution is rising every year at the same rate as economic growth.

• (1345)

We must, however, face the hard facts of what I would call our budgetary constraints. The cash portion of the federal transfers will decrease proportionally, and will unfortunately come to an end within ten years.

Instead of letting these cash transfers run out, we must think of better ways to use this money in order to help more people pay for their studies, thus providing better access to education.

In a competitive global economy, the decision to invest in learning, and no one can blame us for showing goodwill, is economically sound, but the investment must be a shared responsibility.

Thus, two main options are introduced in the discussion paper. The first is to stop the cash transfers to the provinces and territories, and use the money instead to make more loans and grants available to individuals. The second would allow more flexibility in Registered Retirement Savings Plans, so that people could use their savings for lifelong learning. In fact, the commendable goal of the government is to maintain and to broaden access to post–secondary education and learning.

In the interest of greater fairness, the government is proposing a system where loans would be repaid according to the student's future income. Here again, I think no one could blame us for trying to create a much fairer system.

Unfortunately, too many people depend on welfare, whereas, if they had effective employment and training support, they could find a job.

Since 1981, the number of welfare recipients has doubled, reaching just over three million. Our social security system must protect the neediest. It is clear from the options proposed in the green paper that that is precisely our goal.

Finally, members opposite are attacking the reform that we are tabling as if it were essentially an undebatable policy. Let it be clearly understood that the government is working for all Canadians.

Some hon. members opposite have said that they have on their drawing boards an idea for an open, cost–effective and modern federalism. I tell them that on our side, the government side, we think their ideas are already outdated, because the paper just tabled by the hon. minister Axworthy is a perfect example of this new federalism.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected in 1984, our debt totalled some $175 billion. Since then, it has continued to grow and we are living on credit; each year, we borrow money to maintain our standard of living. The paper tabled yesterday confirms that federalism can no longer afford to provide the social services needed by Canadians.

We now have the proof of that, and it has been given to us by the present Liberal government. It is very simple. When a government cannot fulfil its main mandate, which is to ensure that everyone's health and education needs are satisfied, that they have the basics to survive, and when it officially declares that it can no longer afford to carry out its social mandate, this is proof that that government and that federalism cannot work any more. Like we said 30 years ago in Quebec, the federal government should have decentralized its responsibilities and put social affairs under provincial jurisdiction.

This would have been a very logical process, as we can see today.

• (1350)

Quebecers will understand clearly well that the federal government is going bankrupt. In fact, that was officially announced last evening: the federal government is literally bankrupt. The evidence is there. Let us take a look at the document.

The hon. member for Verdun should say if he agrees with me on that. After all he is from Quebec. He has followed politics—

Mr. Cauchon: Outremont.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Outremont, I am sorry. People from Montreal do not like it when you say Verdun. Outremont is posh, so we have to be very careful. Again, Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the hon. member for referring to the wrong riding.

In any case, the evidence is there regarding this very costly overlapping, whether in the education or health sector, and, as I said, this document confirms that this overlapping has cost so much that the federal government is bankrupt. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, first I resent such comments on my riding. Outremont is a great constituency and I am very proud of it. I am also very proud of the fact that, last October 25, Outremont voters asked me to represent them here. I have every intention of continuing to do so properly and to also represent all Quebecers.

It is rather amusing to see how irresponsible the Official Opposition can be in its approach. The members opposite are irresponsible because they are saying that Mr. Axworthy's Green Paper is an admission that we no longer have—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I wish to remind hon. members that they should not mention names but only refer to titles or constituencies. You can say "the Minister of Human Resources Development".

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, they are irresponsible because they claim that the Green Paper is an admission that the federal government no longer has the means to meet its financial obligations regarding social programs.

Again, this demonstrates the extent to which the Official Opposition is trying to deceive Quebecers. We have the duty, in the context of the Canadian federation, to restructure social programs, first because they are no longer working and second because of budget constraints. Can you imagine where you would find the money to do that, once Quebec has separated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. The debate continues to be heated. The Chair reminds hon. members to make sure they always address it.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I was looking at you. My finger was pointing in another direction, but I was looking at you.

I wonder to what extent the people who promote separation are creating smoke and mirrors for the benefit of Quebecers. I say so, because I respect the notion of separation being conveyed in Quebec. I respect it, but I think that this government—and this is really hurting the opposition parties—is a responsible government which takes the mandate it has received from Canadians very seriously. What we are trying to do is first to ensure that our social programs are working and that the workers can re–enter the labour force while we remain able to meet our budget requirements.

I also want to mention that the opposition is trying to focus only on the reform proposals found in the green book, the reform suggested by the Minister of Human Resources Development. I also think that the opposition is trying to deceive people, because this reform is in line with a more general strategy. As the Prime Minister recently explained, the government strategy is based on four pillars. First, there is the intergovernmental relations reform, which the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs must implement. Then, there is the financial situation and the job creation policy.

But here is where the shoe pinches for the opposition. Although I would not call the green book a masterpiece of contemporary literature, it is surely a chef–d'oeuvre as far as a more open, cooperative, flexible and profitable type of federalism is concerned.

• (1355)

If our reform is successful, it will prove that federalism works. Members across the aisle find it to their own advantage to set out stumbling blocks. Today I advise Canadians and especially Quebecers to beware lest they be deceived by these people who only have their own interests at heart while we, on this side, want to protect Canadians' and Quebecers' interests.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments and the answers to the questions the hon. member gave.

He made the valid comment that people are being misled. I look through the document and people think there really is something in there that is going to solve the problems of this country. I really think they are being misled.

I would like to comment on some of the statements made with regard to training programs. First of all, who pays for these training programs? The hon. member knows the people who pay for the training programs this government wants to implement are the employers and employees. They are the ones who pay for them. In other words these training programs are a tax on those who create jobs and those who work.

The finance minister has acknowledged that if you were to reduce unemployment premiums you would create many jobs. Yet there is not a clear plan in any of this that that will happen. In fact it is going to be a job destroyer if we continue to have the public pay these high premiums.

If you pay people not to work they will not work.

The Speaker: Order. I thought I heard the word "you" in there and I know you are addressing the Chair. Perhaps you would pose the question.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I meant it in the generic sense.

How does the plan in this booklet create jobs? Can we have a clear and reasoned explanation as to what in this whole plan will create jobs? I would like a clear and reasoned answer to that because it is not obvious when reading it.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the green paper. Our platform in it is much more interesting than the platform we could have with the Reform Party. Reform Party policy would cut all spending on social programs. That is all Reformers want. All they want is an irresponsible government. They should not tell people that this is a policy. It is a discussion paper.

If you have something to say in the best interests of—

The Speaker: I would simply remind you, my colleagues, that you must speak through the Chair. It takes the sting out of everything. However, it being 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I quote:

> The Canada–Ontario infrastructure works program has been an overwhelming success both locally in Wilmot as well as in the region of Waterloo. It has created numerous jobs and made a significant contribution to the local economy.
>
> I strongly urge you to consider extending this very valuable program. There are still a number of projects which need to be completed. The Canada–Ontario infrastructure works program extended would provide the vehicle to complete these projects and provide much needed additional jobs.

These are the words of the mayor of Wilmot township, his worship Lynn Myers. His sentiments are shared by all the municipal leaders in my community and is indicative of the success of the infrastructure program.

The Canadian infrastructure program is an investment in the future of Canada. I urge the government to consider the extension of this program.

* * *

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario premier joined his Quebec and Saskatchewan counterparts in rejecting the social program reform as proposed by the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The Ontario premier went as far as describing the document tabled yesterday as an insult to all provinces and all Canadians, nothing less. Clearly, this government's obsession with making the most destitute pay is contrary to the people's wishes.

Within 24 hours, three provinces representing two thirds of the Canadian population have already opposed this reform. It is about time this government listened to Canadians and proposed solutions which answer their needs.

* * *

[*English*]

SOCIAL REFORM

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal's discussion paper on social reform policy has no meat. The Liberals had months to develop these proposals and yet there is absolutely nothing we can sink our teeth into.

The Liberals accused reformers during the campaign of wanting to destroy social programs because we wanted to target spending to people in need. This is what social programs are for. By contrast, the Liberals and Tories have traditionally used social programs simply to buy votes.

Canadians are fed up with this. We cannot even begin to make significant cuts in our budget unless the government has the guts to wade into the waters that it and the Tories muddied. We need an action plan directed at those most in need. We need an action plan that targets those who cannot work, not those who will not work.

Canadians want action. What they get are more and more delays, more and more wasted time while the Liberals consider only their political future.

Let us take politics out of this and put Canadians first.

* * *

AIDS

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, National AIDS Awareness Week draws our attention to the most threatening epidemic in the history of mankind.

During this week we must remember the victims of AIDS. Those infected by HIV are victims. Those who have lost loved ones are victims. Those who support the health care system with our taxes are victims. We are all victims of this terrible human scourge.

We must also turn our thoughts to the dedicated work of the health care professionals, hospital workers, care givers and volunteers who seek to slow the onslaught of the damage caused by AIDS.

I call on my fellow MPs to support all efforts to find a solution to this most important human concern.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I stand to congratulate the Minister of the Environment and the government for doing in less than a year what the previous government could not do in seven.

The announcement of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act signals this government's commitment to its red book promises and its commitment to the health of our environment and economy.

The act will remove uncertainty and get environmental assessment out of the courts and back into the hands of the people where it belongs.

The minister in her statement clearly pointed out that the government wants to work with all jurisdictions that care about their environmental future and is willing to discuss harmonization with every province and aboriginal group.

Five ministers of the previous government tried to do this and failed and it only took one Liberal minister, one Liberal government to succeed. One Liberal to five others, sounds like fair odds to me.

* * *

BRAIN TUMOUR AWARENESS MONTH

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today at the request of Barbara McGinnis who has asked me to join with the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada in declaring October Brain Tumour Awareness Month.

Every year over 10,000 brain tumours are diagnosed in Canada. By educating the public to the symptoms of brain tumours, detecting tumours at an early stage and continuing with research into the cause and treatment of these tumours, lives can be saved.

• (1405)

It is only through increased public awareness and the participation of responsible community minded citizens that the foundation can continue to achieve success. The foundation's goals are to be found in brain tumour research, providing patient and family support services and educating the public.

I encourage my colleagues in the House as well as all Canadians to support the brain tumour foundation in its efforts to raise public awareness of this serious life threatening disease.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Quebec government indicated that the social program reform is totally unacceptable. Quebec's position is clear: Ottawa still insists on controlling the economic, social and cultural development of the provinces.

This reform is a centralizing effort irreconcilable with the prevailing consensus in Quebec for taking the authority over manpower training. What is even worse is that Ottawa is ten years behind the existing programs in Quebec. The terrible cuts proposed in this reform only reflect the federal government's inability to balance its own budget. As was noted by the Quebec Minister of Employment, Ottawa used the public finance crisis as an excuse for getting involved in every aspect of social security.

The Bloc Quebecois joins with the Quebec government to oppose this reform which affects the most destitute in our society.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, today marks the tenth anniversary of Marc Garneau's voyage in space. I am sure all parliamentarians join me saluting this Canadian hero and this milestone for the Canadian space program.

I would also like to draw the House's attention to some other Canadian space travellers who will be celebrating an anniversary later this month. The Liberal government has been on another planet for almost a year now. The human resources minister says he wants us to reach for the moon. That is easy for him to say, he is lost in space.

The Canadian public wants to know when this government is going to come down to earth and actually deal with some of this country's social and fiscal problems. How long before the IMF says beam them up?

While I am on this celestial topic I would like to point out that Canada's debt is reaching astronomical levels. This morning at 0800 hours the national debt was $533,210,978,829. 19. That is a disgrace.

* * *

MENTAL ILLNESS

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, this week is the third annual Mental Illness Awareness Week. The Canadian Psychiatric Association and other organizations are focusing on mental illness in the family this week.

Mental illness can affect anyone at any time. One in every five Canadians will suffer from a mental illness at some point in their lives. Canadian hospital costs for people being treated for mental illnesses exceed $1 billion a year. We as Canadians have a responsibility to do our part, especially in these times of fiscal restraint.

Governments, organizations, communities, families and the individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses have to work together to create a more cost effective, more humane approach to the treatment of mental illness.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I am astonished to hear that the Quebec premier refused to join the Canadian economic mission to Asia, which is composed of business leaders and premiers.

Mr. Parizeau claims that he is needed in Quebec. Come on. Has he already forgotten that he pledged to represent all Quebecers whatever their option?

As a team player, we have seen better. Quebec ranked 32nd among exporters, supplying only 18 per cent of all Canadian exports, and Mr. Parizeau would rather be alone on the ice. Rather than joining Team Canada and trying harder not to throw away Quebec's chances, he insists on passing the puck to others. Is this the new government? Mr. Parizeau should know that, to succeed, it is better to rely on top players than on substitutes.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

HERMAN VANDUYN

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to celebrate the impressive accomplishments of Mr. Herman vanDuyn, the owner of Hill's Greenhouse Nurseries in Murillo, Ontario.

This hard working and civic minded entrepreneur has produced over 100 million tree seedlings, a truly remarkable milestone. Mr. vanDuyn is the first Canadian to grow seedlings for the Minnesota state government.

His contribution to his community has been significant, providing employment for 8 full time and up to 50 part time positions. Moreover, he typically donates 10,000 to 20,000 tree seedlings every year to a variety of individuals and organizations in his community and across the country.

This fiercely proud Canadian, born in Holland, chose to emigrate to Canada because of the great respect Dutch people have for Canada. This is one of so many reasons Canada has been and continues to be an excellent destination for business investment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, we waited for the discussion paper on the reform of social programs for a very long time, and we are all deeply disappointed with it.

In fact, all Quebecers and Canadians are concerned about the impact of these reforms on their quality of life and particularly on the poorest members of society. Even some Liberal members dissociate themselves from the discussion paper presented by the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Indeed, last night, the member for York South—Weston said: «For the ten years we were the Official Opposition, we accused the Conservatives of lowering the deficit on the backs of the most needy, and now we are doing exactly the same thing».

[*English*]

SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians are very concerned about the intent and misguided direction of the Liberal government's review of social programs, and rightly so.

The growing federal debt proves existing programs are financially unsustainable in the long run and the long run is now. The minister of human resources seems intent on tinkering with social programs rather than making real changes to put them on a sound financial footing.

For the government to simply rejig programs that are financially unsustainable is dishonest. It is immoral to force on to Canadians a package of retreaded programs held together with bubble gum and binder twine. Programs that collapse under a mountain of debt will crush the very people the programs are intended to help.

I challenge the minister to prove to this House and to all Canadians that his social programs can survive the ravages of a government that cannot balance its books.

The first social aid program that should be cut is an unelected Senate.

* * *

AUTISM

Mrs. Bonnie Hickey (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador has brought to my attention that this is Autism Awareness Month.

Autism is a developmental disorder which occurs in approximately 15 out of every 10,000 births. It is estimated that there are over 500 people affected with this disorder in Newfoundland alone. It is four times more common in boys than it is in girls, with symptoms appearing during the first three years of life. Autism causes severe communication difficulties. Social interaction and behavioural problems are also evident.

It was first diagnosed in 1943 and is one of the most complex disabilities to understand. In fact, 50 years of research has failed to find an exact cause or cure.

I commend the Autism Society for its work on raising public awareness of this disorder and I am pleased to bring this to the attention of the House.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERIM LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard): Mr. Speaker, the interim leader of the Conservative Party recently found a new political orientation for himself.

He said to the Laval Chamber of Commerce that his new constitutional position is now called «shared sovereignty».

This statement contrasts sharply with the philosophy and the action taken by the previous government, of which he was a member. We ask ourselves several questions today: Are there now two sovereignist parties in this House?

Is that new constitutional position supported by more than 50 per cent of the Conservative caucus?

• (1415)

Is there a connection between his about–face and his recent discussions with his former boss, Mr. Mulroney?

Canadians no longer trust these politicians who change their opinions on the basis of opinion polls. If the hon. member really wants to contribute to the referendum debate that is about to begin, he should first decide on which side he wants to be.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, a recent Supreme Court ruling that extreme drunkenness can be a defence against rape has shocked all Canadians, especially women. Where is the rationality in such a decision?

This ruling is absolutely absurd. Now the voluntary consumption of alcohol can be used to excuse an individual's criminal behaviour.

I am sure a great many Canadians are very perplexed by this decision. What will be the impact of this judgment on impaired drivers across the country? Can they hide behind the coloured glass of a bottle because of this judgment?

The Criminal Code has to be amended so that all women and law–abiding citizens can feel safe again. Drinking must be no excuse for any criminal behaviour, none whatsoever.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, partially unveiling its plan to reduce its contribution to the financing of social programs, the government carefully avoided revealing in its discussion paper the extent of the cuts it intends to impose on the needy in order to reduce its deficit. But thanks to yesterday's *Toronto Star*, we now know that a confidential memorandum to Cabinet sets the amount of additional cuts in social programs at $7.5 billion over the next five years.

My question is for the Prime Minister. How can the people take seriously the consultation process that is about to begin when the government did not tell them that its decision had already been made and that regardless of the consultation, it will cut social programs by at least another $7.5 billion in the next five years?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we have said many times in the House that it would be much more valuable, rather than using speculative stories and leaked documents to try to scare people, for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to use the real facts as presented in the government documents which we have made public. They are the real ones.

The document we tabled yesterday clearly indicates that fiscal parameters had been established in the 1994 budget. It indicated that we would hold transfer payments at the 1993–94 level and that we would have in the 1994 budget savings from the unemployment insurance fund, which were obtained last year in Bill C–17.

I have also said publicly that we would like to target another 10 per cent of savings so we could devote that money toward enhanced employment, job creation and training programs for unemployed Canadians.

Those fiscal figures are real. They mean something and they are the ones that apply. Anything beyond that is simply speculation. The document that the hon. leader refers to has no relevance or any meaning in terms of real decisions made by this government.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the document quoted by the *Toronto Star* is a Cabinet document saying that not only has the decision to reduce social spending by $7.5 billion, in addition to the cuts already announced, been made, but the ministers also decided to hide the truth from everybody during the consultation process. The *Toronto Star* is not a paper suspected of anti–Liberals sentiments, so I give it some credibility. That gives us an idea of what it would be like if the Reform Party were in power.

Does the Prime Minister admit that by hiding the extent of the cuts his government intends to impose on the needy he is asking people to participate in a phony consultation? How can a government that will reduce social spending by $15 billion in five years still speak of compassion?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, earlier the minister explained very clearly the government's position. In the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance, we indicated, as the minister mentioned a while ago, that we would not cut transfers to provinces but that we would freeze them for a year. We passed unemployment legislation that led to reductions. That is the context in which these discussions with the public will take place.

• (1420)

As for the document to which the hon. member is referring, it is not a Cabinet document, but rather an internal memo from a particular department. I receive many documents of this nature every day; very often, several of them end up in the waste paper basket.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that this particular memo did not end up in the waste paper basket but on the front page of the *Toronto Star*.

Now that the government's hidden agenda in terms of real cuts and bogus consultations has been revealed, will the Prime Minister be honest and tell us what other unpleasant surprises he has in store for Canadians in this social reform?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is a very important document. The minister is addressing a fundamental problem in our society. We have had social programs that have served us well until now. However, as the minister explained in his speech this morning, the context is completely different today.

The minister was not afraid to tackle the issue and go to the bottom of things. But we do not want to impose all the solutions. The minister has offered several alternatives. We will discuss these alternatives with the provinces and with all those interested in taking part in these discussions, and we will introduce legislation next year.

As for the fiscal parameters, everybody knows that we have made a clear commitment to reduce our country's deficit to 3 per cent of the GDP by the end of the third year. And as the minister was saying, all the departments are encouraged to make cuts in order to help us reach our goal as easily as possible, without destroying the good things that we have now.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, the document *Agenda: Jobs and Growth* goes well beyond that since it says, and I quote: "A social security system that is financially unsustainable is a dead end". They are talking about financial sustainability, Mr. Speaker!

As it had already done in last February's budget, instead of addressing the causes, the government has obviously chosen to attack the unemployed by proposing measures that restrict access to unemployment insurance. Yet, in Quebec alone, the 1993 cuts to the unemployment insurance program forced 22,000 unemployed to go on welfare.

In these conditions, how can the minister claim that, by restricting access to unemployment insurance, he will give to the unemployed the hope and confidence they so badly need when he has not proposed any real job creation measures?

The Speaker: I hope that the question will be a little bit shorter next time.

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. deputy looks carefully at the words she used, rentable means investment. We are talking about investment in people, investment in their skills, investment in their talents, investment in their thoughts. Investment is what it is all about.

I listened this morning to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. In his speech I did not hear one idea about how to get people back to work, not one idea of how to invest in the country, not one idea of how we can help the people of Canada. All he wants to do is tear the country down.

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Human Resources Development. How can the Minister, in his paper, make the victims of a situation where jobs are insecure and scarce, particularly those claimants who regularly rely on UI benefits and make up 40 per cent of our unemployment insurance rolls, carry the blame for the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves? Is that the famous change they so often tell us about?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the paper contains a series of very important choices for Canadians. The most important is: are we prepared to invest in helping people get back to work? Can we help them improve their education, their skills? Can we give them the incentives to go back to work by offering an earning supplement to an employer? Can we help them start their own jobs and start their own businesses?

Those are the key issues. We are not taking away from the unemployed. We are giving to the unemployed. We are giving them hope, we are giving them resources, we are re–equipping them for the new economy so they can get jobs.

We are not standing as an elite, as the members of the opposition do. They want to see people stay on unemployment insurance. They want to see people stay unemployed. They have no interest in getting them back to work.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the government's social policy paper is devoid of detailed information concerning the cost of the proposed reforms or the projected savings. It is that vacuum that is generating the speculation about what is meant.

It seems that the government either does not know the cost and savings figures, or if it does know it is hiding them from Canadians.

Is the Minister of Human Resources Development ignorant of the detailed cost and savings consequences of his paper or is he withholding them?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the questions is no and no.

Mr. Hermanson: That's good. You can tell us then.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, it is virtually impossible to have the public discussion that the minister asked for on social reform without Canadians knowing the detailed cost of the alternatives that are presented. They are not contained in the paper.

The social net is in a mess because Liberals in the sixties and seventies would not answer the questions: what does it cost and where is the money going to come from.

To facilitate the discussion that the minister says he wants, will he provide in the next week an addendum to the discussion paper detailing the cost of his social reform proposals and the expected savings?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, if the leader of the Reform Party had been listening more carefully to what we have been saying, I indicated that a series of technical papers are being issued that will give very detailed accounts of all the kinds of programs.

I am going to make an offer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I will table my detailed financial and economic reports if the hon. leader of the Reform Party will tell us what programs he intends to cut in the $15 billion of social program cuts his member announced. Is he cutting seniors' pensions? Is he cutting aid to children? Is he cutting programs for education? When is he going to detail what he is going to cut?

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, this figure of $15 billion which the minister bandies about is the government's figure. The government has a $40 billion deficit. It says it is going to get to $25 billion in three years. We know that math is not a requirement for being the Minister of Human Resources Development but that adds up to $15 billion.

Ministers who have grand plans and proposals and no ideas on how much they cost or how to finance them have been the curse of finance ministers since the days of Sir John A. Macdonald. I ask the finance minister, if the Minister of Human Resources Development cannot or will not provide Canadians with the cost and projected savings of his paper, will the finance minister agree to do so?

• (1430)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, clearly the Reform Party does not like the answers they are getting. They are too truthful for them to absorb.

I know that it is very difficult for the hon. leader of the Reform Party to say anything that has not been pre–scripted. We saw last night how he made comments before he had read the report and now he is asking questions after I have already given the answer.

I have already said to the hon. leader that we will be tabling very specific technical papers. In so doing I would like to return the compliment to the leader and ask if he is going to explain the comment of his colleague, the member of Parliament for Calgary North, who said "we are going to cut in the neighbourhood of $50 million largely from social programs". When is he going to come clean as to what he wants to cut?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The Minister's discussion paper confirms the worst fears recently reported by the media. Not only is this document going after the most destitute members of our society, but it is targeting women specifically. It proposes to make the spouse's income level a criterion for UI entitlement.

How can the Minister justify his approach that makes women's right to UI benefits subject to their spouse's income level?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I would recommend strongly that the hon. member read the green paper. If she reads it she will recognize that in that proposal we talk about major programs for child care so that we would have a national strategy for child care funded to the tune of 700 million new dollars.

We are talking about a major program dealing with child support as it affects women. We are talking about major programs to enable women to get back into the workforce. We are talking about major proposals that would deal with the whole problem of family work and how we can provide coverage under unemployment insurance and other income security programs for part time work occasioned by women.

This is a document to emancipate women into the workforce and give them full rights for the first time.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, since this proposal is an unacceptable setback for women after decades of struggle for increased financial independence, will the Minister immediately undertake to withdraw this proposal which is in fact discriminatory?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, once again I think it would be very helpful if in preparing questions the hon. member was relevant to the kinds of issues that we are dealing with.

I am saying that I would like to see the hon. member, who expresses a real concern for women, come out and support the proposals in this green paper to have a national child care program. Will she support a program for child support enforcement? Will she support a program that will help women get back into the workforce? Will she support a program that will help women go back to school and university? Will she support those proposals in the green paper, yes or no?

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, if this minister had anything useful to say he probably would not be attacking other members and inventing things that they never said.

Is not the reason this minister has only produced a discussion paper and not an action plan because the minister cannot get co–operation from the provinces?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the most important part of any action plan in this day and age is to make sure that all Canadians have an opportunity to participate in forming it, in shaping it and in designing it. That is what consultation is about.

• (1435)

I understand the Reform Party has this authoritarian streak. It does not want to consult with people. It does not want to ask people. It does not want people to participate.

Why is the Reform Party afraid to go to the public and ask what they think rather than going ding–a–ling on a telephone line?

Mr. Cummins: The program is so sick the book has turned green.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged that the minister already sees we are going to be the government and he is already trying to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Ablonczy: Until he is in opposition attacking the government I wonder if the minister would acknowledge that province after province has already spoken out against these proposals. The reason the minister cannot get co–operation from the provinces is because he is inflexible and unwilling to decentralize. Is this the minister's idea of co–operative federalism?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the only reason I am so kind to the Reform Party is that I do not want to see it disappear, at least not this year.

What the hon. member said is not true. There have been several statements by provincial ministers and leaders saying that they are interested in a serious process of social reform, that they want to talk about real consultation, that they want to raise their issues.

I am not asking them to agree with everything that is in the paper, but it is very important that they all participate. I am encouraged to see that they are willing to participate, just as they were willing to co–operate this past summer. We have been able to negotiate and sign over seven specific new agreements with the provincial government to initiate innovative ideas on how to deliver social programs more effectively.

The best sign of co–operation is when there actually is an agreement to make something happen. That is what we are doing with the provinces.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the discussion paper published by the federal government shows a very clear intent to centralize. Ottawa wants to centralize increasingly the powers related to education, manpower training and income security, which, you will agree, are all areas under provincial jurisdiction. This intent will bring about, as we know, unproductive and harsh confrontation between Ottawa and the provincial governments.

My question is for the Prime Minister. How can he justify that while reducing its contribution to social program financing in Canada, Ottawa insists on imposing increasingly its views on the provinces by dictating national standards?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should have listened to what the minister said. He referred to a series of statements in this paper. It is clearly stated, on page 27, that we are committed to respect the Constitution. We are proposing, on page 40, a transfer of money and responsibility for manpower to provinces. We are proposing, on page 62, the possibility for provinces to opt out in relation to education and so on.

However, the members opposite are stuck in the rut of their doctrine. Besides, last week, the head of the government of Quebec, Mr. Parizeau, in answer to a journalist's question—and that is why the Opposition is taking this approach—stated, and I am sorry to quote him in English:

[*English*]

But I mean after all we are not there to have the system operate as smoothly as possible. We are there to get out of this system.

[*Translation*]

The people across the way accuse us of unwillingness to co–operate, but it is the separatist leader of Quebec who stated that they do not want to have anything to do with the federal government.

• (1440)

As for us, what we want to do with this reform is give to all Canadians and to the workers, including those of Quebec, the dignity that comes with a job. People are tired of hearing about separation and Constitution. What they want is jobs, dignity, training and education. And we will help them.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, need I remind the Prime Minister that not so long ago he called the unemployed in Quebec and Canada beer drinkers? We remember!

Some hon. members: Yes, we remember.

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): We remember when he talked less compassionately about those who suffer because jobs are scarce and because his government does not care. We know and remember.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that his government's centralizing efforts will in fact lead to extremely costly duplication and overlap between the two levels of government and does he not realize that, for Quebecers, the only logical solution is that, to live in a satisfactory way, they must have their own policies, their own government, their own state and their own country?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for confirming what Mr. Parizeau said. They want the status quo, they do not want changes. They do not want the well–being of Canadians, they do not want them to regain their dignity by working. They have only one obsession, which is their petty constitutional fight for the separation of Quebec, but they do not even have the courage to say to Quebecers that they are separatists.

They invent words like "souverainiste", which is not even in the French dictionary. They sometimes use the word "indépendantiste", and the first time this word appeared in the dictionary, it said that it was a regional term meaning Quebec separatist.

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening very carefully to the answers that the human resources minister has been giving and the answer to every one is the same: Attack the questioner. I believe the minister is making a virtue of this consultation process as an excuse for inaction.

Will the minister of human resources tell us when we can expect legislation from this no action plan to be tabled in this House.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I would not want to interfere with the hon. member's own particular form of self destruction by admitting in the House of Commons, the place of the people, the place where we are supposed to express the voice of Canadians that he has no interest in talking to Canadians, no interest in involving Canadians, no interest on behalf of the Reform Party in having any kind of discussion to allow Canadians to make decisions.

The when is now. We tabled the paper. Parliament began to debate it today. Everybody speaks on behalf of Canadians. Get up on your feet and debate for a change.

• (1445)

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, this answer absolutely proves what I have been saying: attack the questioner.

We have been discussing and consulting now for one year. Could the minister make a commitment today that he will not allow any factors to interfere with or delay in any way the much needed social policy reform that should be happening now, not a year or two from now?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, all members of the Reform Party produced after a year of discussion was a statement that said they were going to cut $15 billion from seniors' pensions, from children and from education. We do not want that kind of decision making process. That is why we want to go to the people of Canada. Let them be heard and let the committee and Parliament start right now.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I really do not mind being ignored from time to time, but I cannot even hear my colleagues any more.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. With its discussion paper, Ottawa wants to justify its intervention in workforce training, and I quote: "The role of the federal government in helping people improve their skills derives from its general responsibility to foster better national economic performance—"

Are we to understand that the federal government definitely rejects the consensus reached by all stakeholders in Quebec and refuses to transfer the responsibility for manpower force training?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would read the book he would know that last spring the federal government had already tabled a new interim proposal on manpower training with every province that would provide the transfer of the purchase of training to the provinces. It would provide for the development of guichets uniques, single co-locations the provinces would initiate that would transfer several programs related to education under the management of the provinces and would have a joint planning priority wherein the provinces would have a direct role in the planning of federal programs in those provinces.

We said that was the first major step toward decentralizing the management of manpower training programs across the country. When we complete this reform and see more directly what the programs are then we can discuss further. It seems to me that is a positive first step toward giving the provinces more responsibility in the area of manpower training.

I would ask the hon. member whether he is prepared to support that or not.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, even the former Liberal Premier of Quebec, Daniel Johnson, refused this unacceptable offer.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his stubbornness will cost Quebec alone more than $500 million of wasted spending in the next two years and that the unemployed will continue to be the victims of the present mess the existence of which the federal government admits in its discussion paper?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, first the figure used by the hon. member has no bearing whatsoever. As members well know we have had major discussions with the previous Quebec government on how we could begin to undertake major programs.

For example, we had negotiated with the previous government four very important ways in which the federal government could support provincial initiatives by helping them with the APPORT program, helping them to support major programs for education of young people on social assistance and developing programs in which we could have co-locations.

We announced just two weeks ago the establishment of a major new women's resource centre in the constituency of his seatmate, which I think the hon. member sitting next to him applauded. We are showing that the federal government is flexible. We are showing a spirit of co–operation that has not been shown in the country in a long time.

All I would ask is one thing, that the hon. member go back and ask if the new Government of Quebec is prepared to co–operate with us.

• (1450)

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

I would like to ask about a divorced mother of two who recently wrote about how the system abandoned her when she tried to get off welfare. She complained the system is so backward that she had to quit her job in order to better provide for her family.

What assurances could the minister give this young woman that her concerns and the concerns of many other women like her will be taken into account in the reform of these social programs?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a serious question.

In addition to the proposals that were contained in the green book dealing with major support for child care, a major attempt by my colleague to deal with the enforcement of child support orders and major new programs of employment enhancement, we have indicated in the green book that we are prepared to work with the provinces to free up many of the existing rules in the delivery of social assistance that provide penalties or disincentives for women on social assistance to go back to work.

One of the things I find sort of terrible and really obsolescent is that we confiscate close to 70 per cent of any earned income if a woman wants to go back to work; we figure we have to take back the benefits. As soon as the provinces reciprocate, we as a federal government are prepared to renegotiate the Canada Assistance Plan to make sure that particular condition will be changed and the woman the hon. member talked about can go to work.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, according to a document leaked to the Toronto *Star* the government has a hidden agenda as far as HRD is concerned.

Could the minister assure Canadians that he does not have a plan in his back pocket that would further tax away the hard earned income and savings of Canadians?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, there is no secret plan. There is no hidden agenda. We have put very clearly in the green book exactly what the fiscal parameters will be. We made very clear what we want Canadians to go through.

Furthermore I wish the hon. member would talk to his leader and other colleagues. They seem to be saying that they do not want any consultations. They want the government to impose a plan. We are saying quite the opposite. We want to give Canadians a right to consult with us and tell us what they think the priorities should be.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, it is just as I expected. Our questions go unanswered as usual. I wish the minister would actually come up with a plan whereby he could tell us yes or no, whether this implies there will be more tax for Canadians.

I ask the minister again: Would he tell us whether this means more tax implications for Canadians?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): No.

The Speaker: I think that was the quickest no on record.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. We read in the document presented yesterday by the minister that the federal government intends to cut $2.6 billion dollars in cash transfer payments for post–secondary education.

Does the minister realize that by reducing cash transfer payments for post–secondary education to provinces, he will force them to double tuition fees, thus making higher education less accessible?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question because it gives me the opportunity to clear up one of the more serious misunderstandings.

Let me just say that under the present formula, under the existing arrangements, the cash portion of the transfer of post–secondary education is declining every year. It is going down. It is ratcheting down further over a period of time.

The reason is that the revenue is going to the provinces because tax points are going up. The provinces are getting more money each year. As a result that cash portion goes down accordingly by the ratio under the existing arrangements.

• (1455)

We are trying to say that before that ratcheting takes place, before that reduction causes the cash flow to disappear, let us take the money we have and work together to set up a brand new program of social assistance that will provide a much broader range of real support for students to go back to school, broader accessibility not only for 18–year–olds or 21–year–olds but for all Canadians who want to go back to school.

This is the whole idea of very important creative federalism and of finding ways of using the money we now have to turn it into three or four billion additional dollars going back into the educational system.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not realize that besides doubling tuition fees, his reform helps to double students' indebtedness, as was confirmed by a Treasury Board note made public in today's *Toronto Star*?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that tuition rates have already doubled over the past four or five years under the existing system. They are going up at the rate of 10 per cent or 15 per cent every year. That is hurting students right now because they cannot afford it. Furthermore it is providing a major deterrent for people who are already in the workforce and want to go back to school.

We are saying let's broaden, deepen and widen the amount of money available to students. Let's also put in place a brand new repayment scheme that would allow students to pay back according to the income they earn, not according to a flat rate like we have presently.

When students graduate they would pay it back according to their their income. If they had a high income they would pay it right back. If they had a low income they would take their time. If they had no income they would not pay at all until they got an income. That is what we are trying to do to ensure total and open accessibility for all Canadians.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development has stated that part of the solution to child poverty is more government funded day care, a plan that would cost the country hundreds of millions of dollars.

Will the minister consider saving tax dollars and providing better child care by offering tax incentives for informal child care arrangements?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would read the green book he would see two very important facts. One is that 70 per cent of families with two parents are now working. That puts an enormous stress on those families in terms of their children, but they have to work because that is the way they get sufficient income. The second is that about 60 per cent of children in single parent homes are under the poverty level because their parent cannot go back to work.

A key to changing both those conditions to provide major support for working families, to encourage and give incentives for sole parents to go back to work, is to provide good, serious, decent child care. That is what the government is committed to.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, if we did something about the tax burden people are carrying they would not have to both work; they would be able to stay home.

The minister is suggesting that state run day care is somehow better able to provide care for their children. Does the minister not realize that another important option is to allow parents the choice of caring for their children themselves? Will he look at this option in his review?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, in the green book we clearly say that one of the major areas of reform that will be required is to look at how we can provide broader coverage under some of our security programs for people who are engaging in part time work, mini–work or flexi–work, so that there can be a lot more opportunity and availability for parents to spend time with their children.

One of the disincentives right now is that under unemployment insurance and other areas many of those people do not have any income security protection whatsoever. We included very specifically in the green book that we wanted to look at how we could extend coverage of security programs so that people could spend more time with their children.

That is the kind of reform we want to make. We hope the Reform Party will support it.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

As the minister knows the three main industries in Atlantic Canada, in P.E.I. in particular, are agriculture, fisheries and tourism. These are all seasonal industries for obvious reasons.

Could the minister indicate to the House how he plans to deal with the issue of people who are seasonally employed? These people are needed, are trained and need UI for the winter.

• (1500)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a very important question.

As he knows, we make specific mention in the green book that we have to look very carefully at the circumstances facing seasonal workers. For example, we have already set up a working group with the building and trades council to look at what happens in the construction trade. We are now working closely with them to find an answer.

We are also planning to establish a special working group in the next few days to deal with seasonal workers per se. That group will talk to those workers, the industries and the provinces affected so that once again we can provide a flexible, tailored response to meet the needs of seasonal workers.

There is another innovation we introduced this week, and you will be interested in this, Mr. Speaker. It is a special pilot project we provided in Prince Edward Island. It will allow seasonal workers to use their uninsurable weeks, those weeks when they only work part time during the week, to be pulled together to get an insurable week and therefore establish a broader work time. That stretches out the work week. That means we give more people more time to work. That is the kind of innovation and reform this country needs and we will continue to provide it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the leader of the government in the House. I would like to know what the business of the House will be when we return next week.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, it is my intention to make a statement on another kind of human resources development, that is parliamentary resources.

[*English*]

We will continue this afternoon, this evening and tomorrow with the debate on social security programs.

When the House returns on October 17 from the Thanksgiving break the Standing Committee on Finance will shift into high gear. Following the reference to hold prebudget hearings in accordance with the new rules adopted by this House last winter, I wish to confirm that the Minister of Finance will be appearing before the finance committee on both Monday, October 17 and Tuesday, October 18. The committee will then consult a broad range of Canadians on what they want to see in the next budget.

Under our standing orders the committee will report its observations and conclusions to this House by December 2. We would hope to set aside a significant amount of time before we adjourn for Christmas two weeks after that in order to permit as many members as possible to express their views as well.

Putting this process into operation for the first time represents a new and more open and democratic approach toward budget making. I wish to commend the Minister of Finance for his warm and enthusiastic endorsement of our new procedures.

Turning to more immediate matters for the consideration of the House, the first item to be put before us here in the House on October 17 will be report stage and third reading of Bill C–49, the agriculture and agri–food department reorganization. We will then return to the second reading debates on the other departmental reorganizations, Bill C–46 on industry, followed by Bill C–48 on natural resources, followed by Bill C–52 on public works and government services, followed by Bill C–53 on Canadian heritage.

We will then return to second reading debate on Bill C–41 regarding sentencing.

The business I have announced will carry us to mid–week. The House will know there are two government bills on the notice paper today for introduction tomorrow. We would propose to call second reading of these two bills late in the week we return or early in the week after.

• (1505)

Some members may wish more time when we return for the social security debate which is now under way. It will also be necessary to designate some early opposition days. However I think it would be better to consult with my colleagues opposite before making any firm and final announcements on this. I ask the House to stand by. My next statement will give those details.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I think you might find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Northwest Territories during the month of October 1994 to undertake a study of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and that the necessary staff accompany the subcommittee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent to move the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, yesterday we adopted an order of this House to extend the sitting tonight until 9 p.m. However, because of ministerial statements this morning approximately one–half hour of normal debating time was deducted from that which would otherwise have been time for hon. members to speak on today's order of the House.

After consultation with members across I think you will find there is consent to extend the sitting tonight by yet another half hour, that is to say until 9.30 p.m. to enable more hon. members to make their comments.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, I am so disappointed with the government's mishandling of the opportunity we had to really reform Canada's social safety net. Our social safety net is full of holes and it seems like the minister is trying to shove it full of paper.

It is clear the government is without direction. This is a government without priorities. This is a government without a sense of urgency. This is a government without a long term perspective.

This is not an action plan as promised in the motion introduced by the minister in January and passed by this House. This is not even a good discussion paper. The minister's no action plan says there is a problem with overspending. His paper says that our social programs do not work. His paper says that people are becoming dependent on government handouts. However, any common sense person would come to the conclusion it is the government that is the problem.

The minister goes on to suggest that the answer to all these problems is more government programs. People tell me that none of this would be happening if the government would just take its greedy fingers out of people's pockets and let them run their own affairs.

How much will each alternative proposed in the no action plan cost to implement? What will be the social impact and consequences for each of the alternatives proposed in this no action plan? How many jobs will be created by each alternative? How can Canadians make an informed choice if they do not even have an assessment of the costs and the benefits for the proposed alternatives? How can Canadians make an informed choice if they do not know whether their own lives will be better or worse under the Liberal alternatives?

In yesterday's press conference the minister responded to questions about whether the cuts from social programs would be $1.5 billion or $7.5 billion by saying that fiscal parameters were already set and that there would be other changes in fiscal arrangements. What does the minister mean by other changes in fiscal arrangements? There can only be spending cuts or raising taxes. Will the minister admit that there will be no cuts or will he tell Canadians by how much they can expect their taxes to increase?

• (1510)

I would like to focus my response to the no action plan on the alternatives proposed for the unemployment insurance program and the so–called employment initiatives. I might remind everyone that unemployment insurance is the only program clearly within the jurisdiction of the federal government under the Constitution of Canada. All of the other programs the minister talks about in his no action plan are under the jurisdiction of the provinces.

The Angus Reid survey released by the government this summer clearly shows that the majority of Canadians think training and employment programs should be delivered by the provinces, not the federal government. The problem with this government is that it refuses to give up programs that do not work, programs that were not the government's in the first place.

Going back to unemployment insurance, the minister has failed to explore all the options that are open to Canadians with respect to UI. The Reform blue book policy has said for years that UI programs should be based on true insurance principles and administered by the employees and the employers who pay those premiums.

UI premiums come right out of the pockets of the workers, whether they are paid by the employees or their employers. Did the minister not once consider that the employees and employers who pay the premiums might not like the government taking their money and doing just anything it pleased with it? Did the minister consider that? Did he make it an option?

Did the minister even consider that the UI program should be voluntary rather than compulsory? Why is this option of giving employers and employees control of their program not included? That is a grave omission and one the minister should correct immediately.

The no action plan proposes using UI premiums for employment development rather than straight unemployment insurance as it was originally intended. This is an average of about $1,500 per year for each worker in Canada, money that comes directly out of the pockets of each worker. UI premiums are the second largest source of revenue for the government, next to personal income tax.

The minister is picking the pockets of the workers without their consent. This is just another cash cow the Liberals are trying to milk. The minister should be asking if this is what the workers who pay the premiums want, but that option is mysteriously omitted from this book. The government wants more control, not less, and it is not an option given to the Canadian people to decide upon.

The paper is full of so–called new ideas for helping people with job searches, personal counselling, training and so on. The problem is they are actually old ideas. For instance, the American 1988 jobs initiative was highly touted but proved to be a dismal failure. There is no meaningful analysis of why government has botched such things in the past so there is no suggestion about how to do it better the next time. There are some who claim that subsidized job training works, but oddly enough the OECD just took a hard look at this and rejected it as a failure. Yet this government thinks it is possible.

The 1960s Liberal thinking has failed and the countries that Liberals and NDPers used to hold up as shining examples of this are now in trouble. Sweden has cut housing subsidies. Norway is tightening disability payments. France requires those on social assistance to enrol in work training schemes. The Netherlands has set its social assistance at 50 per cent of minimum wage. Germany and Italy are raising the age at which pensions can be claimed. In Britain income support is available only on the basis of need and only after passing a means test. You decide who to believe: the so–called compassionate politicians that have got us in this mess, or the Reformers who have a plan to get us out.

• (1515)

The dribble in this paper about flexibility, about creating opportunity, about addressing individual needs, about minimizing waste and so on is just a bunch of hogwash. They are good intentions without any useful suggestions as to how it would be accomplished.

Madam Speaker, if you were really hungry and this was brought forth as food—this green book—after going through and digesting it, you would still be very hungry. There is no substance in it. It is like cotton candy. It is so big and it is sweet. It sounds so good, but it does not fill you up. There is nothing in here of substance. The one place where there is anything resembling substance is on UI.

As I explained, there is no action plan, no recommendations, no priorities but there are two fairly clear options. One is new. It is called the employment insurance program, which sounds better than the unemployment insurance program because employment is better than unemployment of course.

In Saskatchewan we have a little animal called a skunk. It does not matter what you call that skunk, it still stinks. This option proposes dividing recipients into frequent and occasional users. Although it charts the rapid rise in the former category, it blames it on globalization, not on the program itself.

I believe that if you want to get people off UI you have to quit paying them to be unemployed. Although the paper admits the difficulty of defining the two categories, then points to regional complexities, it makes no useful suggestion as to what should actually be done; nor is there any analysis of the perverse incentives that might be created thereby, or of the dual bureaucracy it would generate.

It does recommend lower benefits and job programs for frequent users. However it notes that job programs might require more money, not less. Then it says that UI has become a welfare scheme and it might be a good idea to target it based on need. Means testing is one possible good idea, although it would be better to leave welfare to welfare and make UI into real insurance.

The other option presented is to keep the program as it is, but to increase the requirements for qualification or reduce the duration or the amount of the benefits. The review itself notes that while this would reduce spending it would not address the many structural flaws in the system.

The discussion paper also mentions eliminating regional discrimination, which is a good idea, plain and simple. This is a policy straight from our Reform blue book. What worries me is that this good idea lacks the trendy, active labour market orientation to which the minister seems to be committed.

There is no cost benefit analysis here as elsewhere in the paper for the various options that are listed. Canadians cannot make choices if they do not know the costs and the benefits, whether the new situation would be significantly better or worse than what exists now.

It should be noted very strongly that the minister's alleged options paper certainly does not lay out all the options. That is one thing we must be clear about. Conspicuously absent are allowing employers and employees to administer unemployment insurance; voluntary versus compulsory unemployment insurance; a return to true insurance policies—none of these are in there—and finally, making no changes without the consent of the workers and employers who pay the premiums.

One glaring example of how off base the whole review is is that it points how much of recently created jobs are in part time, temporary, self–employed or multiple job sectors, which are not covered by UI. It even notes that these sectors are growing precisely because they are not covered by UI. Therefore they avoid the crushing payroll tax but it calls for the usual creative ideas for extending UI to these areas.

• (1520)

Government does not need any new programs. Lower taxes and create jobs. The finance minister clearly acknowledges that very principle and yet it is not clearly contained in this proposal.

The review notes that payroll taxes are bad although it coyly says that at least in the short run, payroll taxes discourage job creation, as though in the long run things might be different. It then discusses trying to create surpluses in good times to avoid having to raise premiums in bad times when they can least be afforded. This is a good idea but the funds must be kept separate from general revenue, not squandered on other things.

If it was a true insurance program this would be unnecessary. There is no separate fund for unemployment premiums. The paper contemplates removing the ceiling on earnings, subject to the payroll tax and lowering the rate so that the incentive to create exempt part time jobs at the low end would be reduced.

This shows some awareness of perverse incentive but if one does this, and taxes back the UI at high incomes one is moving away from a true insurance program. UI encourages unemployment precisely because it is not true insurance but a subsidy for those who are not working.

It also canvasses the idea of experience ratings, that is, moving toward real insurance by basing premiums on previous employment history. This is a good idea but why not go all the way?

It must be noted, and it is, that this makes the program more expensive for those least able to afford it. That is why it should incorporate a key principle of real insurance. It should be voluntary.

It proposes reducing premiums for employers who support training quite apart from the fact that most jobs involve informal training already. If this is done, then every single employer will move to have formal training and bigger firms will find it easier to do so. It will help crush small business and that is very serious.

I think Canadians will be disappointed, as I was, by the lack of leadership in the minister's no action plan. The minister has failed to lay out a clear path to significant reform as promised in the throne speech.

In those areas where he laid out options, he has not attached a fiscal price tag. An even greater tragedy is that the human cost analysis in terms of what improvements this reform will make are also missing.

How can the minister initiate a substantial debate on social reform without providing these key pieces in a debate. It is like trying to teach kids with only the first half of the book or giving them a test question in math without all the information.

We must admit that the process of social reform is more than just deficit reduction. The financial constraints are clear enough but the real problem with Canada's social safety net are the incentives that the current system is creating for Canadians.

Not only does our safety net need re–evaluation due to fiscal reasons but the inherent damage that these programs have created needs serious attention. This is why it is such a tragedy that neither the fiscal nor the social implications are laid out in this package.

If the minister is unwilling to lead this debate he faces the likely prospect that he will be left behind. Social policy must move beyond the outdated 1960s thinking that has characterized today's social programs. We need to admit that many of the assumptions underlying Canada's social programs are damaging Canadian lives.

We see increasing welfare and UI dependence. We see increasing amounts of students unprepared for the school to work transition. We see rising tax burdens. We see increasing family disintegration.

• (1525)

What are Reformers saying about these failures of Canada's social safety net? It is time to recognize the failure of the 1960s Liberal thinking and move toward the 21st century with real Reform thinking.

It is time to question universality. It is time to target social programs to those who are truly in need. It is time to recognize that we do not have the money to pay for all our social programs. It is time to consider affordable programs that can be sustained. It is time to reduce the number of programs and bureaucracy and consider flexibility, empowerment and put control of the programs back into the hands of the people.

It is time to recognize the dangers of big, centralized federal governments and consider community based and family oriented solutions. It is time to address the inherent dependency of present social programs and consider self–sufficiency, self–reliance and personal responsibility. It is time to question inflexible national standards and consider flexible programs that are responsive to human and economic reality. It is time to eliminate shared jurisdiction over programs, eliminate duplication and overlap and consider clear accountability of governments.

I feel strongly that this is the greatest boondoggle the government has come up with yet. We had this big drum roll before this was introduced, a big fanfare. We expected a good act. Then the inaction plan whimpered out on to the stage. Is this all there is?

The Minister of Human Resources Development and the Liberal government still think that outmoded solutions can be applied to modern problems. If he is unwilling to take on sacred cows, he is likely to get trampled by the whole herd.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, a point of order. I wish to indicate, pursuant to our standing orders, that after the speech of the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, that all subsequent speakers from the government side will be sharing their time. In other words, two 10–minute speeches as opposed to one 20–minute speech per round.

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, as one of the other members from the province of Saskatchewan I feel I cannot let the kind of comments I just heard from the hon. member from my home province go unchallenged.

He has dismissed the discussion paper today as hogwash. I cannot pretend to be more of an expert on hogwash than my colleague in the Reform Party. I will leave that unchallenged.

I listened as well to his analogy about eating the green book. I suspect that is where his difficulty has come from, in not understanding that the green book is for reading and not for eating. Perhaps that is why he is having so much difficulty.

Speaking of reading, I suspect that it is a failure to read the book and the predisposition to eat it that has caused the complete lack of understanding of what this discussion paper is about.

One point the hon. member raised is some notion he has that the federal government is hoping to seize power over provincial concerns. I did not think the Reform Party was concerned about constitutional issues, according to their statements during last year's political campaign. However, leaving that aside for a moment, the green book clearly states that it is the minister's intention to co–operate with the provinces on such things as education—learning in chapter 3.

I refer the member to page 19 of the summary where it clearly states that the federal government is looking for ways to expand access to education by co–operating with the provinces in finding ways to make the most of our shrinking resources and putting our talents to use that way.

If it is not expecting too much for the hon. member to turn to page 19, I refer him to the preface of the book where the minister clearly states that in his consultations with Canadians he hopes to work in partnership with all levels of government.

• (1530)

In all sincerity I listened to the hon. member and his colleagues in last year's campaign. I heard fine words from them about doing a new style of politics, looking at a plan on its merits and not simply criticising every possible aspect without giving time to consider the plan to possibly say: "Well we don't like this part, but we do like that part". Instead, what I am hearing from the hon. member is an outright denial of any merit in this plan.

I would just ask him to justify taking that point of view and then to honestly state to this House that he can find nothing in here. Perhaps he could comment on why he is not prepared to involve himself, as all other Canadians will be doing, in the process of bringing forth their ideas for weaving together our social safety net and making it stronger. Why does he not do that instead of simply taking out his machete, or whatever the proper analogy would be for someone in hogwash, slashing it down and letting Canadians fall with it.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's sense of humour. However, I do not think it is very funny when we look at what is really in this paper.

First she criticized my remarks in regard to the power the federal government is trying to exercise over the provinces. If she had read this green paper she would realize the federal government is trying to take away control from the provinces in areas the Constitution of Canada has given them, such as training and education. Those are provincial responsibilities and this government is trying to get more and more involved in those areas.

I would also like to point out to the hon. member how incorrect she is when she says the government is trying to get the co–operation of the provinces. That is pure talk and no action. The government is giving the provinces less and less funding, but is continuing to maintain control. That is co–operation? Obviously not. You cannot expect the provinces to co–operate if you do not give them more control. I think that is a very serious accusation the hon. member has made. I think the Bloc members over here have some very legitimate concerns about this federal government taking over provincial jurisdiction. We ought to listen once in a while at least.

The hon. member also said that I did not see anything good in the paper. Obviously she was not listening very well to my speech because there are some options in here which we commend. For example, in unemployment insurance the reduction in the duration of benefits is a good thing. I have mentioned that. To reduce the level of benefits, to have income testing, to have all of these things I said are very good.

However, I also said that not all of the options were included. She said I am not getting involved in the debate. She has not been in this House very much if she does not know that we have made many suggestions to this government in previous speeches which it has not read and not included in these options.

That is what I was saying again today. Why are these options not included? Why are these options so narrow? Why is the government trying to have more control over the lives of Canadians rather than letting them have more jurisdiction over programs like unemployment insurance?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member's speech, and I am about to do something unusual for me and stand up for my colleague in the Reform Party even if, in many respects, we do not share that party's views.

Our colleague is a member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources. As far as I know, he was present during all proceedings and did take part in the first phase of consultation. That is why I am asking him this question.

Does my colleague consider that the consultations our committee held last winter and last spring are reflected in this working paper? We were supposed to get an action plan, but what we got is simply a working paper and a series of options. We were supposed to get something by mid–April, and then in June. Here were are in October, and the implementation is now postponed until next year. Is this a disappointment for the hon. member?

• (1535)

[*English*]

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, the answer is obvious. Yes, I am very disappointed.

Look at what this government is doing and the time line this government has laid before us. Back in January or February the government said it would put down an action plan and it would come forth in April. Then the government postponed it to September. Now in October we have more discussion.

If we look at what is going to happen in the future, if we follow this whole process through, now the government is saying we are going to go through a consultation process. Consultation is fine, but if it is just an excuse for more inaction, I cannot find that acceptable.

Then the government said it was going to introduce legislation in the fall of next year, 1995. That legislation is going to be debated, it is going to go through committee, it is going to go through first, second and third readings and that all takes time in this House. That brings us to 1996, the year before the election.

I ask: Does anyone think this government is going to seriously make some big changes just before the election? The answer is obvious. I do not think we are going to have substantial changes. After one year of inaction and another couple of years of debating and fiddling around with this thing, I do not think this government is seriously committed to really doing anything with social programs.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I welcome this historic opportunity to participate in the debate on the reform of Canada's social security system which this government has launched.

I also welcome the challenge of chairing the House of Commons committee that will seek the views of Canadians over the next few months on the proposals for reform which the Minister of Human Resources Development tabled in this House yesterday. I want to say a few words later in my remarks about how the committee proposes to hear from Canadians on this important issue.

There are few dimensions of being Canadian that resonate more strongly in the hearts of all of us than the sense that we are a caring, compassionate and tolerant society. These fundamental national values find their most tangible expression in the framework of social programs that together we have built through our federal, provincial and municipal governments over the past half century to provide support, income security and dignity to those less fortunate members of our society in times of need.

These programs, unemployment insurance, the Canada assistance plan, the Canada student loans program, and the system of federal–provincial co–operation in the funding and support of higher education in Canada, the family allowance and its successor programs, the child tax credit and the child benefit payments for families with children have been responses by reform minded Canadians to real needs crying out to be met. They were inspired by a vision of a better Canada and a willingness in the pursuit of that vision to overcome the overwhelming drag of the status quo and the straitjacket of existing institutions to find ways to realize on that vision.

The great bulk of the national programs that comprise the social security system in Canada today were put in place by successive Liberal governments. They form a proud legacy of this party to the building of Canada. We on this side of the House have every reason and every incentive to want to preserve the social security system and its values which is at the core of our political inheritance.

Why would a Liberal government be proposing to review and reform the very programs with which it has been so identified over the years? For the very same reasons that led our predecessors to defy conventional wisdom and overcome the resistance to change in order to create these programs in the first place.

The Liberal Party of Canada is not the party of the status quo. It is the party of reform. It is the party that has been willing to take on the risks and challenges of guiding and leading Canadians into the future, a future which may not always be fully visible.

• (1540)

The destitution and despair of the great depression called for the creation of programs such as unemployment insurance and new arrangements for assisting provinces and municipalities in helping those in need. These arrangements and other initiatives by federal governments have been met with all kinds of objections for why they could not be funded or why they could not be carried out. So too this Liberal government in the spirit of its predecessors finds itself today challenging the status quo in order to bring Canadians into a brighter future.

We on this side of the House were not elected just to defend the status quo. We were elected to confront the real problems that face Canadians today.

One of the real problems confronting Canadians today is the one million children who in the midst of this abundant land live in poverty because their parents and more often than not their single parents for a whole host of reasons are denied access to the means to earn a decent living for themselves. As a result, these children are born short changed on the promise of being Canadian.

A real problem facing Canadians today is a stubbornly high level of unemployment which exists side by side in good and bad times with a growing number of jobs which fail to get created or go unfilled because there are no Canadians trained to take them. Increasingly the profile of the jobless is not the individual who is between jobs for a few months. It is the long term unemployed whose skills are out of date for the current economy and who cannot get the support to obtain the training necessary to rejoin the labour force.

In the face of this reality our unemployment insurance system which was developed and designed to serve as a temporary bridge between jobs is increasingly being used by a smaller and smaller share of recipients year after year as a form of almost guaranteed annual income. The result is that notwithstanding major increases in UI payments in recent years the number of unemployed who are helped is decreasing and the ability of government through these programs to assist the unemployed to get into the job market is being more and more curtailed.

In an effort to contain UI costs in recent years a host of regulations have been erected that forced the unemployed into dependency traps and often bizarre lifestyle choices. Most Canadian families know that the system is not working. While the proposals in the government document may not be the only solutions, it is clear that more than tinkering is necessary.

The focus of this reform exercise is not deficit reduction. However Canadians know that with a government debt that costs taxpayers more than $40 billion a year in interest charges alone to service, we cannot ignore the cost of this deficit as a consideration in the future programs we undertake as Canadians. If Canadians do not begin as a society to gain control over the mountain of debt and to reduce the deficit which is adding to it we may find that our social programs will not be determined by us but by the international bond agencies that buy our bonds.

These are some of the real problems which this review of social programs and the other elements of the government's jobs and growth agenda are meant to address and in which all Canadians are being invited to participate. The focus for this participation will be the Parliament of Canada and specifically the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development which has been asked by the government to carry out broad consultations on these reform proposals.

We will begin our work immediately, hearing from the minister of human resources himself the day MPs return from the parliamentary recess on October 17. We will meet with experts and national associations in Ottawa to hear their reactions and ideas to the government's proposals.

• (1545)

Beginning November 14 in Whitehorse, Yukon, our committee will begin an intensive five week program of cross Canada hearings and consultations which will take us to every province and territory in this great country to hear firsthand what Canadians want from their social security system and what improvements they have to suggest to the government's proposals.

Today we will be making public the schedule of the committee's travels and details on how Canadians can participate in the work of this committee. I encourage Canadians to make contact with the clerk of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development by phone, fax or letter for information on the committee's schedule and how they can get involved.

In addition to the committee's consultations, we are encouraging individual members of Parliament to carry out their own consultations, to hold public assemblies and town hall meetings in order to obtain the views of their constituents on the proposals and to bring the results of their consultations forward to the committee for its consideration in the preparation of its final report.

The views and recommendations which result from these consultations will form an important element in the response of Parliament to the ideas in the government's discussion paper.

[*Translation*]

As chairman of the Standing Committee of Human Resources, I had the chance to hear the views of Canadians of all social conditions and of all regions. The message they sent is quite clear. They are proud of a system that could assist many people in the past, but that simply is no longer working well enough.

Our existing system is too easily misused, it does not meet the needs of many people, and it is out of touch with the present social and economic reality. During the last 20 years, many traditional sectors in our economy have had to struggle to survive, and undergo fundamental changes. Many traditional jobs have disappeared and been replaced by jobs requiring more education, training and upgrading of skills.

Since 1976, the long–term unemployment rate has tripled because of those changes. More and more people have had to go on unemployment insurance repeatedly, while struggling to adjust to new requirements. Today, almost 40 per cent of recipients have been on unemployment insurance at least three times in the last five years.

The number of people on welfare has doubled since 1981. Three million Canadians are now on welfare and the cost of social assistance provided under the Canada Assistance Plan has gone up from less than $3 billion to more than $8 billion a year. Chronic unemployment and the increasing number of people who so often claim unemployment insurance show that people are not receiving the help they need.

Too many young people drop out of school without being ready to be part of the labour force. Too many people on welfare or low income earners find themselves in a position where they cannot afford to develop their skills or cannot do it because of the system.

Too many people whose career has been cut short because of changing conditions do not get the training they need. First and foremost, we must find solutions based on the new consensus in terms of principles and priorities and the mechanisms to implement them.

The reform goals and principles outlined in the working paper reflect what Canadians have told me. We must now set out to take action on principles and priorities through the implementation of concrete ideas on how to make the best use of our money in order to meet our main objectives.

• (1550)

There are several proposals in the working paper and they are obviously open for discussion. Given the restrictions about government expenditures, we will have to make difficult choices as to the priorities that we have, as a country, in order to implement some of these proposals contained in the working document.

We have the opportunity to work together and to establish a better system for the future. A system that will be efficient and that will give some hope to parents, children, workers, people looking for jobs, future generations and Canadians across the country.

Next February, I intend to report to this House on the consultations made by the Standing Committee. Once the consultations are over and the Canadians have made their priorities known, this government will introduce a bill to establish a new social security system. Let us see to it that this bill truly reflects what Canadians want and what they need, that is a fair, efficient and affordable social security system we will believe in and which will bring us into the 21th century.

[*English*]

The time has come for a focused vigorous debate on what we can achieve, on what we must achieve through social security reform. It is our responsibility as members of Parliament to help ensure Canadians can take part in this debate. This is a matter for all Canadians, not just interest groups and not just governments.

We have to move the discussion to the coffee shops, the dinner table, the boardrooms, classrooms and union halls. We have to listen closely to what people are saying. All Canadians will have an opportunity to examine these suggestions, to propose new ones and to help define the priorities for reform.

As chair of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, I look forward to holding public hearings across the country. I intend to ensure that these hearings are as complete and as accessible as possible.

If at all possible, I want anyone who wants to take part to have an opportunity to so. The government will organize consultation seminars across the country. These will provide a broad range of Canadians the opportunity to take part in an intense examination of the issues and priorities for social security reform.

We will have public meetings in all major centres to bring the discussion of reform to the grassroots of our country. Groups such as labour unions, business and professional associations or service groups are encouraged to organize their own reform consultations and to make their views known.

We will make detailed information and material available to both individuals and groups, setting out the facts on social security, the objectives and principles proposed by the governments as well as the ideas for reform outlined in this discussion paper.

We will provide individuals with a workbook to help people work through the reform issues, identify their priorities and concerns and provide direct feedback to the government. I encourage all members of this House to take part, not only by making their own views known but by making information available to their constituents, encouraging their participation, gathering their views and passing them on.

This is a unique opportunity to move the debate on social security beyond the traditional confines of narrow ideologies. It is an opportunity to go beyond the traditional debates about cutting programs or spending our way out of trouble. Today, that kind of narrow vision misses the point.

Before I conclude my remarks, I want to appeal to Atlantic Canada in particular and to the constituents whom I am honoured to represent here in the House of Commons. No region in Canada has a greater stake in the success of this reform exercise than Atlantic Canada.

No region has been more reliant on the income security system than Atlantic Canada and for good reason. Because of their historical position in Confederation and the nature of their economy over the years the people of Atlantic Canada have by necessity been forced to rely on the income security system more than the country as a whole. In many parts of Atlantic Canada the people know the adversity we have recently had to deal with because of crises in our natural resource industry such as the fishery in some places, forestry and other industries and other sectors on which we are traditionally reliant.

• (1555)

The people of Atlantic Canada may well feel concerned. They may feel nervous. They may feel that their concerns are not being addressed or will not be addressed in a future social security system.

For that reason there may be a temptation not to participate. However, I would encourage and appeal particularly to the people of Atlantic Canada to be a full player and full partners with the government in redesigning an income security system that will serve them as well as the rest of Canada so that rebuilding the economy of this country can be achieved.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Madam Speaker, listening to my colleague, I realize it is true that the deficit is very high. It is true that we pay $40 billion just in debt charges. And I agree that something has to be done about it. But at the same time, I wonder why the debt has grown so much. How did that happen?

Why does a country like Canada have to pay so much interest on its debt, a country said to be rich, rich in natural resources as well as human resources? How is that possible? If we look back, what party was in power in Canada before this government and the previous Conservative government? The Liberals. They are the ones who have put into debt to a dramatic extent not only our generation, but also and mainly our children and grandchildren.

They are the ones who should bear the responsibility. Today, we take stock and, of course, realize that the situation has become unbearable. So, they have to take the bull by the horns and they will stop at nothing to achieve their aims. When a family experiences financial difficulties, what does it do? There were prosperous times for this family in the past, but what does it do now? The first thing to go is one of the two cars it owns. Then the cottage. That is where cuts start in families. Do they start by taking away the bread and butter from the table for the children?

As I see it, this reform will penalize the poorest of the poor. There are two categories of unemployed workers; first, the good ones, that is to say those who require almost no assistance, who are out of work on a temporary basis. The second category includes people from my region who are seasonal workers such as silviculture workers. These people want to work. I know, I was the president of their society for many years and they would tell me: "Give us work. We want to work." We could do nothing for them.

• (1600)

What is happening here is that these people, who want to work and put their hearts into their work, will be penalized. When spring comes, they get all anxious. They wonder: "Will there be work for us?" And the industry does its very best to find work for them, in co–operation with the town councils, companies, producers' syndicates, and to put them to work. But work eventually runs out and, every year, these workers end up on unemployment again, naturally. These people will be penalized.

In my region in particular, and I like to stress this point because students tell me to repeat this every occasion I have, the university is far from home, and the Univervité du Québec in Rimouski offers only certain programs. This means going away to Quebec City, Montreal or elsewhere to study. If cuts are made in postsecondary education, then our students will get further into debt, and this is true for all students in Canada of course. It is estimated that university students with a doctorate are $50,000 in debt and have no job prospects when they graduate. Wherever they send a CV, they get the same answer back: "Sorry, we have no work for you".

I fail to understand why, after putting the country this many billions of dollars into debt, the first thing to be cut —and that the most infuriating and frustrating—is assistance to the poor, the underprivileged, those who cannot speak for themselves, while the rich get to keep their family trusts, for example. The government does not dare do anything that would affect them. That is understandable, given they are the ones who fill the campaign coffers. They fill them and keep filling them. The other day, a proposal to put election financing in order was rejected. I commend nonetheless those members opposite who voted for this proposal. But no thought is given to this. They do not want to, because friends help one another. It is not the poor, the vulnerable, who will help my fellow members; it is the wealthiest.

I strongly deplore this situation, particularly for rural residents, not to mention Gaspé fishermen who will be hit hard. I find it unacceptable for my region, for Quebec's rural ridings—and I imagine it is the same thing elsewhere. I do not understand how my colleague can say that these measures will be good for the most vulnerable. If he can prove it to me, let him do so.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member opposite and his concern about the Canadian debt and about the most vulnerable in our society.

I think that the best way to start reducing the Canadian debt burden—this is not the time to explain why the debt is so high—is to put Canadians back to work, create ideal conditions for economic growth and, at the same time, find ways to reduce overlap and duplication and other problems preventing people from finding work and undergoing training and development when needed, so that we can improve the economic picture, given Canada's existing prospects. A dramatic example of that can be found in rural regions like mine, in the eastern regions that are dependent on ailing industries such as fishing.

• (1605)

The purpose of this debate is to get from members on both sides of the House concrete ideas that will allow us as a government and as a society to create conditions favourable to economic growth and job creation, reduce the debt burden and, more important, promote the dignity attached to employment, to income and to Canadians' ability to work and support their families. That is the challenge issued by this debate to this House and to all Canadians.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, as the Official Opposition's training and youth critic, I am pleased to participate in this debate on the social program reform proposed by the Minister of Human Resources Development.

I am also, as a member of the Committee on Human Resources Development, pleased to participate because, as you know, Madam Speaker, with two of my opposition colleagues, I was involved in all the proceedings of the first consultation phase. We heard many people express their opinions on this. Unfortunately, I must tell you right off the bat that I am disappointed with this proposal when we were expecting an action plan. This discussion paper almost invites us to scrap last winter's consultations and start over.

As the training and youth critic, I will focus on the education part of the discussion paper issued by the Minister of Human Resources Development. I say education because that is what it means. Although the third section of the minister's discussion paper is called "Learning: Making lifelong learning a way of life", they are clearly talking about education. This section nonetheless contains elements that will affect post–secondary education systems in Quebec and Canada.

Again, may I remind you that, under the 1867 Canadian Constitution, education is a provincial jurisdiction. The discussion paper released by the Minister of Human Resources Development even included the following statement, on page 57: "In Canada, education falls within provincial jurisdiction". While admitting this fact, the federal government also points to training–related problems and uses them to justify its continued involvement in the field of education.

It is obvious, when you read this document, that the federal government has no intention of withdrawing from the field of education, even though it is a vital provincial sector, particularly for Quebec, since our identity as a nation is at stake.

The most contradictory aspect of this paper is the fact that, while the government expresses a will to tighten controls and centralize even more education–related responsibilities, it obviously wants to withdraw its financial support.

• (1610)

The withdrawal of federal support would not result in fewer constraints, quite the contrary: It would mean less money and more constraints. The federal government intends to cut transfers to the provinces and to replace them with more student loans. However, these transfer payments are used by provinces to subsidize secondary schools. The provinces will be stuck with a shortfall of $2.6 billion. They will then be left with two options: either allocate more money or else leave the institutions to fend for themselves, which would surely mean increased tuition fees.

The federal government seems to think that students would easily absorb such an increase, which is anticipated in the minister's document, on page 63:

> It is true that replacing federal cash transfers would put upward pressure on tuition fees.

In fact, a Treasury Board memo published in the *Toronto Star* today indicates that tuition fees will double if such a measure is implemented. Cabinet has been informed of that.

Students already incur large debts. Let me give you some figures. In Canada, 10 per cent of personal bankruptcies affect students or former students unable to repay their loans. And what does the minister propose? He wants to put students even deeper into debt.

In Quebec, a university student spends more than 30 per cent of his or her annual budget on tuition fees and related costs. This percentage has doubled since 1990. The situation is the same everywhere in Canada.

In fact, the problem is somewhat less serious in Quebec because the provincial government, through a scholarship program, has helped alleviate the burden of students to ensure that everyone can get a university education. Quebecers can be proud of that initiative since, as the Leader of the Opposition mentioned this morning, until the quiet revolution, in the sixties, only rich families could afford to put their children through university.

The discussion paper also refers to a new scheme which consists in making repayment proportional to one's income. This concept raises many questions. Since the government claims to be relying on the support of all partners, it is rather surprising that, after the working paper was tabled, the first reaction was that of the Canadian Federation of Students which immediately opposed the income contingent repayment, because they worry about the terms of the program. They are all the more concerned because of pilot projects which were carried out, particularly in Ontario.

I should mention that Ontario had an experimental project and that last year, only 75 students participated whereas up to 1,000 could have. Why? Because the terms of this income contingent repayment plan are often quite restrictive. Students have to say that they want to be part of that program almost as soon as they begin their studies. Usually, they are forced into that program. That approach was tried in other countries, and results have always been negative. Nevertheless, Canada now wants to use that approach. We should at least ask a few questions.

• (1615)

The president of the Canadian Federation of Students stated: "Members of the Canadian Federation of Students are determined to fight government proposals and we are convinced that the majority of Canadians will support us because they want to maintain accessible post–secondary education for themselves and their children". The federation reacted that way because it is convinced that this reform will push students deeper into debt and restrict access to higher education. That was the first reaction.

The president of the Fédération des étudiants universitaires du Québec, François Robello, made the following comment: "The government will have to publicly assume responsibility for passing the bill on to students. The way this reform is going, access to higher education will be under direct fire". The first federation is an umbrella organization mainly for associations outside Quebec, and the second one is affiliated to but independent from the first one and represents most student associations in Quebec.

Two federations, two similar conclusions. Both are concerned about student indebtedness and access to higher education.

The government claims that the reform was initiated for the very purpose of securing freer access to higher education. There is already some disagreement on the subject between the government and representatives of this community. Since members of student groups experience first hand the effects of being in debt, they are clearly in a good position to evaluate the impact of such reforms.

In addition to the students, groups representing universities, colleges and their presidents in Quebec and across Canada have expressed their concern that student debt would have the effect of compelling universities and colleges to raise their tuition fees, which in turn would reduce enrolment.

The future does not look too good for government members, when we see both students and universities worried about the same thing. I think you are in for a tough time during the months to come.

As the article that appeared in the *Toronto Star* on October 5 pointed out, the government wants to cut $7.5 billion from social programs over the next five years. During Question Period, in response to a question from a member of the Reform Party, the minister referred to $15 billion. We know that the budget already provided for cuts totalling $7.5 billion, and now the minister says $15 billion. This is not a rumour. This is not a document leaked to the newspapers. This is the minister speaking.

There is one suggestion that did not really impress me but did raise some questions. Just think, to deal with student financial problems, they suggested using their RRSPs, their registered retirement savings plans. Now how many students who are in debt have RRSPs when they graduate or when they are at university? Unless the minister or the paper he tabled means that parents could use their RRSPs to pay for their children's education. If that is the case, then we have a problem. First of all, students who are over 18—which means they are of age—are adults and want to be able to take care of themselves, and now the implication is, unless any other explanations are forthcoming, and we hope they will be, that the parents' RRSPs could be used. This is disturbing because usually, people have RRSPs for their retirement and not to pay for the education of their children.

• (1620)

What about consultation? The Standing Committee on Human Resources, of which I am a member, will conduct wide–ranging consultations across Canada. Why bother, since the government has already made its decision on its reforms? The parameters are there, plus cuts totalling $15 billion. What we need here is a little motivation, because if spending cuts are to be the order of the day, people will come to defend their own particular interests, and you can hardly blame them.

What this paper does not contain, and although what it does contain is disturbing, what it does not contain is equally disturbing, and I am referring to a genuine job creation policy, because we can train students and keep improving their employability, but in the end they will just be competing for the same number of jobs.

What do we see now? More and more young people, at least a third of them, live in insecurity, not just for a year but for long periods; at least a third or so of young people in Quebec have trouble finding permanent employment.

What does this reform project do? It calls them frequently unemployed, it classifies them and we see in the discussion paper that they are particular targets for cuts. On the contrary, action should be taken to strengthen these people who are victims of unemployment. Why attack the victims instead of unemployment? Why is the human resources development minister's paper silent on job creation? Why does it not talk about full employment measures? Some countries have almost full employment, so why not use them as models?

The paper does not cover everything. We see leaks. We could talk about them at length, but when a member meets his constituents, he realizes that cuts are being made to established organizations that are working to increase employability. Many organizations in Quebec at least were told that their programs would be cut by 10 per cent, even though some community organizations grouped together in the RQUODE umbrella organization, where I attended a consultation last year, have a placement rate of 75 per cent. Resources are being cut back for these established organizations.

While they consult, they cut. Unemployment insurance was cut last year. Now the organizations are being attacked.

This morning, I heard the minister tell us about an experience he had when he visited a training centre in New Brunswick. I would suggest that he not go as far; he could go to Gatineau, a few kilometres from here, where the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi Centre found out last week that not only was it getting a 10 per cent cut but that the job search club was losing its entire $240,000 annual grant, while young people are told about so–called measures and intentions. Meanwhile, what the document does not say is that cuts are being made.

• (1625)

Madam Speaker, do you think that I am being partisan? Last week, the member for Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, whose name I do not want to mention, said that he was shocked. He tried to save the program at the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi Centre in Gatineau from being cut. He had to admit that he was disappointed because he had been misled, it seems, so he said in the newspaper. He had been given some hope and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who lives in Hull, had announced that the problem would be settled.

But three days later, the way it was settled was by cutting it. And that is not the only organization to be cut. In at least two other regions, organizations that prefer to remain anonymous have already been informed verbally that they will be eliminated. Meanwhile, the government puts in place its youth strategy, the Youth Service Corps, and gives $10,000 per young Canadian, while Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi managed to find jobs for 375 young people on a budget of $240,000 last year. And these young people later generated $1 million in tax revenues for the federal government. Before eliminating organizations, they could at least have had the decency to await the result of the consultation process before cutting programs.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Madam Speaker, I paid close attention to the hon. member's speech. I am somewhat concerned about his interpretation of the facts as outlined very clearly in the green book that is part of the government's agenda for jobs and growth.

The hon. member and the Leader of the Official Opposition have tried to depict this exercise by the federal government to bring about positive change in the lives of many Canadians who feel trapped by our social security system as a political power grab, a centralization of power by the federal government.

I draw the member's attention to three pages to illustrate how wrong the hon. member is in that particular sense. Page 26 indicates very openly and very clearly that we are viewing this exercise as an excellent way to better improve federal–provincial relations.

I would like to refer to a couple of points. We admit that the situation must change. The federal government is committed to increased collaboration and co–operation with the provinces and territories in order to simplify access to services, to minimize duplication and waste, and to clarify the roles and responsibility consistent with a constitution based on who is best able to accomplish what is required in the interest of individual Canadians.

On page 40 of the document we talk about an issue which I know the hon. member truly cares about. He has to be honest with the people listening to his speech, because the section clearly outlines our willingness as a federal government to sit down—whether it is the province of Quebec or any other province in the country—with any interested province and territory to talk about a new three–year labour force development agreement for which interested provinces and territories could assume responsibility.

I think the hon. member should pay attention to the following:

> —strategic planning related to various federal employment development services, including institutional and workplace training, as well as project-based training;
>
> —managing and the purchase of institutional training;
>
> —planning and implementing a network of "single window" offices, that would assemble under one roof programs and services provided by both levels of government, including unemployment insurance, training, welfare and other labour market programs; and
>
> —managing a variety of other federal programs, such as co-operative education and Canada Employment Centres for Students. The list of programs could vary, depending on the interest of each province or territory.

• (1630)

Another point the hon. member mentioned, although he sometimes selects the kinds of words he wants to use, was in reference to the income contingent repayment. He knows as well as I do because we share a lot of time together at the committee of human resource development that like Quebec they have the option to opt out.

The hon. member can get to his feet this afternoon and tell Quebecers that the federal government wants to sit down and discuss these matters and that its major objective in this exercise is to improve the quality of life for people.

The hon. member should also tell the people of Quebec that we initiated these discussions so we can help all Canadians from coast to coast toward a better and bright future for themselves and for future generations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dubé: Madam Speaker, I will answer this to my hon. colleague, whom I know well, as he is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development and we both sit on the same committee.

I think he already knows the answer. Not mine though. So far, three provinces have indicated that they find it unacceptable in many respects. Quebec of course considers it unacceptable. A statement to that effect was made yesterday. The hon. parliamentary secretary mentioned the government's commitment to co-operate. To illustrate the spirit that drives this government, I would like to quote from the student financial assistance act, Bill C-28, passed last year. This act provides for the possibility of opting out. Yes, but "only if the province satisfies the Minister—that is the Minister of Human Resources Development, the new super minister of education for Canada—by written notice received by the Minister before the beginning of the loan year in question, that, in relation to the matter in question, the provincial financial assistance plan has substantially the same effect as the plan established by this Act".

In the mind of the new government, in a spirit of sharing, from now on, the provinces could apparently be entitled to financial compensation—in a provincial jurisdiction—provided they satisfy the minister that their plan has a similar effect, the same effect—as this is put in the act— as the federal plan. A fine example of co-operation indeed!

Canada is currently undergoing changes. We are witnessing the end of a status quo. This reminds me of statements made by a certain Prime Minister, the former leader of the Liberal Party, to the effect that the 1980 referendum would indeed bring about change, but not in the direction that the people of Quebec expected. Change is happening now and I can see it from here: I do not doubt the persuasiveness of the present Quebec Minister of Education, with whom I have worked, but he has to satisfy the federal minister that his plan is the same as the federal plan. What a great show of co-operation!

This government tells the provinces: "We will go along with you on this, provided you do exactly as we tell you. From now on, your role will be limited to do as you are told, in a provincial jurisdiction on top of that".

Make no mistake, people of Quebec, that is what this co-operative proposal is about. When they talk about decentralization in the discussion paper, they are not talking about giving more powers to the provinces, they are talking about going directly to the groups, the municipalities, the people interested in employment. They would bypass the provinces to reach the groups and organizations concerned. Is that what decentralization means? In any case, that is not what Quebecers want. If the government stubbornly insists on spending less but controlling more, I fear that the reaction will not be the one the parliamentary secretary is hoping for.

• (1635)

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Madam Speaker, if I may, before making my comments, I would like to salute my wife Zaïda and a group of friends from Chile in the opposition gallery and I would also like to congratulate the hon. member for Lévis on his presentation. I want to say that I am totally against this social security reform proposed by the government.

I think that it shows a total lack of human values, of compassion and fairness to the most vulnerable in our society. The Canadian social security system is not the most generous in the world. Far from it! Many systems in Europe are more generous. Canada spends $18 billion less than the average OECD—or industrialized—country. That is why the union movement was unanimous in opposing and fighting the social security reforms advocated by the government.

I will also fight these reforms because they hurt the most vulnerable, the unemployed, the people on welfare. In my riding of Bourassa, in north–end Montreal, which is a working–class riding, many immigrants, many Haitians are suffering from the economic crisis and they are not at all happy with the reform proposed by this government.

For all these reasons, I will be among those who will fight tooth and nail against these reforms. I congratulate once again my colleague, the hon. member for Lévis.

[*English*]

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to take part in this very important debate. The revamping of our social security system is one of the most important issues facing our government and our people. By revitalizing these programs now we are investing in our long term economic and social well–being. If we work together to make positive change we can renew the country and prepare ourselves for new challenges.

When our government initiated this review last January, major emphasis was placed on the need for thorough nation–wide consultations. We realize the importance of listening to the concerns, the ideas and opinions of as many Canadians as possible.

Consultation is key to a successful social reform process, and that is what I want to talk about today. During the election campaign I heard very clearly from the people of my riding that they wanted a greater say in the decision making process. I am sure other hon. members heard the same message. People have grown cynical of governments who make decisions behind closed doors without input from the public. Instead people want their voices to be heard during the development process.

That is what the social security reform is all about. To a large extent, our social programs have been a defining feature of Canadian society, programs such as unemployment insurance, social assistance, post–secondary education and child tax benefits reflect our strong values of sharing and compassion.

Despite our commitment to social programs, we have over 1.6 million unemployed Canadians, over a million children living in poverty, thousands of young people who cannot get a start on their careers, and families who have fallen into poverty traps and see little hope for the future. Clearly we can do better.

• (1640)

In order to improve the system, however, we must consult and gain the support of members of Parliament, all of the provinces, various interest groups and most important, the Canadian public and the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants.

I believe there is a consensus among Canadians that we must improve and update the various programs that have helped make us the great nation that we are today.

An Angus Reid survey conducted earlier this year showed that fully 85 per cent of Canadians agreed there is a need to reform our many social programs. I know the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants will seize the opportunity to participate in this process in order to help map out the future of our social security system.

In the past few weeks I have heard from critics who have said on more than one occasion there is no need for consultations, that the decisions have already been made and that the government will go ahead and do what it wants regardless of public input. I heard it already from across the way.

As I look at this discussion paper and I read the options being put forward, I feel confident in categorically rejecting these arguments. The final decisions have not been made. This paper does not lay out government decisions. Instead this document outlines certain principles and it presents options for consideration. It is a catalyst for further debate.

As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to facilitate this debate in our communities. Anyone who has not done this consultation and at the end of the day says that they have not been a part of the process, should be ashamed.

We must bring these options to the people in our own ridings, talk about how best to reform the system. We must ask what options are acceptable, what will work in our communities.

In my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants this process has generated a great deal of interest. In a questionnaire that we distributed throughout the riding last spring, fully 77 per cent of respondents felt that Canada's social security system should be a top priority for reforming.

I have also received many phone calls and letters from people who have offered their opinions and ideas on what changes should be made to the network of our social programs. In response to this tremendous local interest on this issue, my team set up a committee of community people to help me design a process to consult the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants.

Through the diligent work of this group, a series of four consultation forums will be held throughout my riding within the next three weeks. The objectives of these consultations are straightforward. First, to stimulate a broad discussion among constituents about Canada's social policy programs. Second, to seek the views of the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants on the future direction of social policy in Canada and the kinds of programs that will be needed in the future. Last, to submit to the minister the views of the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants in order that the concerns that my constituency has put forward are a part of the decision making process.

As part of this process, the committee has developed a questionnaire which was distributed to every household in my constituency. This is the type of consultation process, in my

opinion, which will stimulate worthwhile discussion on our social security reform.

The dedication that this committee has shown in establishing a thorough, local consultation process clearly demonstrates the importance people have placed on the issue. While we still have a lot of work to do I want to thank the members of my local committee for their time and great effort. They have truly demonstrated their desire to work toward positive change.

• (1645)

It is this type of involvement which will bring about focused discussion and worthwhile recommendations as to how to improve our system. I would encourage all members of Parliament to follow the lead set by the committed volunteers of Annapolis Valley—Hants.

I would like to close my remarks today by reiterating the importance of public discussion and debate on the options that are before us. The decisions have not been made. I have not spoken for or against these proposals because the people of my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants have not been heard. By communicating with our constituencies we can ensure that our programs reflect the concerns and interests of the people across the country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Madam Speaker, I was surprised when the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants said in his speech that the government wanted to do this out in the open, not behind closed doors. In yesterday's *Toronto Star*, however, we read, and I quote:

[*English*]

"The federal government has a secret plan to cut $7.5 billion from social programs over the next five years". Further it states: "The plan was put on paper after Prime Minister Jean Chrétien asked his cabinet colleagues to clarify just how much social reform would save federal coffers before the end of the Liberal mandate".

[*Translation*]

I was surprised this should happen behind closed doors, but I also have the impression that as far as members from the Maritimes were concerned, the doors were closed to them as well, because that is the only explanation I can find. The hon. member who represents the Maritimes comes from a region that, like Eastern Quebec, which I represent, has been hit very hard. The government is going to create two kinds of unemployed workers in these regions: people who have been on unemployment insurance at least three times during the past five years and those who are employed on a more regular basis.

This is going to be a regular witch hunt. People will be practically branded as cheaters: "Why were you unemployed so many times?" The government also says their benefits will depend on the number of times they were unemployed. This means that two people working for the same employer and doing the same kind of work and earning the same salary might not receive the same amount of benefits if they are laid off, depending on whether or not they were employed regularly. There will be utter confusion!

I suppose we can assume the only jobs this reform will create are jobs in the bureaucracy, because the federal government will do exactly what it has done in the past: increase the number of bureaucrats instead of introducing specific job creation measures that will help the regions kick start their economies. One of these measures, for instance, would be to reduce the employer's contribution to unemployment insurance premiums. Instead, we have something that will further complicate the situation.

I am very surprised to see a member from the Maritimes rise in the House and say he is prepared to put this before his constituents, instead of immediately taking a stand against this kind of proposal.

[*English*]

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, I take note that my hon. colleague obviously does not have very much faith in people and people's abilities to make a contribution to the forum that is up and coming.

I have great support for the people of Atlantic Canada. We know the issues. We are putting forward ideas for debate to which I believe the people of Atlantic Canada will contribute heavily. They will help us make decisions in this Parliament.

• (1650)

The hon. member feels that the Canadian people do not have that kind of ingenuity, that kind of intelligence. I am insulted by that and I am insulted that he would put that on the people of Atlantic Canada. The people of Atlantic Canada and the people of Annapolis Valley—Hants will contribute to the debate. They will help us make the decisions that are needed to reform our system.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Madam Speaker, I was most interested in this speech and I would like to commend the member for the process he is going through in his constituency. I would like to do something like that in my constituency too.

I wonder whether he would contemplate giving us a copy of the questionnaire he is using. Hopefully between what he has done and what we would do, we could remove any political bias in the process and thereby get a good cross-section of what people across the country would respond to. I really believe in honest and open discussion. I want to hear the options and I too trust the people in my constituency.

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, I will forward the member a document. It was a householder that I sent to every household in my riding, outlining what we are doing. They then have the opportunity to get the document from us now.

I will forward it to the member. I am pleased to hear him say that he trusts the people of Canada and their judgment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, Defence Industry Conversion.

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would like to commend the member for Elk Island for his co–operative attitude.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the matter of social security reform. A discussion paper we have released gives Canadians a chance to debate the future of these programs, what is necessary and what is possible with the limited resources we have available to us.

As the National Anti–Poverty Organization has correctly noted, the best social security for an individual is a decent job paying decent wages. But we know with technological change that decent job has been altered beyond recognition.

[*Translation*]

And if that were true so far, just think about what the future has in store for this 18–year old woman, assuming she has just registered this year at a community college. Can anyone predict what skills she will need in the labour market in the year 2030? Of course not!

What we can predict is that her education will not stop on the day she receives her degree. She will have to continue to learn. In fact, to achieve financial security, it is not enough to have a job now; we must also have the skills needed to secure employment at any time in our lives. That is why we must upgrade these skills on a continuing basis.

[*English*]

It seems only yesterday that I was 18 years old myself. Shockingly, I find myself the mother of 18–year old twin boys. The future they face is much different from the one that lay ahead of me at the same age.

When I left school at age 18, the product of rural Saskatchewan, the choices were clear. A generation or two ago it was still expected that one would finish school, train for a specific job and keep that job most of one's working life.

For myself, a young girl from a traditional farm environment I had a couple of choices; be a nurse, be a teacher. I chose teacher. I went to the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon which I am proud to say is a jewel in the crown that is the riding of Saskatoon—Humboldt.

Because of this fact and the fact that I am a former teacher, I am particularly delighted today to address the learning chapter of the green book, chapter 3. No one would deny that learning is the key to finding and keeping stable jobs. Competition from other countries, automation, new technologies have changed the world of work irrevocably.

The new jobs in our economy demand higher and broader kinds of skills and this is the future that looms before my 18–year old sons. Unlike me they can expect, no they must plan for, being educated for the likelihood of changing jobs in their working lives. Their future must be one in which lifelong learning is possible. Only this way will our young people be able to enjoy the same financial, emotional and societal benefits of employment as generations past.

• (1655)

Our government, through this discussion paper, faces this challenge. As members know, federal contributions have helped build and operate a system of post–secondary education that is both extensive and accessible.

[*Translation*]

The Canada Student Loans Program has been improved. We raised the weekly ceiling by close to 57 per cent for full–time students. We also raised the maximum for loans to part–time students from $2,500 to $4,000. We will gradually introduce special subsidies which will provide an extra $3,000 to single parents who pursue part–time studies, to handicapped students and to women registered in Ph. D. programs.

[*English*]

For the first time we will be offering a national program of deferred grants that will help high need students who would otherwise face extremely high debt loads on graduation. There were many other elements to our improvements to CSLP, but members will understand the essential principles of improving and broadening access for students of all kinds.

I would probably not be addressing the Chamber today had it not been for the assistance of the Canada Student Loans Program. Without those funds, a university education would have been beyond my grasp. From the letters I have received from constituents, and from talking to people in the riding like Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Dale, I know there are still young people out there facing the same problem.

Education is not just for the young. As I said in my earlier remarks, it has to involve people at all stages of their lives if we are to be successful in the future. In spite of the removal of certain barriers, one huge obstacle remains. That obstacle is money or the lack of it.

[*Translation*]

In the discussion paper, we propose ways to finance post-secondary education. We discuss the means to make it more accessible to those who want to develop their skills. We also recognize that we have been contributing to the financing of post-secondary education for a long time and that we must continue to do so.

[*English*]

The provinces and territories manage the system, but without federal involvement it would look much different. The federal government now provides $8 billion a year, or about half the total spending in this area. The discussion paper recognizes that the federal government provides core funding for the post-secondary system through tax points. As members will recall, the budget earlier this year called for the federal government to reduce the other part of that funding, cash transfers.

We have already told the provinces and territories that cash for post-secondary education will be returned to the 1993-94 level of $2.1 billion in 1996-97. Within 10 to 15 years the formula in place to calculate the funding will probably end the portion of the PSE funding paid in cash.

[*Translation*]

The document raises the question of how to best use that money. We believe that it is by making post-secondary education more accessible to students. We realize that the increase in tuition fees imposed by provinces and territories have forced students to absorb a larger proportion of the costs of their education. The changes we made to improve the Canada Student Loans Program should help students get by, but we can do more.

[*English*]

The paper offers an interesting option. End the cash transfers for institutional support quickly and expand student loan opportunities instead. It is estimated that a $500 million student aid program would lever $2 billion in loans every year. The target for that money could be older students, people who want to add to their skills and who want to retrain.

A student aid program like this can be truly preventive. It can offer support to working people who want to stay ahead of the skill wave.

All this talk of loans brings up the thorny question of repayment. Sooner or later these loans have to be paid back. Over the last year I have received letters from students young and old who are unable to repay their student loans, wondering what they can do. Sometimes they have graduated and cannot find work, other times the work they found was so low paying that they cannot make loan payments. They cannot even make ends meet.

One option being considered in the discussion paper is the income contingent repayment plan. This plan which has been working well in Australia and New Zealand would permit people to repay their loans on the basis of their income perhaps through the tax system.

• (1700)

Another option in the green book is the concept of using RRSPs to finance education and training.

What is clear is that the discussion paper takes into account the need to achieve reform within tight fiscal parameters. Our objective is to use limited resources in the most effective way to preserve and expand access to post-secondary education for many more students.

I congratulate the minister of human resources for having the courage and the commitment to his ideals to engage Canadians in the revitalization of our social programs. The easy way would be to sit back and watch as an outdated social system collapsed under its own weight as it limped toward the next century. It is much harder to take the path set by the minister, to recognize that we have a problem, to identify what those problems are, to take the time to hear what Canadians have to say about their needs and about how those needs may be met and how we can pay for those needs.

In my riding my constituents will be participating in the revitalization process October 29 and 30. I invite all Canadians including some of the doubting Thomases in this House to participate fully in this task, to take advantage of this opportunity to be part of the rebuilding. Criticism without offering constructive alternatives gets us nowhere. Why be part of the problem when it is so much more exciting to be part of the solution?

I am confident that Canadians hold dear our social programs and I anticipate that they will join in the task of reweaving our social safety net so that it is there to cradle Canadians at those times in our lives when we need its support.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned some interesting measures in her speech, including those designed to help women go back to school—she even related her personal experience.

I would like to make a comment followed by a question. The discussion paper contains a provision regarding UI, while the budget speech tabled by the Minister of Finance made mention of a cut. In fact, there are cuts this year and the government wants to make additional cuts affecting those who regularly find themselves without work.

As the hon. member knows, that group includes women. In times of economic hardship, many women will have part-time jobs. Their situation is precarious and, unfortunately, they are often underpaid or paid less than men.

Last year, the human resources development committee heard testimony by the Anti–Poverty Organization. One woman who testified had finally succeeded in returning to school and she told us that, like other students, she would have completed her studies since she was prepared to incur debts of $32,000 in the process. In the end, since she did not have a job, she could not get loans.

As an MP, but also as a woman, what does the hon. member think of the new measure designed to take into account the salary of a spouse, in the context of women's autonomy?

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheridan: Madam speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and his focus on the role women play in the new working world. I am so pleased that the hon. member has asked me this question because I think what you must bear in mind when you launch on a massive enterprise like this into social reform is what you have in front of you as a discussion paper. Exactly the kinds of commentaries that you have made here will be the kinds of things we will be hearing when we go out to our ridings—personal stories. People are going to be revealing what the social safety net has meant to them and how it has either worked or has not worked.

• (1705)

I would respond to the hon. member's story with a story of my own from Saskatchewan that has to do again with a young woman. In my other life of continuing to change employment I managed a clinic. I was faced with a young woman, a single parent, who came to the clinic first as a patient.

It turned out she was trapped in a social assistance web. She was unable to get the kind of training she needed because she had no experience. She had no experience because no one would hire her. She was suffering from the risk of losing what benefits she did have for herself. Primarily her focus was on what the loss would be to her child if she was to give up her social assistance.

What ended up happening was that she started working with us, training on the job and trying to get herself into a position in which ultimately she would break free of that welfare trap. I honestly believe that most people are going to be coming forward with ideas that will allow Canadians to make the kind of transition that the hon. member has touched on in his comments.

Whether it is through UI or other programs that will come under discussion in this social security review, those opportunities are the ones we have to make for Canadians to allow them to bridge that gap and to become part of the workforce. I truly believe that most people look forward to the prospect of getting up everyday, going to work and providing for their families.

Mr. Silye: Madam speaker, on a point of order, the Reform Party under Standing Order 43(2) will be splitting its time now in 10 minutes and 5 minutes.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Madam Speaker, we have heard some good input into this debate today. I thought I would add some thoughts around four main points. One is why we need change in our social service delivery; second, talking a little about the process of change; third, our role as Canadians in getting change; fourth, where we go from here today.

We need to change our social service delivery. I think there is a consensus in the House about that. I would like to suggest four things that we must do when we talk about changing social service delivery. One is that social programs must be targeted to those most in need.

We are a rich country. As the Prime Minister is fond of pointing out, we have been identified as the number one most desirable country to live in by the peoples in the world. Interestingly, the Minister for Human Resources Development says in the plan we are discussing today that fully one–fifth of Canadian children live in poverty. I find it difficult to believe that with the billions of dollars we spend on social programs still one–fifth of our children live in poverty. Surely something has to change.

Second, the document says that nearly half of Canadians on welfare are employable. Here we have able bodied people who are being supported out of the public purse. Surely in the richest country in the world there has to be change in our social programs if this is indeed happening.

Another point in this document is that there is a large percentage of chronic users of unemployment insurance caught in a cycle of short term employment and unemployment and dependency again on public programs. In a country like ours we must be doing something wrong with the billions of dollars we spend every single year if these facts are correct that the minister is putting forth to the public.

The family should be recognized as the primary caregiver in society. Our social programs have strayed from that principle in large measure. Our social programs have said that it is mother government and the state that will look after every need and that there will be a program to help in every circumstance of life.

I believe that Canadians are self–reliant people. Canadians have a tradition in which families and communities stand together and help each other through hard times. That is a tradition. That is the element of our culture that Canadians very much want to preserve.

• (1710)

We want private and public help only as a last resort because we believe in standing together. We need to get the emphasis back from a government intruding in our lives and telling us what to do and taking our money and deciding how it is going to help us, to helping each other and being self–reliant to a much larger degree.

Third, our social program delivery should be decentralized to communities, to the community level, to private sectors, to the provincial level where the Constitution places it. Instead, we have strayed to huge federal centralized programs and they are not working for us. We spend about $160 billion every single year, a lot of money, and fully half of that is on social program spending. It is for social programs, transfers to provinces for social programs. Half of everything we spend is on social programs.

We need to make those programs work and the big, distant, bureaucratic, overlapping, inefficient programs simply are unworkable for Canadians. We want to be free to take care of ourselves and to look after ourselves at the community and local levels.

Last, we need change because social programs must be financially sustainable in the long and the short term.

Some time ago I was speaking to a man who was a third generation welfare recipient, but this man was different. He had become a multimillionaire through very hard effort and work on himself. He taught himself. One thing he did was read over 1,500 biographies of successful men and women in the world and he studied them and emulated the principles they had adopted to be successful. I asked this very wealthy and successful and influential man from another country what he would advise me to do as someone in public life, as someone in a leadership position. He gave me his advice in just two words: "Encourage thrift".

Our social programs do not encourage thrift. Instead they encourage dependency. Instead they encourage the expectation that if we spend our money and we do not save it, do not budget wisely, somehow somebody else is going to bail us out and that somebody else is the public purse, the government.

The government does not have any money. The government just has our money and it does not use it very wisely in many cases.

The programs we have had have been purchased not only with our own money but have been purchased on the back of our future. They have been purchased by mortgaging our children's future because right now our children owe over half a trillion dollars to pay for the programs we have given ourselves.

That is not a financially sustainable situation. Government programs are the problem, not the solution. Because of these programs and because of the way they have been financed, one–quarter of everything we spend is on interest and that interest obligation is rising and our children will have to spend that every single day.

To get change we must provide leadership and vision for a new way of doing things. We must move away from the old expectations. We must move away from the old ways of thinking and we must confront this situation with openness and honesty, without pretence, and without trying to savage and distort and run down people who are simply trying to put the facts out to the public.

We need leadership that will last in the public interest, not in political interest, and Canadians should look for that and should insist on that.

What role do Canadians have in this kind of change? If Canadians are to have a meaningful role in this debate and if they are to have meaningful input we owe them something as leaders. We must define the issues. It is not enough to say: "Oh, we are going to talk about this. What do you think?" We have to define the questions that need to be answered. That is very important. If we are going to give reasoned and thoughtful answers we have to know the questions.

• (1715)

Second, there must be fair and balanced information. The cost and the benefits, both in financial and social terms, must be clearly laid out to people. If they are going to give informed opinions they need to have information.

Third, they must have sufficient time. I am very concerned that we have a document that just came out yesterday and Canadians are going to have to indicate in three weeks time whether they wish to speak to this document and have their submissions in in just about a month. That is with nine background papers not even released. How are Canadians going to give informed input without this kind of assistance and background information?

Last, we have to demonstrate to Canadians that their input is going to count for something. If it is just a feel good exercise it is not going to count.

Therefore, I challenge all of us to know what we are doing, to be informed and to tackle the problem in a substantive way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Madam Speaker, I think it would be interesting to find some common ground with the hon. member who just spoke. Although there are a number of points on which we differ, I think she may find that we agree on the following items, for instance. If we consider what caused the present situation, I think one of the main reasons is that we have a country where the division of responsibilities is absolutely mind–boggling.

If we consider unemployment, some people are on welfare, which is a provincial responsibility, and some people who are unemployed are dealt with through an unemployment insurance system. According to the report, 45 per cent of welfare recipients are people who are unemployed but able to work. There is no proposal for a joint approach to this problem, for an integrated and logical strategy to deal with unemployment.

This may be one of the reasons why we are stuck with the present system, and I think we could agree that the answer is a very decentralized approach where the whole problem of unemployment and welfare could be dealt with at a level that is much closer to the people—at the provincial level, at the very least, because the economic situation varies widely from region to region across Canada and a pan–Canadian program does not have the flexibility to respond to these varying demands.

The second point on which we might agree is the issue of transparency. When we read in the *Toronto Star* that:

[*English*]

> Top provincial officials flew into Ottawa to be briefed on the implications of Axworthy's social reform plan, but they were not given the dollar figures obtained by the *Star* and the document makes clear that it is deliberate.

[*Translation*]

Obviously, efforts will have to be made, at the level of the committee responsible for holding hearings across the country to listen to Quebecers and Canadians, to ensure that the people appearing before us have all the relevant information at hand because, as a member of this committee, I had no intention of being a puppet. I want the real figures to be used. On that too, I think that we can work together with the hon. member to make sure things go in the right direction.

One last point that could elicit co–operation is the different outlook. The reform proposal before us is essentially the same as the one the Conservatives would have tabled. Somewhere someone who is not an elected member is controlling the entire system. That is extremely dangerous for Canada and I do hope that the hon. member will agree with me on the various points I just raised.

[*English*]

Mrs. Ablonczy: Madam Speaker, I would like to think that people of good sense will always agree. I would like to think that we are working together here because we are getting paid by the people of Canada. I would also like to think that we are working together for the good of the people of Canada. As far as the problem of unemployment goes it is important to note that when we take large amounts of money out of the pockets of business people, investors and entrepreneurs to fund government activities and government programs we are diminishing their ability to create real long term sustainable economic activity which creates real long term jobs.

• (1720)

It is not governments that create jobs. It is us with our money and our hard work.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, it is beginning to look as though Pierre Trudeau's vision of a socialist Canada has come true. By making the federal government this country's largest employer he guaranteed most people would be reliant on government for their livelihood.

By instituting new laws to create a just society we are now faced with criminals having more rights than their victims. By systematically tearing down the traditions and freedoms of the old Canada he has been able to convince his political apostles that the old ways were corrupt and his way correct. By destroying the country that our forefathers built and fought for he made way for the country that it has become, chasing itself in circles like a confused dog while the world watches in amazement. Even the finance minister said he wants to square the circle. He just does not know where to start.

Those are not the words of a political speech writer, spin doctor or myself but of Mr. Don Nich, a Calgarian and a taxpayer, who like so many Canadians is tired of status quo federalism and passive and ineffective Liberal policies.

As the debt clock ticks its way into the second half of $1 trillion we are increasingly aware of the fact that the old ways of doing things simply do not work any more. They have in fact led to what many Canadian economists describe as a crisis situation threatening the basic financial security of our country now and for many generations to come.

How have we come to be in such a financial mess? Through years and years of allowing federal governments to ignore the problem, by continuing to live on ever increasing levels of borrowed money. More than 25 years of borrowing started with the Liberal government in 1968 and heaven help us continues with a Liberal government today.

By spending at levels we cannot afford and thrusting the resulting burden on to the people of this country through taxation Ottawa has created a two headed monster that threatens the very core of our country. One head of this monster is increased program spending; the other head is the crushing complex system of taxation.

During the last election Canadian taxpayers made it clear that they want politicians with the guts and the vision to lead the way with changes that will benefit them and their children no matter how difficult those changes may be. They can see the two headed monster and want it stopped before it devours their future.

What has the government done to answer this call? The answer is a discussion paper. Today alone the Liberals will spend $113 million more than they bring in. Today alone the Liberals will continue to take $6 from the taxpayer for every $1 that their members pay toward their gold plated MP pension plan for life which socially conscious Reform MPs have sworn to reject. Today alone the Liberals will let the debt clock continue to run at nearly $1,500 per second. Finally, today the Liberals will spend yet another day talking about social reform rather than introducing legislation that they promised all Canadians during the election in their red book. They have deferred the plan and will avoid the problem for another year.

I predict that any legislation that this government does introduce whenever it introduces it will cost the Canadian taxpayer more than the current $38.7 billion it is attempting to review.

Mr. Robichaud: Do you want to bet?

Mr. Silye: Yes, I will side bet you any time, any amount you want.

We believe that like a house Canada is currently mortgaged to the tune of $531 billion. Every year the government borrows about $44 billion more to pay for things we cannot afford. The interest payments on this mortgage alone eat up one–third of our tax dollars and have led to increases in the tax burdens on Canadians and less money for social programs and left their economic fate in the hands of foreign creditors.

The time has come to start getting the books in order today. Pay down this mortgage and live in a home that Canadians can afford and enjoy.

Through you, Madam Speaker, to the members of the Liberal Party, I would like to take a moment to provide the building plan for that home. Start by laying out a foundation of reasonable spending, setting priorities on what is truly important. On top of this build the four strong walls of fair taxation, direct democracy, institutional reform and equal rights. Finally, protect all those inside the house with a roof of efficient and effective social programs and stop wasting money on needless frills like gold plated pensions, parliamentary travel, better known as MP tourism, and subsidies for business and special interest groups. I wonder what the Prime Minister and his group of premiers and his whole hoard of bureaucrats going to China will bring back in terms of dollars and cents on a business deal for this country.

• (1725)

The benefits of us owning a mortgage free home includes lower taxes, an improved economic climate and secure social programs. If the Liberal contractors cannot budget and build such a home, the Reform Party will.

We believe it is unfair to finance current programs at the expense of future generations, as mentioned by my colleague from Calgary North. The time has come for Canada's social programs to be financially self–sustainable.

We should democratize UI by having it administered by the employers and employees who finance it. Tighten the rules for UI qualifications so that the program reflects its original purpose as a temporary safety net for those who lose their jobs. Provide incentives to help people become less dependent on government. If UI and welfare equal minimum wage, why should people work?

Also the Reform party believes that our social program should be designed to eliminate all duplication of administration between federal, provincial and municipal governments. Not enough money is getting to the truly needy. I witnessed that personally on the campaign trail during the last election. I met individuals who had legitimate cases. Seniors who had a $55 or $75 cheque said: "This has to last me for a month". Yet they were refused or unable to obtain assistance because of the red tape while seasonal workers across Canada who earn $55,000 or more are using it to pad their incomes. This must stop.

Social programs should be based on family or household income and administered through the tax system. Old age security, for example, is not even mentioned. It costs $20 billion per year and is not funded out of anybody's premiums. It is given to everyone who turns 65 regardless of whether they need it or not. I have not paid one cent toward that program. I will become 65 in 15 years and I will get an automatic $365 per month. I do not know if I deserve that if I make more than $54,000 a year.

Social programs should be fair to all regions of the country and treat all Canadians the same regardless of where they live. The Canada assistance plan for example costs $8.2 billion per year and matches provincial spending on welfare for the have not provinces.

What I am going to say in the following sounds tough, but we have to deal with the reality that if you cannot make your region economically viable in any way, shape or form, then taxpayers should not be asked to pay the bill. The money just is not there.

Before we get to that extreme we propose that the federal government decentralize the CAP by passing equivalent tax room to the provinces and let those closer to the provinces decide how the money should be spent. In earlier times people dealing with particular issues in a region were the people who knew the local conditions best. They knew which of their neighbours needed help most. Issues could be dealt with quickly and responsibly and people were directly familiar with their own budget constraints.

Perhaps it is time to push government programs and services closer to the people by placing them under the jurisdiction of the lowest level of government possible. Set basic federal standards, make it portable, make it accessible and give the provinces more flexibility in managing their own affairs. Maybe then we will see more grassroots or local solutions with effective results for the have not provinces.

A social dilemma has been created by the misapplication by this government and the Conservative government of the Keynesian economic theory. In a recession it is fine to borrow to stimulate the economy. In good times you have to pay back what you have borrowed. These past two governments have failed to do that. It is past time for governments to recognize the second half of that theory and start paying down the debt.

Not one member across the floor or in the separatists ranks has like us refused to take the MP pension. Nowhere in the report of the Minister of Human Resources does it say that MPs will lead by example and make the sacrifices that are being asked of all other Canadians. Not one minister has had the courage to go into his department and tell non performing employees: "You are fired" to old school bureaucrats who play the political game. But those bureaucrats have forgotten who they work for, the taxpayers.

If the government really wants to help Canadians help themselves then it should leave more money in the hands of the people who earn it. Taxpayers know how to spend and invest their money much better than the government. Do not tax people and redistribute the money. Leave it at the source. If people are allowed to keep the money they earn they would not need social programs from the government.

A 10 per cent cut for all families earning under $60,000 would leave more money for food, shelter and clothing and that should be the very objective of social programs.

If the government and the finance minister had the political will and the business acumen to lower overall spending, they could easily lower taxes. The handling costs of sending money to Ottawa for bureaucrats to redistribute back to the people as they see fit basically takes 30 to 35 per cent of the moneys out of the programs. This is an enormous impact on the efficiency of the programs.

Objectivity is required in the matter of social reform, not partisan politics as is being played out by the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. It being 5.30 p.m. I am obliged to proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West) moved that Bill C–245, an act to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Auditor General Act (review of budget speech), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I want to talk about my Bill C–245 and why I did propose it. I guess it would be no secret to say that I proposed it because of a great lack of confidence in the ability of this government and indeed the Conservative government before it to accurately project revenues.

This bill asks the Auditor General to order one or more people to review the budget speech and then report to the House on the reasonableness of the estimated revenues used in the preparation of that speech. That report would be by another party and would be submitted to the Speaker on or before May 31.

The reason that is necessary is that we do need another independent body assessing the numbers the government is giving us. I will show today why this and other governments have been projecting revenues like this and have been spending that much and their revenues are downloaded and they end up with deficits.

As I started this speech, this country's debt clock was at $532,343,108,949.98. That just sort of rolls off us Reformers now. However I think the people listening and watching should really understand that this money will be on the backs of our children and our children's children. The overindulgence of the last 20 years must really be noted and it must be accepted that it has to stop. The debate we have already heard today on the social programs from the Reform Party's point of view should be well taken, well accepted, and the rhetoric we are getting from the Liberal Party should be suspect at the very least.

How did we ever get into this mess? Besides overspending and overindulging and overloading the taxpayer, government manipulation of the budget numbers is one of the primary problems. How can government overspend, one asks. It is quite easy when you bring forward to the public estimated revenues of a certain amount of money.

It is like a family whose income is $56,000 a year. They turn around and say: "We know we have $56,000 but let us just say it is going to be $86,000 this year and let us spend $86,000". At the end of the year they end up owing $30,000 to the bank. Next year they do the same thing and the following year. Pretty soon that family owes $90,000 or $100,000 and what happens? The bank comes into play and says: "Wait, you cannot pay your bills". Then the tragedy of personal bankruptcy takes place.

With government however the bank does not come into play, the taxpayer does. It is most notable in recent years looking at the rising tax figures how the taxpayer is paying for this burden of assessment of higher valued revenues and spending to that limit.

• (1735)

In 1984 Canadians thought they got rid of the Liberals. They brought in debt and deficits that were concerning people, so we brought in the Conservatives. We thought they were talking about restraint, and talk about sitting at the trough. We put up with these folks for four years.

In 1988 we were at this terrible decision making point. We could not go back to the Liberals because they blow money like yesterday's business. We were not very comfortable with the Conservatives, but maybe they just needed another four years. So we brought in the Conservatives again. Well, it was trough city after that.

The Conservatives knew it. They figured that as they were probably going to go out anyway, just before the 1992 election they would raise the revenues and spend money. Then if the Liberals got in they would be stuck with it because the Conservatives had spent money based on erroneous, highly projected revenues. If the Liberals did get in they would wonder what had happened.

This has been going on for decades. I have to ask why is it we do not elect the government we want. What we really do is throw out the government we do not want. That is why today there are 52 Reformers sitting in this House. I can assure you at the next election we are going to throw out a government we do not want. The people are finally going to have an opportunity to elect the government they do want, notwithstanding all this rhetoric we hear here. We are going to stick with it and keep talking about deficit reduction and we mean it. It is not rhetoric.

Canadians did elect the Liberals as the government thinking they would have a great opportunity to see this tough budget in 1993. Several of us, me included, went into a lockup. We were looking for the savings, the reductions, and all of the changes that would come. The Liberals were going to help the country. What we saw was some increased revenues and they were going to spend the same amount of money. This is the same old story we have been getting. Meanwhile the debt climbs and climbs. Under the auspices of increased revenues we get more spending.

We hear the talk today about social programs. For one whole year we have been studying social programs from this side of the House and yesterday, we received a discussion document, not an action document, a discussion document. That is kind of sick when you think about it. We have had a year to take some action. We are overspending by $40 billion a year and we get a discussion document. What do the people at home think of this House that is supposed to provide leadership, this House that is supposed to take action? The reports already coming into my office ask why some action could not be taken.

We did hear from the press, not from the government, that there is possibly $7.5 billion in savings over five years. That is a mega whopping $1.5 billion a year. We overspend by $40 billion a year so $1.5 billion does not even make a dent, folks. This comes from an accountant. I think I can even add that much.

I can say this. The government is trying to bail out a sinking ship with a thimble. It does not work that way and even buckets will not help now. We need a sump pump to drain this system. Yes it will hurt a little bit, but have the courage. We will show this government how to have some courage. We just have to take it on the chin a little bit, that is all.

• (1740)

If the Liberals really meet their budget plan we are blessed in this country with a deficit of about $26 billion a year. This is the plan to balance the books, $26 billion a year. Over four years we are running over another $100 billion in debt. That is the thimble we are dealing with. It is not sound and it is not reasonable, but it is rhetoric.

If the Liberals do not cut they have to play with the revenues. That is what they are going to do and that is why my bill kicks in place. We want an independent third party to look at these revenues. We want another assessment of these numbers.

When they are looking at revenues do not discount the cash cow of RRSPs. Although their budget numbers will vary widely on how much revenue they can get from that, you may be sure there is a cash cow there and they do have a focus on those savings. In fact our leader and others in our party have asked in the House of Commons several times in Question Period: "What are you doing with RRSPs?" The answer is always: "Well, we can't say right now". The fact is they are going to dip into it.

Let me tell the House what some people think about that. I hope this government does not think that people are not concerned about it already. This is an unsolicited letter to me from a chartered accountant. Her name is Ruth Gillies. She wrote:

> This letter is to express my strong concern over recent sabre rattling by Revenue Canada to tax retirement savings. I feel that threatening those people who are attempting to deal responsibly with their future needs, rather than relying on the system to provide help as and when needed, provides a strong disincentive for people to act responsibly.

Disincentive to act responsibly. We are hearing that not just about RRSPs but also about the social system changes we are looking at.

It also occurs to me that threatening to tax retirement savings, which is obviously offensive, might be viewed as an effective psychological weapon so the Canadian populace will be thrilled when the proposed charge of first degree murder is subsequently reduced to manslaughter.

I understand the government's need to deal with the deficit issue.

I think Ruth probably understands that need a little more than this government; she is a CA. She goes on to say:

I feel more like a victim or prey rather than the cause of the problem. I feel more like I am being done to rather than being done for.

Do you understand what she is saying here?

In my opinion we need responsibility accounting and good value for our money that government spends.

Now understand this:

A deficit arises when spending exceeds revenue.

I have to say that again. Deficit arises when spending exceeds revenue. This is the new axiom for the Liberal Party.

I do not feel that cost control and expenditure reduction measures have been fully explored or exhausted by our fiscal managers.

We and millions of other people in this country do not feel that way either. The letter goes on to say:

I already feel I am paying my fair share and sometimes, to be honest, a little more than my fair share. I am very disturbed by being constantly asked to pay more. Before I make any more payments I want to know where, why, when and how the debt arose for which I am presumed to be liable.

Is that common sense or what? She is a chartered accountant. It is not somebody with no knowledge of the finances of this country. In the event that this government believes I drew this letter up from Ruth Gillies, I just received another one today that puts it even more basically. I do not think Scott Leaf is an accountant but here is what he has to say:

I am writing you to demand that you oppose any tax grab on money within registered retirement savings plans.

I am 28 years old and have been putting away the maximum RRSP contribution that I am allowed for 3 years. I am not wealthy. I make approximately $30,000 a year.

My wife and I survive on one income at present, while I support her in university. We forgo trips, and most of the things that others our age do not, in order to plan for our future. I would love to go on a cruise or buy a house but we have followed all the advice from both government and the private sector and have saved.

If the government taxes our money within our RRSP it is a slap in the face to us. I am thoroughly disgusted with even the thought of taxing money within RRSPs. I already know that I cannot count on a government pension in the future or even a company pension. Therefore I demand that you condemn any change that will start the process where people will not be able to count on their own retirement savings either.

• (1745)

Why am I interested in this revenue part? The Reform Party has been talking cut, cut, cut expenditure, wise decision making, good sound fiscal management in expenditures. We have looked at the revenues, but we need that independent third party to look at it because we cannot trust what is coming from the crew over there.

Ruth Gillies had actually talked about some stupid spending. I was talking to a fellow today and he says: "Talk about stupid spending. They spent $661,463 to solicit public comment and preach restraint at a series of conferences leading up to last February's budget". Folks, I do not think they got $661,000 worth because they did not listen. Of that total, $37,800 was spent on travel expenses. There was $10,850 spent for a consultant to recruit members of the public to attend meetings. This is very wise spending on behalf of the Liberals because they cannot get people to attend meetings. There was of course $6,050 for a writer to craft four speeches delivered by the finance minister. I suppose he does not have enough staff to do that. We have to forgive him for that.

I want to mention excuses made about revenues. In 1984 the Liberal government brought in a budget, Marc Lalonde's budget. Among the comments made in the revenue portion of it was: "It is planned for stable inflation. We have a job creation program". That was 1984. Ten years later the Liberals are still planning for job creation programs. They had a medium term strategy for deficit reduction. I guess that one did not work either.

They had a planned unemployment decline from 11.9 per cent to 7.7 per cent. This is in justification of increasing revenues so they could spend more money. None of these things came true. Growth in personal income and revenues were expected to grow more rapidly than GNP from 15 per cent in 1983–84 to 15.9 per cent.

What happened? In 1985 Michael Wilson said: "We missed the target somewhere along the line. We don't know what happened but there was a sharp slowdown in growth of budgetary revenues in 1983–84", but it was due to the 1981–82 recession. I have to ask: Why did Mr. Lalonde's budget not pick that idea up? It was two years before that.

The fact is that the Liberals already knew it was going to affect revenues but they kept it high so they could spend more money. That kind of forecasting in the circles I have worked in as a certified management accountant is just unbelievable. That kind of forecasting is actually unacceptable.

At the very least the government should take its revenue projections and discount them. I would suggest that the government should take a very hard and direct look at this bill. It does not have the wisdom to make the decisions. They need a second opinion.

• (1750)

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to address the House today on the issues raised by Bill C–245. I was pleased that the member for Fraser Valley West finally got around to talking about the bill in his speech toward the end.

I want to congratulate him because it is an important initiative to take a look at the budget and the budget process. As parliamentarians we absolutely want to do the best job we can in the formulation of the budget, to understand its contents and to know how we can logically discuss it, debate it and liaise with our constituents about its contents.

The issue of the the budget speech process and the degree and nature of consultation which goes into its preparation has been the subject of debate for many years in the House. Contrary to what my hon. friend across the way thinks, I believe the process that was used last year was better than the year before. It was more open and it allowed more Canadians to become involved.

The process that will be used in 1994–95 is going to be even more open. The all–member finance committee will be undertaking a series of consultations with the public in order to have their input before the budget is formulated and not after.

It surprises me when we have these debates and I listen to the Reform members when it comes to the matter of consultation. It does not seem to matter what we are discussing, whether it is the budget process, the social policy review, or whatever, I hear the same message: Do not consult, just do. Do not listen to the Canadian people. Just go out and do it. Ignore our constituents. Just go out and do it.

This is the party that about a year ago travelled through the country saying: "Our primary objective is to consult, to listen to our constituents". Yet every time the government suggests a way to consult it was opposed. It is very strange.

Basically this bill calls for two major ideas. The first one has to do with setting a specific date for the budget to be brought down. I will let others discuss that issue if they wish.

The more important part, and the one that the member did finally get around to talking about, is the suggestion that we have a third party assessment of the budget, that the Auditor General have a mandated role in the budget. I want to talk a little about that, about his concept that the Auditor General ought to be taking a look at the reasonableness of things. I have some concerns about that.

Mr. Abbott: I would not doubt it.

An hon. member: We know why.

Mr. Mitchell: I will tell you why. There is a fundamental misreading on the other side about what our job is and about what politics is. Members here were not elected to come to the House so they could have a third party tell them what is right or wrong. They were elected to come to the House to use their best judgment, for them to analyse what is going on, for them to bother to read the budget and for them to offer their political opinion and their best judgment.

To abdicate that responsibility to a third party is inappropriate. You are a member of Parliament. I am a member of Parliament. It is our responsibility and to shirk it to a third party is inappropriate.

To go beyond that I have some basic concerns about giving the responsibility to the Auditor General. I have great respect for that office. I know members opposite have great respect for that office. They have often mentioned it. I would be very concerned if we undertook this bill which could very well result in the Auditor General being engulfed in partisan politics, being engulfed in the give and take of the debate, because this is a political issue.

• (1755)

If the government's estimates of expenditures or revenues are wrong, then the government will pay a political price. It is the job of the opposition to make the government pay for it, if it is appropriate.

The opposition was not able to do that when the last budget was tabled because by and large the Canadian people accepted it as sound. That is the difficulty. You were not able to make your case and now you are looking for a third party to make it for you. That is not appropriate. The Auditor General's office is an important one. It undertakes a number of important tasks.

Recently a private member's bill passed, which I was quite happy to see, that gives the Auditor General the opportunity to report on this House on more than an annual basis. That is an important step. It gives the Auditor General the opportunity to come to the House and comment on what the government of the day is doing.

Beyond that, there are some structural difficulties with asking the Auditor General to provide comments and assurances on financial forecasts or projections. Guidelines have been established in the accounting industry, which I much admire and in my previous life had an opportunity to work with quite closely.

The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants states very clearly that a very cautious approach ought to be taken when passing judgment on estimates. In fact, it cautions its members to be very careful when offering that kind of opinion, I think with good reason. The institute recommends that the reporting be limited to stating that the assumptions and projection used are suitably supported or consistent with the organization's plans and that the forecasts presented fairly reflect the assumptions.

The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants further calls for the auditor to provide a disclaimer, noting that the projections could be materially wrong if there are changes to assumptions and projections. Although members may not want to believe it, the world goes on every day and the assumptions that are made for a budget do in fact change. Indeed they change. The world changes every year. I know the Reform party has a hard time grappling with the fact that change is ongoing and that we have to learn how to deal with it.

There is another concern. What happens if the Auditor General is wrong? Is the Reform Party going to be standing in their places railing against the Auditor General as being the cause of our deficit? To suggest that, because projections are wrong and is the cause of our deficit is ludicrous. With this bill we would be suggesting that if the Auditor General makes an assessment and that office is wrong, that the Auditor General would be responsible for the deficit. I cannot buy that.

In addition, I have some difficulty with the proposed process in the sense that the Auditor General's report will come out three months later. I do not think the House is going to wait for three months before it starts to debate the merits of the budget. There is a similar bill in Nova Scotia. In the Nova Scotia experience the Auditor General's comments come with the budget. There might be some value to doing that and looking at it that way.

However, I would suggest we might want to wait until we see what the Nova Scotia experience is, take the best from it and incorporate it into this House, leaving aside those things that do not work well.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Madam Speaker, I too welcome this opportunity to rise in this House to speak to Bill C–245. Seeing that my colleague from the Reform Party chose to use his speaking time to talk about this, that and the other, the budget, the deficit, in fact, anything but his bill, I would like to briefly go over the content of this bill. I think it is important for all the hon. members of this House to understand what it is about.

First of all, the existing Auditor General Act states the mandate and lists almost all the duties of the Auditor General. He is the auditor of the accounts of Canada, including those relating to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. As such, he makes inquiries and examinations and then reports to the House of Commons as required by the act. He is responsible for auditing the expenditures made by the departments and Crown agencies. He must submit an annual report, naturally, on or before December 31 of each year. In addition, he was recently given the mandate of submitting more than one report. The Bloc Quebecois had asked for this and supported the proposal.

Obviously, the mandate of the Auditor General is commendable. His role consists mainly in checking how public funds are used and I would say that, so far, this neutral authority has carried out his duty.

You will understand that the performance of such duties requires a great deal of precision and accuracy. I realize that everyone is probably familiar with the act and the duties of the Auditor General, but it is useful nonetheless to refresh the memories of some hon. members.

The bill before us is intended to add to the already heavy workload of the Auditor General. In fact, clause 2 of the bill would extend the Auditor General's duties so that he would also become, listen to this, the auditor of the revenue estimates used in preparing the budget speech, for which the Minister of Finance is responsible.

It makes no sense. The Auditor General's role is to audit the public accounts. The member wants to add to this the auditing of the government's future revenues. The Auditor would thus be asked to forecast government revenues, as well as review all its spending. If that were so, the Auditor General would examine revenue projections. He would have to go to the very root of the assumptions made by the government.

The present mandate of analysing the expenditures of departments and agencies is not at all consistent with an additional mandate of estimating revenue.

Experience has shown us that the finance minister's estimates are often unrealistic. The present Minister of Finance is no exception. We cannot ask the Auditor General to assume responsibility for the analyses made by the Department of Finance. Overestimating revenues as a way of reducing the deficit is unacceptable. That is why the Minister of Finance must be satisfied with the quality of the estimates made by his department. The government cannot evade its duties and ask the Auditor General to do the job instead. This is the work of elected officials.

I would like to understand why the member for Fraser Valley West thinks that this task should be performed by the Auditor General, who we must say does not have the resources that the Department of Finance has to carry it out.

• (1805)

This would lead to duplication and overlap and of course additional expense. That is not how one reduces the deficit. Of course, the member for Fraser Valley West might mention clause 3, which says that after the Auditor General reviews the budget, he will report on the reasonableness of the estimated revenues used in preparing the budget speech.

It would not be easy for the Auditor General to determine what a reasonable revenue estimate is. As the Auditor General himself has said, it is hard to know whether the estimates are reasonable or not. Political considerations enter into it, but the Auditor General is supposed to be neutral.

Even if my colleagues in the Liberal Party think that their estimates are reasonable, I am sure that they will again have a strong tendency to overestimate revenues, but they will still have to answer for it to Parliament.

So, again, the Minister of Finance is responsible for the accuracy of the data presented in the budget. I stress that it is up to the Official Opposition, the other opposition parties and financial analysts to criticize the budget, especially its revenue projections.

There are several flaws in the analysis which led to this bill. It would make the Minister of Finance no longer responsible for the validity of his revenue estimates. The critical role of financial analysts and of the Official Opposition would be completely removed.

For these reasons, the Bloc Quebecois will not support this bill.

In closing, we will just say that everyone should do his own job and we will all be better off.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill C–245.

First, I want to congratulate the Bloc member. It is the first time this week—and I am not trying to be nasty—that a Bloc member raises an issue in an honest, fair and concise manner. I really appreciate that.

I also thank the hon. member for Fraser Valley West for his initiative. However, I would have liked to hear him discuss the bill itself. He might have been able to convince me that it has many positive aspects but, instead, he chose to make all kinds of political comments. Unfortunately, the hon. member failed to convince me. He could have done better, because I do think that the bill has some good points.

The hon. member knows that the whole issue of budget preparation, including the consultation process, is a permanent process because the budget is an extremely important exercise. Who prepares the budget? How is this exercise conducted? How extensive is the consultation process? Who is consulted? When? What do we do with the information gathered? All these are very important issues.

As I understand it, this bill includes two major points. The first one is the date the budget is tabled. In this case, there is no clear indication that what the hon. member proposes is better than the existing procedure. However, I want to discuss the second point more in detail.

[*English*]

The Auditor General report on the reasonableness of the estimated revenues in the preparation of the budget speech.

• (1810)

The Auditor General would be required to report his findings to the Speaker of the House on or before May 31 in the year to which the report relates.

The Auditor General as we all know has a particularly important job, one that must be above and beyond and not at all associated with politics. The Auditor General has probably as much credibility as some of the institutions that have most in our society today. We must as Canadians, as a society, as a Parliament be absolutely certain of the independence and the credibility of the Auditor General in this institution.

It seems to me that any action whatsoever that might be undertaken by Parliament that might draw the Auditor General into the political fray would destroy that credibility and would damage the independence of the institution, one that I have indicated and I think all colleagues would agree is of great, great importance.

Let us look closely at this provision of the bill. The bill says: "to comment on the reasonableness of the estimated revenues". It seems to me that this could bring the Auditor General perilously close to getting into policy matters, hence into political matters. I worry about that.

Perhaps my colleague does not worry about it. He seems to be smiling but I think that most Canadians would agree with my perspective. That is that the Auditor General must not be put into a position where the credibility and the independence of that institution are questioned. That is the issue here.

My colleague will know, he was indicating that he had had some experience in this field, that normally accountants or people related to that profession will make commentary and historical transactions, financial statements where there are facts to be dealt with. That is their primary focus.

When it comes to projected revenues, yes, they have been involved but they are always extremely cautious. Why is that? It is because they are made based on a number of assumptions. They are based on a number of understandings that people have of the relationships that exist.

It is not unusual for someone to use different assumptions or to do a different analysis based on certain assumptions. My colleague knows that fully. In fact, I am starting to suspect—I did not suspect that before I started—that what my colleague really wants to do here is stir the pot to get a little bit of political hay.

We could be setting up the Auditor General. We could be setting up that institution. We could be setting him up in order for him to try to use—

Mr. Silye: We want government to start to live within its means and start today. We are not responsible for collecting taxes for 44,000 people.

Mr. Duhamel: The member will get a chance to speak if he likes later. I would appreciate it if he would be polite. When I heckle, at least I do it quickly.

As I was indicating, I am absolutely convinced my colleague really wants to try to use another institution so that he can try to discredit the government. He has no intention of working with government since he has come here. Why should he start now?

My colleague may be interested in the following:

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants insists on being very cautious when making comments on revenue and expenditures forecasts. The institute even recommends that the auditors add a cautionary note to indicate that forecasts could be totally erroneous if the basic assumptions and projections were to change. The fact is that budget–related information is based on a wide range of economic projections.

[*English*]

We know that to be true. One of the questions that I would like to ask is this. Did my colleague ask the Auditor General whether or not he would accept this, whether or not this was a good idea. My colleague says that he did. Could my colleague please share with us in this House whatever communications he has received from the Auditor General indicating that this would be a good idea?

My colleague will recognize, and he may read and recall, when I say that we have a colleague who proposed change to the Auditor General's responsibilities. Those were passed by this Parliament. In fact in the debate a letter was brought forward by the Auditor General saying that it was a good idea.

• (1815)

Where is the letter? Where is the document? Has it been tabled in the House, the letter saying that it would be a good idea? If it has, I would like to see it.

[*Translation*]

Hon. members are so excited by my speech that they cannot sit still. This is extraordinary. It is the first time I get this kind of attention and it makes me very proud.

[*English*]

My colleague may know that they have attempted a similar experience in Nova Scotia. They reported in April. I wonder if my colleague took the time to call Nova Scotia to find out what kinds of difficulties they had.

Was it all positive? Were there negatives? What were the positives? What were the negatives? Perhaps he would like to write me a note to tell me with whom he spoke and what points were made.

There is another really quite interesting point, as I understand it. I stand to be corrected; I love to be corrected by Reformers. They never make any mistakes so they will correct me in this instance, I am sure, if I stray from the truth. I am told it would take three months before the Auditor General would probably bring forth his report. A lot of things change in three months. Perhaps the Reform Party does not change in three months, but Canada's economic situation and the world's economic situation change in three months and what is done today may not be as precise three months from now.

I suggest we should talk to Nova Scotia. We should look at that experience. Subsequent to analysing what benefits it might bring, perhaps we should look at this matter again.

[*Translation*]

I am about to conclude. I would like to ask a few questions and I will be very open–minded. Indeed, if the hon. member can provide answers to all my questions, I will reconsider my point of view. I love to ask questions.

Can the hon. member, who is a member of the Reform Party, a party that loves to brag about savings, tell us what resources would be required for the Auditor General to implement such a measure? Did he give us a figure? Did he talk to the Auditor General? Did he ask the Auditor General to give him a report stating whether or not he agreed with the proposal?

The hon. member knows full well that the Auditor General has a great deal of independence. He also has a lot of credibility, precisely because he is dealing at arm's length with the government. And he can make additional reports because Parliament recently amended the law. What I am saying is that there are certain risks involved although the premise is sound. It is not a bad question. It is even a very good question, I admit, but there are still certain risks involved. He did not do all the research he should have done. I would recommend to him that he do more research.

For example, what would it cost? Can we wait to see the results of the Nova Scotia experiment? After he has answered all my questions, I will review my position but, until he does so, I say no to this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to address Bill C–245, an act to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Auditor General Act, and in particular to give the Auditor General a mandate to review the reasonableness of estimates in the budget speech.

Whenever I rise to address seriously a question before the Chamber I always find I begin in a somewhat depressed state after listening to some of the earlier histrionics. Some of the positions that have been expressed so far today strike me as odd.

For example, the Bloc Quebecois would be concerned about giving the Auditor General the power to limit the independence and effectiveness of elected members of Parliament. Yet the Bloc Quebecois would not be concerned about the plans of the Government of Quebec to undertake action which would destroy Parliament and destroy the country. It seems to me to be a rather misplaced sense of concern.

Likewise some of the Liberal MPs who have spoken are similarly concerned about the control of the Auditor General. He may be controlling some of the decisions being undertaken on the financial end. They would seem to be unconcerned about the fact that our financial policies, if followed, will ultimately lead to the International Monetary Fund controlling the decisions we take here. It seems to me that should be a much greater concern when we examine some of these questions.

• (1820)

In recent years the estimates of revenue have been well off, as have many other estimates in the budget. That is the reason we are here today discussing some of these concerns. The political process left without any degree of fiscal discipline has failed us.

I compliment the hon. member for Fraser Valley West for bringing forward this kind of proposal. It is a very common kind of proposal, not just in political circles these days but indeed in academic and intellectual circles where the fiscal constitutions of parliaments and of governments are coming under some examination. I speak of public choice literature and various other matters.

Let us take a couple of examples of the kind of problem we have in budgeting in the House of Commons. We know that the last government, the Progressive Conservative government, of which none of us are particular admirers, really based its fiscal projections on revenue growth of 4.5 per cent per year basically for eternity or at least to the end of the century. We know and the Liberal government should well know that when it took office it had to deal with the extent of misrepresentation that had entailed and the kind of additional problems that created for its own plan.

In the last plan the government provided, as I have admitted before, much more modest revenue estimates. But the government largely adopted the interest rate assumptions of the previous government. In the last budget just months ago the government estimated that short term interest rates would be around 4.5 per cent for this year and about 6.4 per cent for this year on the long term side.

What is the fact? The fact is that the government is off 1 per cent on short term rates and about 2.5 per cent on long term rates. It finds itself now facing an additional unexpected crunch because those kinds of poor estimates on interest rates with a country that is so heavily in debt impact not only on the kind of deficits and financial planning we have this year but will impact dramatically in future years because of the compounding effect.

Therefore these are the kinds of suggestions governments should be looking at in my view in order to facilitate their work, both here in Parliament as governments with opposition and ultimately with the public and the financial community.

Government members who have spoken have suggested, as I mentioned earlier, their extreme and almost frantic concerns about the Auditor General taking control of their voice as elected officials. They seem unconcerned with the fact that the whips exercise almost unlimited power over their party, but they are concerned about the Auditor General. The strange thing about these concerns about the power of the Auditor General and the concern about opening up the entire subject matter is that this is not a concern at the moment shared by their own government.

As I understand it the government and the Department of Finance are actively studying this very issue, as well they should be. They should be acting of course but they are studying it. I believe and I hope that at some point they will come forward with recommendations to the House on the forecasting processes that have been used and how they might be changed.

They are not just looking at Nova Scotia. They are looking around the world. They are looking at what governments do in places like the Netherlands and Australia on these kinds of matters. The Auditor General is an appropriate individual to look at this sort of information, both at forecasts as well as at projections, as well as at various forecast scenarios that could be used.

It is an approach that is increasingly used in the private sector. There has been some reference that I have had opportunity to review of late to the various guidelines that securities commissions use and the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants use for evaluation of future oriented financial information.

This is not something that would be invented out of thin air or that the Auditor General is unfamiliar with. For example, when companies go into the securities markets it is often the practice that before they can issue debts their forecast will be reviewed according to acceptable standards. That would be expected in the investment market. Surely when we are talking about $40 billion deficits a year the taxpayers would expect the same kind of reasonable evaluations of our financial state to have taken place.

• (1825)

Let me just give some idea of some matters the CICA would consider relevant in the examination of future oriented financial information. It would examine all aspects of the procedures.

Public accountants would look at all aspects of the procedures used in formulating both forecasts and projections. They would look at the process of developing these forecasts and some of the assumptions and hypotheses that are behind them, as well as the preparation and presentation of financial forecast data and management representations that were received.

This gives some idea of some of the things they would evaluate whether, for instance, sufficient pertinent sources of information about the assumptions had been considered by management. These would include both external sources, what forecasting firms would say, what government documents say, what is available in various agreements, as well as internal sources.

They would look at whether the assumptions were consistent with the sources from which they were supposedly drawn, whether they are internally consistent and mathematically accurate, whether the historical, financial or other information used in the assumptions was sufficiently reliable for the purpose for which it was employed, whether other data are compatible over the periods of time for which they are being used, and whether the assumptions are consistent with the plans and policies of the entity. Probably, most important, public accountants would evaluate whether there is any bias in the selection of assumptions by management which causes the assumptions on an overall basis to be unduly optimistic or pessimistic. We know there has been a habitual tendency of government to be excessively optimistic, not simply in ways that are optimistic by very marginal standards of judgment but which are wildly optimistic and in fact indefensible by any reasonable standard.

Of course that is the kind of criteria the Auditor General would apply. The Auditor General would not second guess reasonable assumptions or pertinent assumptions, but he would second guess assumptions that were clearly and totally unjustifiable.

In terminating my speech, let me say I support the bill. I support the kind of matter it is looking into. I think if anything the subject could be broadened, but certainly the House should give its support to the bill. It should really consider seriously, as a matter of general policy, bringing this aspect and all aspects of government budgeting under established concepts of fiscal discipline that exist in all other walks of life.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, as a businessman I have often said that governments should be run like businesses. Now, having been a politician for a year, I say that government cannot be run like a business but it still should be run more businesslike, in a business manner.

My speech is a little long so I will pick out some of the highlights. I realize there cannot be an absolute parallel between the private sector and government. In other words government cannot hire the Auditor General. We do need that arm's length distance.

The Auditor General, however, must be absolutely independent of Parliament and cannot participate directly in the budget planning process. However Parliament would be foolish not to take advantage of the Auditor General's advice in assessing the government's budget plans from the outset.

Why not have value for money audits conducted by the Auditor General in conjunction with budget planning? Why not have sunset clauses contained within all government programs, including social programs, so that they run out after one year, two years, three years, five years or whatever it takes? Then we could see if we want to renew it, add more money, delete some money, or cancel it altogether.

These are some of the things an auditor could do, working in conjunction with the finance minister. The important thing, the crux of the matter, is that governments must stop living on borrowed money and stop refinancing current needs and desires on the backs of our children and grandchildren.

In conclusion because the bureaucracy and politicians are spending the money of other people, no wonder it is hard to balance the budget. No wonder we cannot find out who is responsible. No wonder ministers blame bureaucrats and bureaucrats blame different departments of other departments of bureaucracy. No wonder we have such big fiscal problems within government. I really believe it is important that if we could get the Auditor General to have more authority and become more involved with the budgeting process in this government not only would it complement and assist this government, it would help all future governments and it would, most important, help the people of Canada, the taxpayers.

• (1830)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Resuming debate on normal House time, the hon. member for Calgary Centre has 30 seconds remaining and then a five–minute question period.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, objectivity is required in the matter of social reform, not partisan politics that are being played out by the Minister of Human Resources Development. If we want to have a true social conscience in this country and if that is what government wants to provide, then let us help the truly needy and not continue the practice of helping everyone lest we offend and possibly lose votes.

Will the Liberals have the courage to act after they have received the input they are seeking? The government must govern, the government must lead, the government can only consult for so long. It has already been a year. How much longer do Canadians have to wait before their do–nothing, say–nothing, feel–good leader puts the action plan on the table?

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Madam Speaker, it is indeed with pleasure that I participate in this debate which effectively launches our review and reform of Canada's social security system. Constituents in my riding of Brant have been anxiously awaiting the tabling of this discussion paper. They want to see what the options look like. They want to have input and they want to suggest alternatives. I look forward to working with them over the course of the next couple of months and in bringing their advice and counsel back to this House and debate it at a later time.

For the purposes of this intervention, I would like to take aim at some of the criticisms that we have been taking and will continue to have to deal with over the course of this review.

There are those who say that by undertaking this reform our government is abandoning its Liberal roots. To my mind nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, it was Liberal governments in the sixties that wove together Canada's first effective social safety net. They were responding to the needs of Canadians at that time.

This system worked very well for us through the sixties and the seventies, but now it is becoming dysfunctional. Is it wrong for us to listen to single parents who tell us that they are caught in the welfare cycle because they cannot find appropriate day care for their children or because they cannot find a job that pays them enough to meet and support the basic needs of their families?

Is it wrong for us to listen to employers who say that our training systems are ineffective? They prove this by saying that they have to go to England and Europe to find technically trained staff to help them do the work of their businesses.

Is it wrong for us to want to stop businesses from using the unemployment insurance program as a wage supplement for their employees? I think not. In fact, when I think about it, if we had been the government over the last 10 years I believe we would have continuously changed and modified our social safety net so that this major intervention would not be necessary today. Unfortunately, that is not the way things worked. To meet the needs of Canadians we now have to make significant change. This government will not shy away from that. I am proud to say that I agree with its strategy.

Second, there are those who say to go ahead, embark on this reform, but only do so if the purpose is to reduce the fiscal deficit. I believe that indeed we have to take stock of our economic times and that that has to be a major consideration in the work that we do. However, the economic times that led to this fiscal deficit have also created a huge social deficit in Canada.

We are sending our children to school without appropriate clothing and without enough food in their stomachs. We have university graduates who cannot find that all important first job and as such are threatening bankruptcy and, worse still, suicide because they cannot repay their student loans.

We have men and women across this country whose skills and abilities are not being utilized. They are undervalued, underused and as such they are not able to contribute to their fullest potential to help us reduce our fiscal deficit and to reduce our social deficit.

• (1835)

If we do not deal with our social deficit there is no question that it will add exponentially to our fiscal deficit. We cannot support that. It is not sustainable and it is not right.

Third, I would like to comment on the criticisms that we are receiving from some provinces, particularly my home province of Ontario. The Government of Ontario is constantly saying it feels that Ontarians are not getting their fair share from the federal government. They point out, and rightly so, that the federal government contributes about 50 per cent to the cost of social programs in the province of Quebec and by and large in the maritime provinces.

It points out that in Ontario that contribution is about 20 or 25 per cent. Let us look at the background here. Under the 50:50 cost sharing split that is part of the Canada assistance plan, it has been provinces which have been able to afford to spend money on social programs that received larger transfer payments.

In the 1980s and certainly in 1990 with the partial implementation of the SARC report, Ontario expanded and enriched its social programs significantly. The federal government decided to cap its transfers, deciding that its responsibility was not so much to fund at all costs the unilaterally created social programs of provinces but rather to support the mandate we have under the Constitution, section 36, that says we are responsible to provide for Canadians no matter where they live in this country reasonably the same level of services for reasonable the same level of taxation.

Do not get me wrong. I do not accept and I do not agree that the Canada assistance plan is the appropriate or the right way to manage our transfers to the provinces. I would encourage all our provincial partners to come to this table, sit down and discuss the options that are tabled, suggest alternates, and help us make sure that Canadians no matter where they live have equal access to social security programs.

Finally, I would like to say that as a government our prime role and purpose as we have stated time and again is to create jobs and opportunities for Canadians. The initiative of the Minister of Human Resources Development adds a dimension to that commitment.

Coupled with the work of the Minister of Finance, who will be tabling a statement in the next few weeks, and the work of the Minister of Industry who will be tabling some information on our micro economic status, possibilities and strategies for economic growth, we will have a blueprint that will help us to renew Canada.

I look forward to implementing that blueprint and being part of a government that will in fact bring Canada back to the level that it should be. In closing, I would like to quote from an editorial that was written this week in my local newspaper *The Brantford Expositor*. In reference to the initiative of the Minister of Human Resources Development the editor writes:

> Rightwingers will complain that the plan does not go far enough, that there are too many people living off the government gravy train. Leftwingers will object that the government is caving in to corporate interests and balancing its budget on the backs of the poor. What sensible Canadians should do is try to avoid being buried in all of this muck and take a long and serious look at what Axworthy proposes because the time has come for real reform. Canadians who are fed up with the high taxes and program recipients who are not getting the help they really need stand to be hurt a lot more if things are not fixed.

I do not always agree with the editor of my local newspaper, but this time we are at one. I want to thank the Minister of Human Resources Development for the hard work that he has put into this discussion paper and tell him that as a member of Parliament I will be working hard with my constituents to make sure they have input and that they are consulted in this process so we can work effectively to restore Canada's social security system.

• (1840)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for her speech. It was well presented but I feel that somehow it lacked the kind of commitment that Canadians are looking for in terms of actual deficit reduction.

What I am driving at here is this. I do not believe in cutting for cutting's sake but it is time to be more realistic and to realize that spending $5 for every $4 we take in is going to eventually cause us to hit a wall.

When I hear the different concerns and particularly that of balancing the budget on the backs of the poor, it presupposes that the only way one can look after those who do not have what they need is to give them a handout. We need to really seriously look at replacing handouts with work, with things that people can do for themselves, and expand the involvement of family and community in looking after needy people.

Instead of sending a dollar to Ottawa and having it eaten up by bureaucracy and administration and then getting 10 cents back to the person who needs it, we need to bring that more closely to the people.

I would like to know the member's response to this question. How can we be more efficient with the money that we are taking from the taxpayers in order to look after those needs? How amenable is she to making it more local, moving it to the provinces and indeed even down to the communities?

Mrs. Stewart (Brant): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. It sounds like he may have read the document when he talks about the options that we require.

We are looking at ways to make sure that the programs fit the needs of individuals, that they do participate and have a say in the kinds of strategies and activities that we need to do to get people back to work. That is the focus. We want to make sure that we use the skills and abilities of all Canadians so that they are contributing to the country and in effect help us reduce, as I mentioned in my speech, our fiscal and our social deficit.

We cannot lose track or lose sight of the fact that if we do not provide support for Canadians, we do carry a social deficit that has real dollar cost. We as a party, and I am very proud of this, look at things in a balanced fashion. I believe that that has been our strength in the past and will continue to be our strength in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis–Hébert): Madam Speaker, during Question Period, the Minister of Human Resources Development practically admitted that the proposed social program reform would translate into savings of about $15 billion over the next four, five or six years. I was very surprised to hear the previous speaker talk about employment in such a context and I have a specific question to ask her. Could she explain to me briefly how this reform will impact on employment?

[*English*]

Mrs. Stewart (Brant): Madam Speaker, there are a lot of ways that this is going to have an impact on unemployment. As I mentioned in my speech one of the things that I find is happening in my constituency is that employers are unable to find Canadians with the skills and abilities that they need to do the technically advanced work of their businesses.

Through our program we want to encourage and focus significantly on improving the training aspects that we have for Canadians. Let us face it, if they have the skills to do the work, they will find jobs.

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak in support of the minister's discussion paper on improving social security in Canada.

I suspect that few in this room or in the entire country for that matter would dispute Canada's affluence and ability to sustain a generous or even enviable social safety net. In fact, how many countries can we identify that would love to be having this debate right now. Rwanda, Haiti, Bosnia, Cuba, most recently India, to name the more obvious, but also European countries. Even the Americas would love to be engaged in a debate about how to improve what is arguably one of the best social safety nets in the world. I would say we are rather lucky. We are a wealthy nation and we must remind ourselves of that as we engage in this discussion.

• (1845)

I would like to point out that many people have stated a need for reform of our social safety programs. Most Canadians agree that change is imperative. The basis of this need for change comes from two sides. One, we must cut because of the debt and the deficit situation. Others argue that our social programs were born of a different time and place, a different era, and that they are now simply out of date and need modernizing and restructuring to better reflect the current needs of our citizens.

It is this second position with which I agree. Our programs have become dated and there is an absolute need to restructure whatever assistance the government can provide to better reflect the contemporary needs of Canadians. I do not deny that financing our ideological generosity over the long term means attending to our deficit, but we do not have to compromise our ideology or our generosity, or force the burden of prudence on to the backs of those in need.

New directions are necessary. Some will cost money but savings can be realized by improving inefficiencies within the system. We can improve the way we deliver assistance and reduce the amount of overlap and duplication. We can achieve savings by devolving some responsibilities to the provinces. We do not want to cut simply for the sake of cutting. I believe the government has the plan to bring about our badly needed social policy reform.

Foremost, we recognize and fully embrace the need for open and informed consultation with all Canadians. We must if we are to be the architects of a safety net for generations to come, exercise the greatest prudence, and the greatest patience in engaging Canadians in this historic debate. It has to be a system made by Canadians if it is meant to serve Canadians.

I want to commend the Minister of Human Resources Development for his strong personal commitment to a thorough, comprehensive and meaningful consultation on this issue. His commitment is one I urge all members to rely on, to appreciate the need to seek out the views of every constituent in every riding of the country, to want really to know what it is our constituents want.

It has been suggested that the Reform proposals represent firm decisions and that we as members on this side are involved in selling a plan. As you can tell from my comments, it is not my intention nor is it the intention of the government. Rather, my effort today is designed to sell a process, a need to involve Canadians in this important debate.

There are certainly elements of the discussion paper that excite me, particularly those involving helping children and its general direction to more active social programming I wholeheartedly support.

Specifically as a New Brunswicker I can attest to the fact that we have been engaged in a similar debate at the provincial level. Such discussion and debate has resulted in a conception of some forward–looking social programs in our province such as the community academic services program, a literacy training program, and job corps to name just two.

It is the vision behind these creative partner–based programs at the local level that underpins the federal government's renewal initiative. The benchmark for our success is not how much money the government can save, rather it is whether such programs are beneficial and effective in the lives they are intended to improve. That is the objective that must be brought to the government's desire to reform the social safety net. It must be the guiding principle for decisions taken and it should be the framework adopted by all members of the House when they seek input from the constituents in their respective ridings.

I personally learned a great deal from the forum on social policy held in my riding in April. I know that my constituents are encouraged by the fact that they have been asked to help in the minister's reform proposals. My constituents recognize what a proposal means. It is something offered, something suggested, and they know their opinions will be welcomed and valued in helping transform a proposal into reality.

We in Fredericton—York—Sunbury are ready for October 30 when we reconvene to discuss this important reform again. We are anxious to offer whatever assistance we can to the minister because we, too, want a safety net designed to suit our needs both now and in the future.

• (1850)

We must listen to Canadians. The magnitude of this debate is such that its success will depend on achieving some kind of national consensus. In order to achieve that consensus we must assure ourselves and all Canadians that apart from our new social program regime, every effort is made to attend all possible opportunities on the revenue side and elsewhere on the expenditure side.

We must be as creative and fair as we possibly can in addressing our fiscal situation or we will not be able to count on the support of those who need to know the system is fair. We must remind ourselves that our social programs have and continue to be designed with a purpose; to mitigate against poverty, inequity, regional disparity and uneven opportunity.

The reality now is that the fault lies with the system, an outdated system on which far too many with tremendous capabilities have to depend. Our labour market needs these people but we have to find better ways to marry the employment needs of Canadians with the employment needs of Canada.

We are entering a more enlightened era of governing and of offering aid to citizens who need assistance. We have progressed through earlier notions of simple charity and through the 1960s notion of entitlement.

I am pleased that in this reform we are moving further along that continuum. We now recognize the differences between those with and those without, the haves and the have nots, the empowered and the enfranchised and those unempowered and disenfranchised. These differences are far greater than merely money and material assets.

These differences are far more fundamental; differences in skills, confidence, access to opportunity be it financial, academic or professional. These are the factors and the measures against which we must judge the integrity, suitability, sustainability and success of our social programs.

These are the dimensions needed to reflect an enlightened, holistic, modern approach to people, their needs, their goals and their personal desires. I want to emphasize that the cornerstone of this exercise is to recognize the importance of giving people control over their own lives, to let individuals themselves be the decision makers and architects of their own destiny.

Our paternalistic system of defining and administering to the needs of people is approaching an end. I cannot overstate, as we engage in this transition, our need to provide short term support during the progression from unemployment to employment.

As a New Brunswicker I am proud of the fact that we are moving in the direction of greater independence. Just as we need to be able to rely on the support of the federal government to help us through this transition, so too do citizens struggling to improve their own lot in life.

Practically, I would propose special consideration must be given to the unique seasonal nature of the Atlantic Canada workforce. I wholeheartedly support the need to offer training, counselling and choices to those historically dependent on federal programs such as unemployment insurance.

I would also maintain the need for continued income support where present circumstances simply do not allow for many seasonal workers to enjoy a sufficient annual income. We must seize the opportunity to make the entire social system more client based, more efficient, less bogged down, less heavily weighted with administrative infrastructure.

I conclude by appealing to all Canadians to participate in this review regardless of their personal predisposition or politics. Even past positions should not get in the way of helping the government do what is right by Canadians. Lives are at stake, many people are depending on us. We cannot allow the impact of the exercise to be dismissed.

I believe that the solutions to the challenges before us lie in the hearts and minds of compassionate, caring, committed Canadians. Change is necessary. Resources are scarce. We must collectively, hopefully collegially, create a new system that captures the generosity and compassion of Canadians that have served us so long and so well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member who spoke before me. I found his presentation very philosophical. I would like to tell him about a very practical case that I dealt with today in my office, which reflects some of the details of this reform. After hearing about the proposed reforms on television, one of my constituents gave me some historical background. I will read it to you and I will certainly ask questions on this.

• (1855)

To put things in their historical context, if your parents or your grandparents had mentally handicapped relatives, they would have been put to work on the farm. Nowadays, with automation, these people have become vulnerable to unemployment. How many people in Canada are handicapped and cannot work because of a deficiency? Whatever their handicap, many places will not hire them.

Is this new reform penalizing these people who want to work but were abandoned by the industry? Many of them are, through no fault of their own, permanently unemployed. There are many of them, more than we may think. Do you think that this reform will include some mechanism to prevent these vulnerable people from being penalized by the proposed measures? That is the question I want to ask my distinguished colleague.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the questions. It allows me the opportunity to speak specifically to the rather targeted nature of the changes. A large part of the reason we are engaged in this discussion has to do with the fact that the Minister of Human Resources Development has invited Canadians to help priorize what is important to social policy spending.

I would say the member has hit the nail on the head. We have to make sure there are sufficient opportunities for those people who are not able to be employed. At the same time, we have to make sure there are opportunities for people, regardless of disability, who would like to work and very often can work, but are constrained by a system that requires them to define themselves as being unemployable to get benefits.

It is deplorable that people who otherwise would love to be working—in many cases that is the case in that particular community—are restricted by virtue of the programs they are participating in. I welcome the opportunity to point that out.

Regarding the rather philosophical nature of my discourse I can only say I really believe that is the tone we should bring to this debate as we launch it, because we want to involve Canadians. The first place to start is the values around which this review should take place.

Clearly my background as a proud member of the party that I support leans me toward supporting the kinds of programs that would offer opportunity to the people the member mentions. As we engage the nation in this debate we are all obliged to set out the parameters and bring a philosophical framework to the discussion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert): Madam Speaker, I have lots of sympathy for the Liberal members who must rise in this House and speak in favour of a bill which is not justifiable. It is unjustifiable because it does not state things clearly.

When they talk about such a bill being compassionate, when they pretend its intent is to meet people's needs, when we know quite well it is meant to save money, I might agree with the idea of saving money, but they are not telling it as it is, and I do not agree with that.

During the election campaign, the Bloc Quebecois said we should cut government spending by $10 billion. The government adopted part of our ideas and is trying to cut back, but in all the wrong places. Instead of reducing government spending, they cut into the social safety net we painstakingly set up by paying out large sums of money and they do not touch the machinery of government. Who will benefit ultimately? Students who will see their tuition fees increase? How can they pretend this bill meets their needs? Women who will now receive unemployment benefits only if they prove their spouse is not earning too much? How can this bill meet the needs of those people? How will the frequently unemployed who will see their benefits decrease—

• (1900)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Unfortunately, your time has expired unless you can reply in 30 seconds.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Madam Speaker, in my 30 seconds I would say that I also feel sympathy for my colleague. Never having sat in opposition I sympathize with the nature of this place being somewhat adversarial. It is very difficult for members on the other side to see the benefits of some of the things that are proposed. So perhaps we share a sympathy toward each other.

As to the fact that my colleague claims his party has told us about its deficit reduction plans, our plan is to reduce the deficit by the end of the third year to 3 per cent of the gross domestic product.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Madam Speaker, here it is finally, the famous social security reform we have been hearing about for such a long time. Since I am a member of the Human Resources Development Committee, I can tell you the birth was a laborious process because we started with a project for an action plan and ended up with a discussion paper and that is almost the opposite of what should normally happen.

At the outset, the social security reform was to be a job creation tool. There is no job creation proposal in the program tabled. It was to be a source of pride, an incentive for Quebecers to stay in Canada, but I think it will be more of an incentive to the contrary.

In fact, the reform project we have here does nothing but manage the inefficiencies of the existing system. It contains nothing that would lead to true job creation. To find some good points, we can say that there is an excellent illustration here of what is going wrong. We are told, for instance, that in 1968 the unemployment rate was at 5 per cent in Canada. In 1982, it was at 9.3 per cent. That was from the beginning of the Trudeau years to the period just before the arrival of Mr. Mulroney in office. In 1993, it was at 10.2 per cent. What kind of system has produced that? In what kind of country are we living to get results such as this?

In a graph that we find here, we are also told that there are 20 per cent more jobs for university graduates than a few years ago. For people with post–secondary diplomas, there are 6 per cent more jobs and for people without these diplomas, 20 per cent less jobs. If we would follow the normal logic of this, we would say that we will have to find ways to get jobs for those people without post–secondary diplomas.

But on the contrary, the government is going on a witch hunt, only it is the unemployed who are the prey. It has decided that there would possibly be two categories of unemployed now: the unemployed who are using unemployment insurance occasionally, by accident, and the others, the bad people, those who are using it three, four, five times in five years, in fact, the seasonal workers. Lester B. Pearson must be spinning in his grave when he sees what the Liberals have done, because this reform is simply a continuation of what the Conservatives would have done last year.

Yesterday, the previous minister responsible, Mr. Valcourt, was laughing his head off on television because he, at least, had said during the election campaign that he would do that, so he was defeated because people did not want that. Liberals won because they were saying that they would create jobs, but they are going back to the Conservative program. The message for Canadians will be that Liberals or Conservatives, it comes to the same thing and that next time, they will be out too. But that will be the task of the Canadians, because we will surely have chosen to get out of this boat which is sinking.

What I would like to say is that when people who are working in peat bogs in Saint–Ludger–de–Rivière–du–Loup or Rivière–Ouelle, when people who are working in the forests will see this, they will not feel disillusion, but anger and discontent. They will only feel like coming to tell us, and I hope they do so before the committee, that this is crazy. Whoever wrote this has not been outside of Ottawa for a long time.

• (1905)

As for the minister who approves this kind of paper, he probably has a department where so much is going on that it is easy for people to slip things past him from time to time. In any case, what we see on the Table has no connection with the economic situation in my part of Quebec or the Maritimes or regions that survive on seasonal employment, and the paper contains nothing that meets the needs of people in our part of the country.

How did we get into this situation? First of all, we have to say that Canada is a regular dinosaur. Its reaction time is slower than anything I have ever seen.

Last year in October 1993, we had a promise that reforms would be introduced as soon as possible. Now, we have a working paper. First it was proposals for reform, then a plan of action and now we have a working paper. I suppose the next version will be a draft prepared by the successor of the present minister.

Finally, the process broke down for the same reasons it will break down again. There was a refusal to confront structural problems. When we look at Canada, I think we have to be perfectly honest and say: The real problem is not that the federal government did not have the right ideas at the right time. The problem is that the whole architecture of the system has to be changed. If I were a federalist, I would say we have to decentralize to adapt solutions to local needs. I know it is practically impossible to change the system, so for us the answer would be to create another country next door with a more decent approach to the needs of its people.

The other point I wanted to raise was how we got into this situation. The answer is that we keep perpetuating major sources of duplication. In Quebec, we created the Société québécoise du développement de la main–d'oeuvre, an agency that was ready to take on the entire responsibility for manpower training. Today, however, this agency, which was ready and willing to go ahead, is just marking time because no agreement has been reached by the federal and provincial governments. Annually, $250 million is being wasted in the case of Quebec alone, because the federal government has refused to decentralize responsibility for manpower training.

Far too much time and energy is spent on consultation at the local level, because people who live in the regions have to get organized any way, whether we are talking about the people at the SQDM or Employment and Immigration. They will do what they can because they know the people in the community and they are able to work with them. However, the time spent on consultation is time they would otherwise have been able to invest in developing employment in their community. There is a lesson here, but there is nothing in the reform paper that addresses these issues.

The federal government therefore insists on playing a role in professional skills training. We have known for years that the federal government's involvement was pure duplication. For years we have had a consensus in Quebec. Employers, unions, political parties, everybody is on the same wavelength. You do not see such agreement very often, and we should capitalize on it. Even the federal government should have understood that. Yet, for whatever reason, we always avoid coming up with the real solution. The reason might be that the vision is too bureaucratic. It has been too long since a minister was really in control.

It is high time that cabinet shape up and say that it is really in charge. Maybe it could start by travelling throughout Canada to find out what people need and then translate that into orders to their deputies. Then they could tell them: "From now on, that is what you are going to do", instead of "Give me the report so that I can know what to answer during Question Period."

There is another reason why this reform is not satisfactory, and I will show it with an example. There really is a double standard in the government. Let us compare family trusts and the reform of social programs and unemployment insurance. For months, we have been trying to get information on family trusts, to find out how much money is involved. We are not even saying that family trusts are unacceptable, because we do not know. The government refuses to produce any information on the matter. We are unable to find out how much money is invested in those trusts and the government is not helping.

Conversely, for unemployment insurance, we get all possible information on the number of unemployed, on the percentage of those who have used UI three, four or five times during the last five years.

• (1910)

The government can keep close track of people who have a much smaller income. With the new reform, an individual who applies for UI benefits will be required to disclose the financial situation of his or her spouse to see if that person really needs UI.

We are faced with a situation in which people who make $20,000, $30,000, $40,000 or $50,000 a year will have to meet requirements that do not exist when it comes to family trusts worth tens of millions of dollars. According to a survey, the average family trust has assets amounting to $10 million. Would it not be possible to spend as much time going after family trusts as we are trying to fix unemployment insurance?

The government is turning unemployment insurance into a fiscal management tool when historically it has been a way to redistribute wealth and to allow people in different regions of the country to make a decent living. On the other hand, it permits family trusts to put billions of dollars in tax havens for 80 years.

Before, we had a 21–year rule, but in 1992, it was decided to add 60 years to it. Eighty years without paying any tax. Even if, in the end, you still have to pay that gives you a lot more time to plan your taxes than when every two weeks you have to fill out a card to see whether or not you have worked during these past two weeks. This is some kind of a double standard, and I believe that the government is largely to be blamed for it.

That brings me to a matter which, in my mind, is of the utmost importance in all that. I mean the independence issue. In Quebec, we are often asked what will happen if Quebec separates. This proposed reform of our social programs brings me to ask myself a much more pertinent question: what will happen if Canada keeps on going in this same direction?

What we are offered for the next few years is cuts in the unemployment insurance program, a witch hunt against unemployed workers, and a two–tier system. Some system! The government will keep track of each claimant with a smart card. The rate of benefit will depend on how often he will have applied. Employers' premiums will be calculated according to the unemployment rate in their industry or the rate of cyclical unemployment they generate.

Personally I am not interested in the kind of country this will produce. It will not eliminate waste. We will still have a very costly bureaucracy. Therefore, I believe that it is important for Quebecers, Canadians also, but mostly Quebecers, to look at this project in the context of their future.

Of course, if Quebec becomes a sovereign country, we will not find ourselves in paradise overnight. We will have to manage things, to decide how to allocate funds, but we will at least be in a system where we can control all the data and decide that the system—whether someone is unemployed and on welfare or a real unemployed worker who receives UI benefits—should be changed and managed from a single data base by a government with all the tools needed to deal with the problem.

At the present time, the UI part of the system is handled by the federal government while Quebec is responsible for part of welfare. The federal proposal even encourages the provinces to opt out of welfare by giving them "candy" so that they feel compelled to join the federal program. It is very clear, I think, that this is not the way of the future.

• (1915)

Only yesterday, three provinces with more than 60 per cent of Canada's population immediately said no to the proposed reform. I think that their position is justified in the light of their responsibility and desire to do the right thing in the future.

I think it is important for Quebecers to say that they do not want that kind of Canada and to realize the painful situation they are in because of the national debt, a large part of which is due to the country's structure and confirmed by the proposed social reform program.

I think that people want a different country that can and wants to be on the move. Canada seems stuck in a vision and a structure preventing us from evolving and getting anywhere.

As I said earlier, I feel like we are finally witnessing the end of the Canada that was put in place, amazingly enough, by the Liberal Party itself. Let us look back at the Pearson years, even at the first years of the Trudeau government when there was a desire to be fair to the people. The reform discussion paper that was tabled this week marks the first–class burial of this desire to redress the balance in the Canadian economy.

This proposed reform also includes significant setbacks, notably for women. The right to collect benefits will now be linked to spousal income, which takes us back a few years. We are going back to a situation where, for 20, 25 or 30 years, women fought to gain independence and pull the rug from under them in what I referred to earlier as unemployment management. Instead of developing a plan that would promote, through a constructive policy, job creation, all that is achieved through this reform is unemployment management.

To conclude, I will tell the minister this, as the opportunity arises for opinions to be voiced throughout Canada, although the government seems to have already made up its mind: I encourage individuals who are part of groups representing those members of our society who need assistance as well as employers and anyone who wants this country to function properly to come and tell this government what is not working in here.

Reports from the OECD and other international organizations on the unemployment situation often show that, in every country that has relied only on employability and done nothing else besides developing rules of employability, the funds required were never made available and, at the end of the day, it was a dead loss.

I suggest that the government must think things over to ensure that, if opportunities to increase employability are created, there will also be jobs available. Otherwise, this reform may produce nothing but more dissatisfaction.

To paraphrase Gilles Vigneault, let me warn the minister that by blustering like that, he is stirring up quite a storm.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, a while ago, I heard a Liberal member state that we should take our own destiny in our own hands. This involves a great many things, particularly for women. But what this green paper contains concerning women is plain awful.

Just today, I think my staff has received about 50 telephone calls from women in my riding who are worried. They are worried because they have fought for years to get recognized and carve a place for themselves in society.

• (1920)

Today, they are told: "From now on, when you apply for UI benefits, we will check your husband's income to determine how much you will get". That is disgusting!

For 20 to 25 years, women have fought, they have fought something fierce, to take their place in society. Today, with this legislation, we are telling them that they no longer have a place in this society. We are simply telling them: "From now on, you will be dependent upon your spouse's income". That is totally unacceptable.

I represent a riding the economy of which depends on the tourist industry to the tune of 90 per cent. Some of my constituents are seasonal workers. They work, 10, 11, perhaps 12 weeks, I do not know exactly. They will be penalized because, according to this green paper, they are usually unemployed. But that is not so; they are people who depend on tourism for a living.

You know what I would do with that reform? I would take it and just throw it in the garbage because I do not believe in it. I sincerely believe that we must cut where it really counts. Do not cut the women who have fought so hard, do not cut people who really depend on it. It is not their fault. They would like to work all year if it were possible, but it is impossible for them. These people really depend on seasonal work.

I think it is totally wrong to cut there. Cut the family trusts. Cut where the cuts should be made.

I was a businesswoman before being elected to Parliament and I tell you that I never refused to pay my taxes. When I made money, I never refused to give some to the government. But today, the government is going to take money from the less fortunate.

[*English*]

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I thought we were in the period of questions and comments. This is not supposed to be a period for another speech. I was expecting the hon. member to put a question to her colleague or to make some short comments in accordance with the rule, but it certainly is not an opportunity to make another speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pillitteri): Does the member have a question?

Mrs. Guay: My question is coming. Is that it?

Mr. Allmand: That is it.

Mrs. Guay: Fine.

[*Translation*]

My question is for my dear colleague from the riding of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup: I would like to have your opinion on how women are treated in this green paper and especially on the situation of people who have seasonal jobs.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question. First, she herself was a self-employed businesswoman before she was elected. When she talks about what women go through, I am sure that it is a true reflection of reality.

In this regard, as a member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, I will make an extra effort to have that problem considered. I also call on her to ask women's groups to come and present their views to us so that we can make the government move on this.

As for seasonal jobs, I would answer her with an image and draw her attention to a particular aspect. This reform goes back to the vocabulary on welfare reform used by the defeated Liberal government in Quebec. They talked about bad welfare recipients, people who did not want to work. Now we are hearing the same thing. Seasonal workers who use unemployment insurance regularly will be penalized. After an unemployed person has made three claims in five years, he will be told: "You have a bad mark on your file. The next time you apply, you will get less." So he is made to feel a little guilty for a situation that he is not at all responsible for.

• (1925)

There are industries in which there will always be seasonal employment. In some regions of the country, forestry, agriculture and tourism will always be seasonal activities. There will never be year–round work available. Moreover, workers in these industries are not necessarily prepared to train for jobs which do not exist in their region.

If a person works in a restaurant for 15 or 18 weeks during the summer, you can train him to become a technician, but if there are no jobs for technicians in his region, you are wasting money. This is the conclusion reached by the OECD in a study on unemployment. In all the countries where attempts were made to increase employability without a job creation policy, these efforts were futile. The government will have some time to reconsider, and I hope it will.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my eyes really filled with tears listening to the lugubrious comments about seasonally employed workers. Does the hon. member believe that it is fair, right or even decent that low paid people who work the year round and faithfully pay into UIC are the ones who are paying to support extremely highly paid seasonal workers in certain industries?

For example, I think of fallers in the logging industry in British Columbia. It is not uncommon at all for them to pull $300 a day. They work for a few months and then go on pogey. It is the poor worker who is paying for that. A lot of these people are married. Their spouses work the year round so they have double income. That is not reflected in their benefits.

I wonder if he thinks this is fitting and proper. Even in his own province he will find diamond drillers, for example, in Abitibi who make $150 to $200 a day. They work seasonally, go on pogey and have a good time. It is the poor, hard working person flipping hamburgers at McDonald's and paying year round into the fund who is supporting these people.

I would like to hear the hon. member's opinion on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. It is important not to go overboard. Some people may abuse the system, but problems will not be solved by imposing strict measures right across the country.

Some parts of the country have particular problems. It may be the case back home too. However, the government will not solve a specific problem by implementing a national solution which penalizes a number of workers. Such cases require a more individual approach to correct the situation. In its present form, the reform is based on the premise that seasonal workers do not want permanent jobs, and that is just not true.

In my riding, many people work in the tourism, agriculture or fishing industry, including eel fishing. These people want to work. There is a continuous flow of people coming to my office because they are looking for work, but jobs must be available. A reform like this one would give interesting results only if it included a real job creation strategy. But this is not the case.

• (1930)

Canada is losing ground in terms of productivity, having slipped from 4th place to 14th. We are now behind several small countries such as Denmark and Sweden, which have control over their whole economic development and which are not fighting a federal structure preventing them from performing and getting interesting results. These countries have managed to find solutions while also showing compassion for those who have special needs.

The discussion paper alludes to a guaranteed minimum income, but the idea is immediately rejected on the grounds that it would be too costly to implement. The fact that our population is scattered all over the country, that Quebecers and Canadians have settled throughout the country is a plus. We must ensure that the people can live where they chose to and are given the means to develop their economy. No witch hunt or unemployed hunt will solve our problems. We should rather hunt for jobs so that each and every Canadian can find a position in which he or she can grow and contribute to Canada's wealth.

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Madam Speaker, tonight we are debating the government's discussion paper on social security in Canada entitled "Jobs and Growth". I must say that I take the government at its word when it says this is a discussion paper. It is not a law or bill as I heard a few minutes ago from one of the Bloc Quebecois members. It is not the last word. It is not cast in stone. It is a discussion paper.

It covers such things as unemployment insurance, the Canada assistance plan, assistance to post–secondary education, training, child support and some other matters. However it does not cover our pension program, nor does it cover our medicare program which are being examined in other studies. Many of us are extremely interested in knowing what proposals will come out of those studies.

This discussion paper has certainly identified some serious problems and I congratulate the government for doing that. It has identified the very serious problem of child poverty. It has identified the problems of disincentives for work in many of our welfare programs, and other things.

It has also emphasized some excellent goals. For example there is the goal of lifelong training, the need to continually upgrade our training and our ability to compete in the modern world. There is the goal of a national day care program to permit many women to go to work and earn their living.

All that having been said, I have some serious concerns about some of the proposals in this discussion paper. First of all, with respect to unemployment insurance, if I understand it correctly the paper proposes a 10 per cent cut in unemployment insurance benefits amounting to about $1.7 billion. This is on top of the cuts of about $2.4 billion that were made in the government's budget in the spring.

The government says in this discussion paper that these cuts in unemployment insurance benefits will be used for training. Well, let me point out that historically in this country the unemployment insurance fund was never used for training. It was used to provide support for persons who were unemployed against their will. It helped them to buy the food that was necessary for their family, to pay the rent and to pay the necessary expenses while they were unemployed. It was only under the Tory government of Brian Mulroney that moneys were taken in large amounts out of the unemployment insurance fund to pay for training. Historically that fund was never meant for training and it was not used for training for years and years.

Also, I have a concern that in taking so much money out of the unemployment insurance fund and reducing benefits we are going to leave short those people who are already fully trained. There are many unemployed people who are fully trained. What they need to help them are jobs. They do not need more training. What they need is enough money to keep them and their families going until the next job comes along, until the economy improves.

• (1935)

I am also concerned about the unemployment insurance proposals because of what they might do to seasonal employees. I listened to a member of the Reform Party who suggested that seasonal employees prefer to go on what he calls the pogey. Very few workers prefer to go on the pogey. As a matter of fact as a result of amendments made to the act under the Conservatives if you leave employment you totally lose your unemployment insurance benefits.

I am familiar with the construction industry. The people in Canada's construction industry have a tough time during the winter. They would prefer to work the whole year long, but it is difficult to do that in many parts of Canada because of our climate. They do not prefer to go on unemployment insurance. Unemployment insurance is a definite reduction in income for them but it is all they have in the winter, even though their wages are good when they are working.

The other thing they must keep in mind is that Canada is a country with many one industry towns. There are people living in towns that for example are almost completely mining towns, such as Sudbury, Ontario. For people who are fully trained and excellent workers in the mining industry when the world market for a metal goes down and all those people are put out of work, it is not a question of retraining. It is a question of making sure those workers have enough money to see them through until the market price for copper, nickel, or whatever goes up again.

I can remember a few years ago when the market prices for copper plunged. Thousands of workers were put out of work in Sudbury. These were fully trained, highly skilled mining workers but thank god for the unemployment insurance system because it saw them through until the market prices for those metals went up again.

There are many one industry towns in Canada, whether they are lumber towns, mining towns, railroad towns and so on.

Finally, I have to ask whether any government now has the right to tamper with the unemployment insurance program. The Mulroney Tories withdrew the government's contribution to the unemployment insurance fund which was about $4 billion. Before Mulroney did that the unemployment insurance fund was made up of contributions from workers, employers and the government out of general revenue, especially when the rate of unemployment went above 6 per cent. Mulroney stopped that and we criticized Mulroney severely for doing that.

Now many workers and unions say if it is only workers and employers who are contributing to the fund, they should control the fund as is done in Germany. In Germany a corporation is made up of representatives from the unions and the employers which controls the unemployment insurance fund, sets the benefits, sets the rates of contribution and so on. I have concern about that.

I am fully in support of the goal in the paper that we need much more training. Of course we need much more training but not as we said in previous years out of the unemployment insurance fund. Training benefits the whole society. It should be paid for out of general revenue and not by the contributions of workers and employers who are contributing to a fund that is to see them through when they are unfortunately put out of work. Therefore I have concern about that particular provision.

I also have concern about this concept that jobs are the answer to the poverty and the social security problem in Canada. There are many working poor in Canada. For many young people a job alone is not the answer. We must look at what kind of jobs people are getting these days. There are a growing number of people, especially women, working in service type jobs. They get minimum wage, it is temporary or part time work, no union, no benefits. They cannot start a family. It is almost impossible for a young person to get ahead in those kinds of jobs.

Somebody mentioned McDonald's. Unfortunately there are too many people working in McDonald's type jobs. I like a big mac from time to time myself but that is not the type of employment which is going to enable people to get married, start a family and buy a home.

I am also concerned with the provisions in the paper with respect to universities. Under the present program the government gives money to the provinces to assist with post–secondary education. We know that money is committed—there have been some problems with some provinces—but it is committed to the universities. The universities to a certain extent have some guarantee of funding with that money.

Under this proposal we terminate that type of funding. We give more money to students so that they will have more money, it is said, to pay tuition at whatever university they please. With this proposal we will find that universities are left in a doubtful position. They have guarantees of funding now. They will not have guarantees. There will be very serious risks. Students may decide not to go to university. They may decide not to get those loans. They should, but they may not.

• (1940)

We in Canada need world class universities. In my city of Montreal I would say we have four world class universities: McGill, Université de Montréal, Concordia, Université du Québec à Montréal. With this kind of proposal I do not know what will happen to those types of what I call world class universities, when they are not assured of that type of funding.

In conclusion, I have to say I do not know to what extent this reform package is being driven by demands of the Department of Finance and the problems of the deficit. All I can say is that we said in the election campaign that we would deal with the deficit by economic growth and jobs, not by cuts. Consequently, I am a bit concerned by what I read in this paper.

I am also concerned by the suggestion that there is not enough money for these types of social programs. I believe we should cut out waste wherever waste is present, but on the other hand I see too many instances in our society where there is waste in consumption. We are closing hospitals. At the same time there is an unbridled pressure to buy more and more consumer goods which are not essential.

Madam Speaker, I see you signalling my time is up. Let me say this: There are some good proposals in this document, but there are some that give me grave concern. I will reserve judgment on those. I will see how the discussion goes in the country. I encourage Canadians to participate in the discussion, but I hope these proposals are not the last word, that they are not written in stone.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce and I must say that he was true to himself. This government member has shown some independence of mind, by voicing his own concerns. It is interesting to hear such statements in this House.

He began by addressing the issue of unemployment and decrying the practices and orientations of the previous Conservative government, under Mr. Mulroney, and I want to indicate to him that I have come to the same conclusion after reading the discussion paper, and that is that the unemployment insurance fund should still be used to support training.

Then, the hon. member mentioned his concerns regarding the universities, and I agree with him. I took note of these two points he raised. As far as the unemployment insurance situation, for which he blames the Conservatives, and the universities are concerned, if the hon. member has read the same document I did yesterday or today, he must have come to the same conclusion I reached. I think that the universities are very concerned about the increase of students indebtedness, the rise in tuition fees and the reduction of transfers to the provinces and that these issues concern the hon. member of Notre–Dame–de–Grâce, so I would appreciate his comments on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, this paper identifies some real problems with our social security system. I congratulate the government for putting those problems before us and offering some alternative solutions.

I also said it emphasized some goals which I approve of. I approve of the goal of eliminating child poverty. I approve of the goal of eliminating the disincentives from the welfare system. On the other hand I said I had serious concerns about some of the alternative proposals for unemployment insurance and for assistance to the universities.

I speak with respect to unemployment insurance because I was the critic in opposition for five years on questions of unemployment insurance and employment. For five years I was the critic for the Minister of Employment and Immigration and I criticized both Flora MacDonald and Bernard Valcourt when they brought in bills which did some of these things.

• (1945)

Our government is putting forward this discussion paper in an attempt to get some discussion started on how to deal with the problems in the system. I do not deny there are problems in the system. The discussion paper has overlooked the fact that we have many one–industry towns in Canada, that we have many seasonal workers, that we have many workers who are fully trained. They do not need training when they are unemployed, they need enough money to help them and their families.

I am being consistent with the position I have taken for years and years, especially with respect to the Conservative government under Brian Mulroney who made some very terrible changes in the unemployment insurance system. I hope we do not do this. I hope some of these things are not written in stone, that they are not the last word. That is what a discussion paper is supposed to be.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Madam Speaker, I wonder if my hon. colleague could elaborate a bit on a couple of aspects of the unemployment insurance program.

Does my hon. colleague feel that unemployment insurance is actually unemployment insurance, and whether the premiums paid by both employee and employer should be commensurate with risk so that it is in fact unemployment insurance. The other question is this. What about the person earning $50,000 and working six months versus a person earning $16,000 a year who works day in and day out—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry. The hon. member has scarcely one minute.

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, in answer to the question yes, it should be a real insurance program. I refer to the program in Germany where the Germans have a quasi–public corporation made up of employers and employee representatives. They decide what the rate of premium should be and what the rate of benefits should be. It is strictly an unemployment insurance program and has been proposed by some of the unions in Canada.

With respect to those who have high wages and those who have lower wages, the member knows that even under the present system there are caps on what the high wage earner will contribute and there are caps on what they will receive.

What the $50,000 a year man might receive in unemployment insurance benefits is nowhere near his $50,000 income. We have four categories of contributions and four categories of benefits. They are subject to fairly low limits when one considers the plight they face today.

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak tonight on social security reform.

May I add that I am also proud to serve a Prime Minister who has had the wisdom and courage to deal with an issue that will lead Canadians into the 21st century. I would also like to congratulate the Minister of Human Resources Development whose hard work, perseverance and leadership have resulted in an initiative whose fruition will be absolutely essential to the well–being of Canadians.

Our reform of social security is not being done in isolation. It is one of four components of the government's job and growth agenda, which also includes ensuring a healthy fiscal climate, reviewing government programs and priorities and strengthening the performance of the Canadian economy, in investment, innovation and trade.

As a government we intend to pursue all four pillars aggressively. It is important that we understand what the social security reform process is all about. It is not simply about cutting government expenditures, although this is important, and fiscal considerations cannot be ignored in all of our deliberations.

It is also not simply an exercise in being more efficient although the elimination of duplication, the reduction of overhead and the co–ordination between the various levels of government are also important.

It is not simply about creating a quick fix for an ailing system. We are not prepared to simply tinker with the system so that it can stagger forward for another three or four years. The time for basic reform is upon us and we are prepared to meet and take up the challenge.

What this process is really all about are jobs and security. It is about helping Canadians in whatever socioeconomic position to be gainfully employed and to provide their families with a life of security within a system that we and future generations can afford to maintain. Our social security reform process will address three major issues which are critical to ensuring that Canadians can provide the best form of security for themselves and their families, a job with a fair wage.

• (1950)

In this respect the discussion paper which the minister tabled yesterday deals with three areas which must be addressed if we are to assist Canadians in achieving job security: First, ensuring that our young people receive the necessary education to compete in the job environment of the 21st century. Second, to ensure that Canadians who are suffering from structural unemployment are given the necessary training and other tools to re–enter and maintain long term employment in the workforce. Third, to ensure that the disincentives built into the income security system are eliminated and that individuals are encouraged to work rather than be given an incentive to stay at home.

It is true that no one can promise that an education will guarantee anyone a job. What we can guarantee, almost without exception, is that without an education a person will have less of a chance to obtain a job. To demonstrate this we merely need to look at the statistics.

In the last three years job growth for university graduates has increased 17 per cent. There has been no growth of jobs for high school graduates. Most telling, there has been a 19 per cent reduction in jobs for people who did not complete high school.

The discussions of how best to fund post–secondary education to make sure that it is accessible to all Canadians and how to make sure that is relevant and meaningful are important objectives of this reform and forms an integral part of our agenda for jobs.

We must provide Canadians who become unemployed the necessary tools to rejoin the workforce. Forty years ago when the unemployment insurance program came into being, most unemployment was of a short term nature, usually caused by a cyclical decrease in consumer demand which was restored as the business cycle revolved. After periods of time which were measured in months rather than years, individuals would be recalled to their place of employment.

Unfortunately this is no longer the case in many instances. There exists in Canada today a significant amount of structural unemployment. People who are losing their jobs are doing so not because of cyclical decline in demand but rather because the jobs have disappeared permanently. We need to face up to this reality and understand that not only do workers need to be provided with income support, and they do, but also with tools so they can adapt themselves to new jobs which are being created.

These tools include better access into the support system; provision of basic literacy and numeracy skills; training to assist adaptation to new technology; on the job work experience to allow employees to be more effective and incentives for hiring unemployed workers. In this area we must ensure the responsibility is shared by giving responsibility to communities, local businesses, labour and educational groups so that they, who best understand the needs of their local community, can drive the process.

We must work at removing the disincentives for people who are receiving income support from returning to the workforce. The provinces must be given greater flexibility so they can meet the needs and priorities in their regions. Child care needs to be provided so that single mothers can return to the workforce. Individuals must have the opportunity to obtain entry level jobs with a gradual reduction in benefits and move away from the all or nothing scenarios which presently exist.

We must end the cycle of child poverty so prevalent in single parent families. We need to ensure that the federal child tax benefit is made stronger and target it to where it is needed most. As I said earlier, we need to work with the provinces to ensure better child care and child development. We must work hard to ensure that child poverty is not the result of irresponsible, non–custodial parents who refuse to pay court ordered child support.

The discussion paper tabled yesterday is not the final word. The final word belongs to the Canadian people. Not only is the government committed to receiving input from people across Canada, but I am personally committed to hearing the concerns and ideas the residents of my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka have to provide.

• (1955)

On November 7 and 8 I will host a forum at the Rosseau Community Centre to hear what my constituents have to say. Their views, their letters and their presentations will come back to Ottawa with me to be presented to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. The particular concerns generated by a seasonal tourism economy, the challenges of operating in rural Ontario will be brought forward to the government and will be considered.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this meaningful process. I am committed, along with my colleagues, to ensuring that Canadians have the best social security system, a stable job with a fair wage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated the fact that, in his speech, the hon. member acknowledged that one of the goals of this social program reform is spending cuts. The hon. member said that this was not the only purpose of the reform, but one of its goals. This only goes to confirm an article published in the *Toronto Star*, not known for its animosity towards the Liberals. So, what they mention must be a minimum figure. Some people say that the federal government secretly plans to cut $7.5 billion in social programs in the next five years. This means that major cuts are really part of this reform.

My question concerns rather another aspect of my colleague's Speech. He said we must avoid overlapping. On page 76 of the reform proposal, we are told all in the same page about federal intervention in three different sectors: daycare, education and welfare—which are all provincial jurisdictions. How can the government reduce overlapping by increasing its interventions in provincial jurisdictions?

[*English*]

Mr. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, let me comment on the two points that my hon. colleague made.

This review is going to be needed in any event because our social policy programming needs to be updated. But if he thinks that we are going to undertake a review without trying to find cost efficiencies, without trying to deliver our programs in a more efficient way, without trying to get better value for each dollar that we spend, then he is totally wrong.

From my discussions with the Canadian people, from the discussions with the people in my riding, from the telephone calls and the mail I receive, Canadians have said two things. They want a social security system that they can depend on, that is going to last because it is going to be affordable for us and for the future generation and that this social policy review must deal with both of those issues.

As to dealing with specific areas of jurisdiction, I have listened today, yesterday and the day before to the Bloc Quebecois say over and over again that their major concern about the social policy paper is not that Canadians or Quebecers have more opportunity for employment. They have not told us about how they think this social policy review can improve social programs or their suggestions. What they have told us is that their primary worry is jurisdiction.

I suspect that the individual in Quebec, just as is the individual in Ontario, is not so much concerned about where their cheque is coming from. They are concerned that there is a social security safety net to protect them. They are not so much concerned whether we have constitutional *t's* crossed and *i's* dotted. They are concerned that we have efficient government and a social program that can be delivered in a cost efficient manner that will be there for themselves and for their children.

• (2000)

If the Bloc Quebecois wants to continue on and on to put this in the terms of a jurisdictional question, I think that your electorate in Quebec will say what this is about is to ensure that we have a social safety net; what this is about is to ensure that we have an opportunity to re–enter the job market; what this is about is to give Canadians the best social program, a secure job with a decent wage. That is what Canadians want.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to finally have an opportunity to speak to the social programs review. I have waited with great anticipation for this day since January 18 when His Excellency, the Governor General, in the speech from the throne announced that the government would initiate an action plan for major reform of the social programs in Canada. Two weeks later, on January 31, the Minister of Human Resources Development asked all members of this House to work with the government to develop an action plan for renewal of our social safety net.

After all that we expected an action plan. Nine months of gestation and the elephant has given birth to a mouse. Now that we are here we have no action plan but a discussion paper full of maybes.

The minister says he will consult with Canadians. In phase one the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development held consultations with interest groups, private citizens in person and through the media of teleconferencing. Now the committee is scheduled to embark on five weeks of face to face consultation.

I had hoped that this would give us an opportunity to hear from Canadians who do not represent the special interest groups and whose inherent bias and sole mandate is to perpetuate their own existence. The Government of Canada, the taxpayers of Canada, is paying $4 million in intervener funding to interest groups to prepare their presentations and no doubt we will hear from some of the same interest groups that we subsidized to testify in phase one.

The government has made it virtually impossible for ordinary Canadians to prepare submissions because the deadline is November 7. The real information, the technical papers, will not even be available until late in October. Perhaps the minister thinks that this is some kind of a Hallowe'en treat or maybe a trick.

After many delays and much fanfare and many leaks, we are left with a watered down series of questions that offers little direction and no plan of action at all. It has been said that the minister hopes to generate intelligent, informed discussion at every dinner table in the nation. The premise is right on. We are hoping that this reform would actually place all the social programs on the table for discussion. We felt certain that the minister would want to give Canadians an opportunity to examine and challenge the principles on which existing social programs are based so that informed discussions can take place and decisions can be made.

To facilitate this discussion did the minister even give Canadians the information they need to initiate informed discussion? I do not think so. Is he trying to fool the people? He thinks that perhaps if he fills them full of mumbo–jumbo, the type that we heard here today in Question Period from him, eventually people will leave the table and say "I've had enough, let government fix this mess". He does not want Canadians, it appears, to know the real truth about social programs.

You can fool some of the people some of the time, or something like that, but Canadians do not really know what their future holds and they want to know. They need to know so that they can plan for their future and their retirement years. After they have paid their taxes will they have any money left? Very likely they will not. They had better not count on the Canada pension plan or old age assistance to sustain them in their declining years because there will not be enough money to go around. Today every dollar that is paid into the Canada pension plan is paid out the other end to a current beneficiary.

Canadians want to know what their future holds and we believe they have every right to know. Forewarned is forearmed. The Reform party wants to ensure that Canadians are fully informed so that they can make conscientious decisions about their futures.

The Liberals set their target for deficit reduction at 3 per cent of GDP.

• (2005)

If it is really serious about making this a reality the government is left with few options: either a meaningful reduction in spending or an increase in taxes or a combination of the two. We do not have that information. It does not show up anywhere in this paper. We think that is one of the first question Canadians will want answered.

If young people want a payout from CPP the premiums that they are paying in will have to double, triple or perhaps quadruple before they reach retirement years. It will not take that long. By the year 2010, about the time the baby boomers are set to retire, government revenues will be totally consumed by interest on the debt and by social program spending.

We know government has other financial commitments that will have to be met as well. What will happen to the pension the baby boomers thought they could rely on in the so–called golden years? The gold in those years will be tarnished and there will not even be any coppers traded for the necessities of life. I believe that the best way to help Canadians and their families prepare for their future and to fight poverty is to reduce the tax burden.

In pre–World War II days when government entered into the foray of income support, I am sure that no one ever dreamed it would go this far into debt, this far into fostering a dependency on government to provide for our well–being. For too long people have believed that grants are gifts from the government. Actually everyone knows we have to pay the taxes in first.

This government and its predecessors have given with one hand while increasing taxation and taking with the other. Canadians want to know what this government's agenda is. Is it to protect those who cannot help themselves or is it income redistribution? In this country we punish people for being successful and we seem to reward those who are not.

Some will say that sounds pretty radical. Wait until you hear this quote: "We are not interested in paying able–bodied people merely because they were not able to find work. We propose social aid for those people who are unable to work because they are crippled, aged or mentally ill". Does that sound like a radical statement? This is a quote from Tommy T.C. Douglas, former CCF Premier of Saskatchewan, talking about social assistance programs in his province. From that time to now we have arrived at the place where we think we have to subsidize everybody.

Those who have tinkered with the expansion of our social programs over the last quarter century have lost track of the target. In trying to help everybody the government has incurred a massive debt that today has reached a whopping $533 billion. This amounts to $18,000 for every man, woman and child in this country. If we want to do anything about child poverty, I suggest we do something about that $18,000 tax bill.

Past enlightened governments have allowed this country to fall off the rails and now it is time to get it back on track. The role of government in providing help must be redefined. If we continue with the status quo we will not be able to help those who are truly in need. It is imperative that we reinstate the balance between public support and private responsibility. We have allowed people to become reliant on government and now the government is broke.

This document does not leave me with the impression that this government is looking beyond the next election. There are Canadians who truly need help. To ensure that they will be cared for the government must immediately eliminate handouts to corporations and interest groups and reform the members of Parliament pension plan.

After all, how can we expect Canadians to embrace social program reform if the government is not prepared to reform its own pension plan? The Reform Party MPs have opted out of the pension scheme but I notice that none of the other parties has followed our lead.

As I said earlier, the minister asked this House to work with the government to develop an action plan for the renewal of the safety net. From what we have seen of the green paper, this no action plan, he needs help.

I want to assure members that we will help wherever possible to bring about real social reforms. In that vein I will be glad to share with the members of the government what the Reform Party believes. We believe that social programs should be financially sustainable.

• (2010)

We believe that social programs should be targeted to those who are most in need. Social program delivery should be decentralized and the family should be strengthened as the primary caregiver in society.

The Reform Party is committed to real social program reform and we believe that if the government follows these principles, Canadians can have a plan for the future.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Madam Speaker, I listened with great intent to the member's comments. I must admit that I do not exactly hear anything very positive. I heard it is not working, that it is not right and the lead in was basically that the government does not have a plan.

The government put out a plan, put out the framework for a plan before us. The concept is to go back and consult with one's constituents to get the input of Canadians in this process. It is very important.

I hear the Reform people saying why do we not do this tomorrow. The reality is that it has taken us 30 years to get here now. It is not going to get fixed tomorrow afternoon. Hopefully it can get fixed within a year.

The very important part of this is to get Canadians involved in the process. I am conducting a social policy review in my riding on October 23. I have used a householder and sent it out to 40,000 households in my riding to solicit all the possible support and views and different concepts. General Motors is on the panel, the CAW is on our panel. We have the chairman of Durham College chairing it for us.

That is the kind of consultant method that we are going to. I would like to ask the member what he is doing to bring this to the people to get their ideas.

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, this idea of consultation I did say in my remarks is good. When we do consultation over and over again with the same groups of people, and we subsidize them with taxpayers' money to prepare their reports and to bring their remarks to our standing committee—we do this over and over again—when does consultation become excessive? How much consultation is enough consultation?

I submit that we have gone through the consultative process. Sometime we have to start making decisions. If this government is not prepared to make a decision in the first year or year and a half of its mandate, it will be facing an election in the second half of its mandate and then I suggest it will be even more hesitant to make decisions than it is today.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Madam Speaker, I am perplexed by what the member from the Reform Party has said. I have always thought that one of its major points as a party was that it wanted to listen to Canadians and to do it in a very consistent manner.

The fact that Canadians were consulted from January 31 to today is one phase of the consultation process. The hon. member knows that what we would like to get from Canadians is a reaction to the proposals for change in the green book as outlined by the Government of Canada.

I am wondering if during this consultation he will also present to his constituents the Reform Party position on cutting $15 billion from social programs and where exactly he will cut from.

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that the Reform Party has not said that our plan is to cut $15 billion.

What we did say in a news conference is that the Liberal Party has campaigned on a promise to get its deficit down to 3 per cent of GDP. Three per cent of GDP is in the neighbourhood of $25 billion. The deficit today is $40 billion and the media and perhaps even the minister did the arithmetic and came up with the stunning conclusion that somehow their target rates meant that the Reform Party was going to cut $15 billion out.

I have a pretty good imagination. I cannot imagine how they came up with that.

• (2015)

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this debate on the discussion paper on social policy review.

I wish to take a slightly different approach than has been taken so far and concentrate on a particular section of the policy paper that has been presented. I would like to indicate how clearly that discussion paper misses the opportunity for leadership and new thinking for a new economy and for a redirected social policy program.

I recognize that the government has set for itself a major task of tremendous significance that will affect our financial, social and personal well–being in this country.

There is a desperate need to change our social policy. There is a recognition in this particular paper that our economy has become technology oriented and that it is critical for Canada to find a way to capitalize on the technology of tomorrow.

How can we all benefit from this recognition? By recognizing that the world is rapidly changing we have taken the first step in making the transition toward a productive future. But it is only a first step, a very, very tiny one. In real terms this means that the workforce in Canada must change. This too is included in the discussion paper.

Canada must develop a workforce that is well educated, capable and skilled and above all that is primed to participate and anticipate the changes that are coming with respect to the economy in general, their specific jobs and to prepare themselves for the transition that is about to come. A workforce that has those characteristics will indeed be successful in competition.

It requires lifelong learning. Learning I believe is at the basis of a dynamic economy. Only through education and ongoing training of a workforce can that force be equipped to meet market demands.

However, like all the other components in our economy education itself is under tremendous stress. It has become inefficient. It has become too expensive and it is failing the very people it was designed to serve. Canadians are lagging behind, no matter how well educated they are. They are not equipped to tackle the jobs of the market requirements.

Canadians are paying the price for post–secondary education that is out of date, a system that was designed primarily to serve the needs of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. We are in the 1990s. Higher education must be reviewed and must change to reflect today's requirements. That means universities, colleges and technical institutes and other deliverers of educational services and courses. Every avenue of education must be taken to be part of the plan and must be utilized.

I pose this question to the House this evening. What should the federal government's role be in post–secondary education? In particular, how should post–secondary education be funded?

As an educator with 25 years experience and as a provincial politician and now as a federal politician I have witnessed the relationship between education and government in the post–secondary process and throughout Canada. It is from this point of view that I wish now to reflect upon one of the government's proposals.

The proposal is to expand student loans. Student loans are not a new idea in Canada. They have been used to finance education for many years. As a result many graduates have racked up substantial debts and upon graduation, despite the investment, many of them cannot get jobs. The jobs they had and were well paying and looked secure were not. Graduates are underemployed on a part time basis and often on a very short contract basis. Despite the investment in education through student loans there has been no guarantee of employment for graduates despite the fact they have been left with massive debts and no way to repay them.

The key is jobs. There is some suggestion that maybe the government should guarantee these loans. It does not help if the loans cannot be paid back and it adds to the cost of government.

• (2020)

How serious is this problem? One might say that is not that big a problem. In November 1992 the total default in education debts or loans if you will was $1 billion. That is the equivalent of 100,000 students defaulting on a $10,000 loan. That is a significant problem. Many students are not only deep in debt, they are without a job and have very little to show for that debt that they have incurred. Canada has very little to show for that debt. It is unacceptable and it must change.

We are looking for a legitimate role for the federal government in this kind of funding. Leading economists and Canada's leading authority on educational finance or finance of higher education, Dr. E. G. West of Carleton University in Ottawa, says that what we need is a voucher system not a heavier burden on the backs of our young people, a voucher system that would see the federal government distribute its higher education money to students themselves directly in the form of vouchers that would be accepted by universities, colleges and technical schools. These institutions in turn would convert those vouchers into money by redeeming them with the federal government. This voucher system is direct, single, simple, effective, flexible and deals with the individual—talk about decentralization—a legitimate approach for the funding of higher education at least in part.

What are the advantages of such a system? There are many. In the minds of my colleagues and those who are in authority, such an arrangement would encourage healthy competition among institutions to attract students. It would be a preferable arrangement for students too because an arrangement like this would enhance individual choice and make it an effective choice. Students would have more leverage to seek out institutions to meet their needs and the federal cost would be no higher than it is today.

The voucher system would work better for students. It would ensure a higher standard of post–secondary education through competition and would cost the government no more than it costs today.

The voucher system would do much more than that. It would put into the hands of the students consumer power. The students would decide what kind of program, who would deliver it and at what price. It would recognize the diversity of choice of those who seek to learn and those who provide the educational services. It would allow the post–secondary education institution to fine tune the system and like government itself, avoid the expensive duplication and overlap that exists at the present time.

Under this system students would benefit from institutions competing for enrolment between themselves and the students would feel strong and well about their particular decisions. Would they make good decisions? I have dealt with many of these students at the post–secondary level and the post–graduate level and they are very capable of making decisions. They know exactly what kind of program they want and need. If the universities would listen, if some of these services that are provided would listen to the needs and demands of the students and have the wherewithal to give them money needed for their education they would do so.

Students are not only the young. There is a much larger proportion of Canadians who are older adults in various age groups who need further education. These too could be served with this voucher system. It would create a large, political and powerful force at the federal level for higher education if we adopted this voucher system. That force would consist of students, their husbands, their wives, their parents and all those others who would benefit and participate in the decision–making for higher education.

Advanced education would then compete on a much more equal basis in terms of the power that they need so that government supplies those services that we actually have to have in our society.

Finally and most important, it could be expanded beyond simply education to include the training programs under UI and welfare instead of having the turf war that exists between the various departments.

I strongly urge the government to think very seriously not about expanding the loans to students but rather to institute a voucher system and give the student consumer power.

• (2025)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Madam Speaker, the member from the Reform Party has come to the same conclusion as I have. He feels that Canadian students are too heavily indebted, and that this indebtedness can create problems with respect to post–secondary education. He also stated—and I think that we must agree with him—that the key, which is sadly lacking in this document, is employment.

While it is true that university students have a better chance at finding a job than other people, many of them, even though highly educated, have to take a master's degree because they are unable to find work. Some of them even have to go on to their doctorate, because they still cannot find a job, and that leads them deep into debt.

The hon. member spoke of the many advantages to be derived from the student voucher system he put forward, but he did not say where he would get the money for it. His central argument seems to be that he recognizes that the federal government has a funding responsibility with respect to education. The minister's discussion paper and the budget show that the federal government is bent on reducing, and even backing out completely from these cash transfers to provinces.

As he is a former provincial politician, I have another question for him: What role, in his opinion, should the provincial government play in education? He knows very well that education, under the Canadian Constitution, is a provincial area of responsibility. I would like some clarification on the student vouchers he referred to. Where would the money come from? Who would pay?

[*English*]

Mr. Schmidt: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the question. Perhaps I did not explain as clearly as I might have. The intention here is that under the Established Programs Financing Act cash is given to provinces from the federal government. The intention here is that money be given in the form of vouchers to students.

That is where the funding would come from. That is why there is no increase in federal funding over what exists at the present time. That is one point. The second point is in terms of provincial recognition. Absolutely, education is the responsibility of the provinces. This would allow that kind of flexibility to be retained and recognized.

In fact the voucher system could be strengthened immensely if the provinces would do that as well. Then the true freedom of the individual can be expressed to meet the needs that should be there. That will also increase the job opportunities for graduates. Then the programs would be tailored to meet the needs of the job market and at the same time the interests and skills and particular aptitudes of the students.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Madam Speaker, if it ain't broke don't fix it. This is what I learned in my days of farming. The social security system of this country is broken. It has been broken for a long time. I would like to give one example of this which occurred in my constituency office only last week.

A middle aged man came into my office and asked if we could find him some money because the telephone company was going to disconnect his phone. He had rolled up a debt of over $1,500. He was drawing social assistance. Before that he was on unemployment insurance. Before that he had been a federal government civil servant.

When I asked what the moneys were for, if they were to find a job, he told us that it was for telephone sex. What have we done with our social system that actually allowed someone to think it was possible that the taxpayers would pay for his perversion?

The social program spending dealt with by the Minister of Human Resources Development's discussion paper is in the amount of $38.7 billion which represents approximately 31.4 per cent of total federal government spending, excluding debt servicing. Our deficit problems are symptoms of a country living beyond its means. It would be nice to go on a foreign holiday but we do not have the bus fare. An unpaid holiday is what we have all been living.

• (2030)

These are the indiscretions of past governments but the problem is now squarely before us today. There are those who will argue to increase taxes. Canada's personal income tax is one of the highest in the western world. At 53.5 per cent our top marginal rate is only second to that of France. We can compare this with 40 per cent in the United Kingdom and 32 per cent in the United States.

Higher taxes actually produce less revenue as people attempt to take their money and finally themselves to more friendly tax environments. We only have to study the history of Argentina to realize this was true. Taxation actually drove that country to financial collapse.

In short, we have only one direction to go and that is in the area of program expenditure reductions. The trick is to execute this in a way that continues to shield those with genuine needs but reward those who are able to bridge the gap to self–maintenance. We must stop the except me philosophy. The fact is that we are all in the soup together and it will need our collective wills to solve these problems. Failure will be an invitation to have others outside our borders decide them for us.

All is not bad in this process. Indeed there is a great opportunity to retool the Canadian economy to make it internationally competitive as well as allow Canadians to regain control of their own affairs.

I would like to speak on three specific areas of reform. The first is unemployment insurance. Instead of a short stopover for displaced workers, the program has become for many a basis of income support, over 40 per cent of regular users of the system. This is not necessarily the fault of any one but it reflects that our economy is changing. This is a symptom of what is known as structural unemployment. We do not need bottle washers because we have machines to do it. Some employers have abused the plan by using it for work stoppages and all sorts of reasons not to do with the original intent of the plan.

Financially the benefits of the program are one of the highest in the western world. It has reduced the productivity of the labour market. Why take that job when unemployment insurance is better than wages, less day care, less travelling costs, et cetera? Indeed Canada's productivity has been declining even during the recession. Clearly this has to stop and unemployment insurance must get back to its original function, that is strictly insurance. We cannot ask the general taxpayer to foot the bill for lower productivity.

Now I would like to address the area of child care. Much talk has and will evolve over the concept of child poverty. When we say this it conjures up images of children starving in the streets, begging and so forth. I have witnessed this firsthand in Peru, in Africa and even in Ireland. I have not witnessed it here in Canada. May I be so bold as to suggest that child poverty is a symptom of the mismanagement of family resources rather than a lack of transfers by government.

I am heartened by a recent case in Thunder Bay where a single woman with two children was able to save over $20,000 in two years while living on social assistance. Personally I do not believe that throwing more money at these situations will in fact alleviate child poverty. It may even increase it as these families will have less incentive to seek gainful employment which may have resulted in a more responsible attitude toward child rearing.

Finally I would like to address the area of post–secondary education. Canada has established an assembly line approach to higher education. Some statistics given regarding the need for higher education are skewed, that is to say we have not properly taken the time to consider what is the cause and what is the effect. For instance, do employers not simply use education as a method of screening job applicants? Does one really need a BA to clean out parking meters? I suggest it may be a disadvantage. This is not to say that we do not need a better educated job force, but it calls into question the type and quality of education.

• (2035)

Somewhere in the past we elected as a nation that we did not want to get our hands dirty. We closed down technical schools. We said that our children would all become doctors and lawyers. Our universities are full to the brim with students in social studies that have no more prospect of getting jobs than do high school graduates.

John Smith in Port Perry sits in grade 10 hating and failing his course in English and French literature. Maybe he will become one of our dropout statistics. In reality John Smith would rather be learning a trade, becoming an auto mechanic or other form of technician. Many of our largest employers regularly bring in trades from Europe because they cannot find them here.

In short, we need a more aggressive apprenticeship training program. We must recognize that technical programs are just as valid as and perhaps even more so than some of our academic programs.

I wholeheartely support the concept of using vouchers for post–secondary education. I would even hazard to take the process one step further by weighing more heavily on providing larger vouchers in support of science and technology as opposed to other programs. This would result in a shift in the skills of our labour force which would allow us to compete head on with the emerging economies of southeast Asia and others. Sue and Sam will need a greater focus toward job expectation than they have had in the past.

In conclusion we have a lot of soul searching to do, but it is also time for action. We must resist the thought that it is not our problem. Canada can move forward toward prosperity in the 21st century but it must renew itself first.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Madam Speaker, in his speech, the member for Durham claimed that our system was ill. I have to support his position in this regard. It is true that the system is ill. Of course, we must have the same definition of what he means by system. For us, it is the federal system. It is the one which is now holding up the provinces, especially Quebec, with its duplications, its entanglements and its various restrictions. It is even said somewhere in the document that the authors feel that the federalist system had been too strict in the past.

Tonight, certain comments I heard and the member's view surprise me somewhat. Prime minister Campbell was defeated in the last elections because, one night, she said on television—and I remember it full well—that it would not be appropriate to discuss spending cuts during an election campaign. Later on, when cornered, she had to admit that there would be cuts. A little pushed the same way, the current minister told us before that the reform would not change the level.

What can be felt, now in this House, is that the Liberal Party is seeking a new mandate to cut spending, which it has already begun to do in any case.

I concur with the statement that our system is ill, but not with the other comments of the member. According to him, some people seen in the unemployment insurance office look happy to be there. It is as though they are unemployed on purpose. He did not say that, but he was speaking about regular claimants.

Later on, he spoke of some single women with children who were able to put some money aside. I think this attitude is completely depressing, even if I know that we must respect everyone's freedom of expression in this House.

• (2040)

On post–secondary education, he seems to think there are too many students attending university and that these students choose the wrong field of study. To reduce the number of wrong choices, we should make some study programs less expensive than others. I would like to have more details on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Shepherd: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. I suppose we can look at it in two different ways: We can talk about discouragement or we can talk about encouragement. I suppose I have a tendency to have a more positive attitude to this and think we want to encourage.

I agree somewhat with the member. I do not believe it is the duty of government to make those kinds of choices, but I believe we as a nation need a better and higher technologically trained labour force. I believe it is unjustified for governments simply not to acknowledge the fact that we cannot continue to educate people for jobs that do not exist. We must give our labour force some guidance in the areas in which we think we are going to evolve.

I noticed the member in his comments talked about fiscal irresponsibility. I have often heard members of the Bloc talk about this as if it were a federal problem. In fact deficits are rampant throughout the western world. I would like to point out the fact that the province of Quebec, by its own creation, created a $70 billion deficit and, remarkably enough, 40 per cent of it is financed outside not only the borders of Quebec but the borders of Canada.

The province by itself has some significant problems to deal with. They are not unique to the federal system by a long shot.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I have been in Canada for very close to 34 years. I started working when I was young in British Columbia, then I worked in the province of Quebec, in Montreal. In those days, the Canadian economy depended on the big traditional industries, based on our natural resources.

Our society was almost exclusively white and Christian. Drastic changes have taken place in the last 40 years, in Canada as well as in all industrial societies. Because of those changes, the present economic structure is totally different.

In fact, the whole of society has changed. Today's society is not the one that I found when I arrived in Canada. Accordingly, we must look to a sweeping reform of our entire social security net which, in some areas, has been in place for the past 50 years.

[*English*]

Today in North America more people are working in the computer industry than in the automobile, steel and heavy industries combined. The software industry alone represents a total output of $42 billion. More Canadians today are working in the electronic industry than in pulp and paper, our biggest industry to date. There are as many Albertans working in the financial sector today as in oil and gas.

[*Translation*]

Today, more Quebecers are working in the health technology industries than in textiles, which used to be Quebec's basic industry. There are more Americans working in the film industry today than there are in the entire automobile industry.

[*English*]

The tragedy of Canadian society, as indeed it is a tragedy of every industrialized country today, is that our social infrastructures, our services, have not kept up with the immense changes in our economy over the last 35 years.

The paradox is that there are jobs in the new industries but these jobs cannot be filled because the skills do not match the jobs that are open. There is a huge jobless pool of people who cannot access available jobs in new industries because of the lack of proper skills.

• (2045)

I represent a riding in which a great number of high tech industries are located, industries in communications, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, software and others. I have spoken to many company executives.

One company, which is highly prosperous and almost unique in the world, exports 97 per cent of its products. This company cannot find enough workers inside Canada to fill 50 per cent of its demand. Of its skilled workforce 25 per cent come from Quebec and 25 per cent come from the rest of Canada. It has to import 50 per cent of its skilled workforce from England, Germany, the United States and other places. This is not peculiar to my riding. There are similar stories all across Canada in all the new industries.

The reform we are talking about today is to empower Canadians to keep pace in this new world in which sadly there is no longer a place for school dropouts or people without suitable training. If we compare our rate of school performance with that of Germany, Japan, or Korea, of all the emerging countries where skills are at a premium and are being used day by day, we find ourselves sadly lacking.

That is why this reform is so important to us today. This reform is almost a call to Canadians to take up the challenge, to find in the reform an opportunity to reshape our collective skills so as to enable our citizens, especially our younger ones, to find a place in this very different yet very exciting world.

Today Canada will depend more and more on new technologies and new sectors, including communications, aerospace, broadcasting technologies, health technologies and indeed, the environmental technology sector.

[*Translation*]

These are our new industries, our new challenges. Tomorrow's opportunities await. And this is the attitude the Minister of Human Resources Development would like to see us adopt, one of taking responsibility for our actions, of discussing tomorrow's challenges together, so that we can build a social security system that will carry us into the 21st century.

In reviewing the options for the Axworthy reform, we have the opportunity to think about what is at stake, to face today's realities, to reflect on our 50–year old social security net, and to give Canadians, our young people in particular, confidence and dignity, in the knowledge that tomorrow's families will have lasting jobs, jobs that will make them competitive in today's competitive world.

This is what this reform is all about. The reform will most certainly have a financial impact. We can no longer afford our existing overly expensive social security net. We must think of more creative, more innovative approaches: this is the goal the minister, Mr. Axworthy, is trying to reach in his reform.

[*English*]

I hope this will give us all a chance to discuss in a constructive spirit this essential need to reform our social security system so as to make us competitive and give us the qualify of life for the next century we all aspire to have.

• (2050)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I would like to remind hon. members once again that we do not use the names of members of Parliament. We use their titles.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Madam Speaker, this is quite a surprising speech on the part of the hon. member for Lachine–Lac–Saint–Louis, given the fact that he was a Minister in the Quebec National Assembly. I say a surprising speech because he confirms, he finally recognizes the failure of the federal government in the area of manpower training. He says there are jobs by the hundreds of thousands in Quebec that cannot be filled because there is a shortage of skilled workers in specific areas.

However, the discussion paper we have here offers no solutions to that shortage. If there is one topic on which all Quebecers agree, it is no doubt manpower training. Quebec must have jurisdiction in that area. The power to legislate on manpower training must be given to the Quebec National Assembly. Nothing in the government's handling of this issue, nothing in this document gives any indication that that is likely to happen. On the contrary, this project emphasizes centralization in Ottawa and confirms the refusal to hand control over to Quebec. This afternoon, while answering a question, the Minister said that Ottawa was the boss on that issue and that things would remain so.

Another thing. They say there are not enough skilled workers but this reform increases tuition fees. Is this the way to go if you are going to encourage people to get specialized training? Will people be able to afford an education after this reform? No.

The member's speech is astonishing and I would like him to explain where, in this document, in this reform, we can find evidence of a willingness to decentralize?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I must say, before you answer, Mr. Parliamentary Secretary, that it is not customary to wave documents about in this House.

Mr. Lincoln: Madam Speaker, what we should do is make a recording of the Bloc members' speeches and just play it over and over. This way, there would be no need for Bloc members to rise in the House after a speech. We could switch on the recording. It is always the same old story: centralization and the federal government are the root of all evil. Of course Quebec has no responsibility at all for what happens. It is all the federal government's fault. They make it sound as if once Quebec is independent, all their problems will disappear like magic and people will be trained for the jobs they will get in all those specialized plants.

The social security reform proposed by the Minister of Human Resources Development is an attempt to ensure that many more people have access to the education system, training, student loans and a one–stop system for manpower training. The minister has said many times that he is open to any kind of reform that provides for complementary input by the federal government and the provincial government. Tabling this reform paper as a set of proposals for consultation is a way to involve people from all provinces, people across Canada, in a constructive reform process.

For instance, in my own riding, I intend to conduct public consultations on this proposal. I hope my Bloc colleagues will do the same in their ridings and work on ways, not just to break up Canada and separate Quebec from Canada, but to ensure that people find their place in a community where there is work for all. Anything but this endless refrain that centralization and federalism are the root of all evil.

Nobody is talking about centralization. We are talking about co–operative and constructive federalism, that will enable people to find jobs. That is what they are looking for, not your same old stories. You are all the same. It is always the same old story. The words never change. You will never be satisfied. How can you support a reform of the federal system if you want to break up the federal system?

This is the reason for all your problems. It is the idea you have that if you erect walls around you, it will be heaven on earth. But this is not the way. Nowadays, in our competitive world, we have to live together. Even Europeans are uniting to work co–operatively.

Mr. Bellehumeur: In Quebec, we—

Mr. Lincoln: Sir, I did not interrupt when you had the floor. You could at least extend the same courtesy to me. Your are always harping on—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I would ask that the hon. member speak through the Chair. However, his time is up. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Rosemont.

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Madam Speaker, tonight, I am convinced that the constituents of Rosemont are sure to have made the good choice when they decided not to put their confidence in the Liberal Party of Canada.

In October 1993, this party formed the new majority government after an election campaign based entirely on the theme of job creation. One year later, the Minister of Human Resources Development finally tables a discussion paper which was supposed to unveil a major aspect of this job creation program. It is not yet an action plan, only a working paper for consultation purposes.

In one year, this government managed to come up with two documents: a budget announcing cuts tabled in February 1994 by the Minister of Finance and, yesterday, a discussion paper on social program reform, which is also a document announcing cuts instead of a proposal for job creation.

At this rate, this government will have produced seven or eight papers during its mandate and will have only succeeded in creating a few jobs for writers and for public consultation facilitators. I am hardly exaggerating. Of course, the government made a few decisions. What kind of decisions, you will ask? Essentially, contract cancellations and closures.

This government cancelled the helicopter contract, but we are still waiting for its defence conversion policy. This government cancelled the privatization of Pearson airport, but we are still waiting for its redevelopment plan for this airport. This government shut down Atlantic coast fisheries, but we are still waiting for an adequate compensation and retraining package for fishermen. This government closed down the military college in Saint–Jean, but we are still waiting for the economic redeployment plan for the region.

The Minister of Transport announced that the federal government was going to withdraw from local and regional airports and that local and regional communities will have to take over, otherwise they will be shut down. The National Transportation Agency is still allowing hundreds of kilometres of rail lines to be dismantled, but we are still waiting for the position of the Liberal government on the HST.

Is the document that was tabled yesterday any different? Not in the least. While we had been promised more jobs and more security, we are getting less security and no jobs. After promising education and training, this document is announcing cuts in post–secondary education, bigger student loans and higher tuition fees in colleges and universities.

Even if, by and large, the document is very vague, it contains two specific proposals. This first is this—imagine: all workers who use unemployment insurance three times in five years will be declared chronically unemployed and practically treated like welfare recipients. That is the new security proposed in the Liberal Party's document.

The second proposal is equally unacceptable. The federal government is proposing to cut its share of funding for universities and to use the money saved to encourage students to borrow more, while forcing colleges and universities to raise their tuition fees dramatically. That is the encouragement for training and education the Liberal government gives us.

But where are the concrete job creation measures that were promised throughout the election campaign? Incredible as it may seem, they are non–existent.

• (2100)

You can read the whole 89–page document. You can read it and reread it; there is no proposal for job creation. How do you explain such an about–face by a political party whose only election slogan was job creation?

If one analyses the document—listen, I can try to provide an explanation, which I think is in two parts. First, they are making a reform because they have to. It is glaringly obvious, how inefficient the federal government is. It is very clear that the action taken by the federal government in occupational training and job development is completely ineffective.

This paper explains how disastrous the federal government's performance has been in terms of vocational training. And listen to this, it says that the federal government's involvement in that area will actually increase. Instead of withdrawing, as requested by all Quebec stakeholders, from vocational training, an area in which it admits having had disastrous results, the federal government comes out and tells us it will cut funding, but continue to impose its views not only on vocational training but also on education in the future. That is completely absurd.

In the face of the failure of existing programs, there is no doubt that reform is required. But the federal government, which is responsible for this failure, decided on its own authority that it will be in charge of the programs in the future. This is as if, one morning, the last in the class decided to impose upon everyone else his or her own training and education programs. You think that is impossible? No, it is perfectly possible. This kind of thing is possible in Canada because Canada is a sovereign state and the Constitution of Canada is interpreted by the Supreme Court, a court that always sways towards the views of the federal government. That is what sovereignty means in the Canadian context.

The federal government can make all the mistakes in the world for decades and the Constitution gives it the right and the power to keep at it in the future. Fortunately, as far as our future is concerned in Quebec, we will soon have the choice of pulling away from the sovereignty of the federal government with respect to decisions that concern us and to affirm the sovereignty of Quebec, so that we can handle our own affairs ourselves.

This decision is urgently needed and you will understand better when you read the second part of the explanation given in this paper. As the old saying goes, it never rains but it pours. The second explanation is just as dramatic.

Behind the grand–sounding headings of unemployment insurance and employment development, you will find on page 23 of this paper most of the second part of the explanation, which relates to Canada's public finances.

After cutting $2.4 billion from unemployment insurance this year, the government confirms that spending on social assistance and post–secondary education in 1996–97 must be reduced to 1993–94 levels and can be no higher in the following years. Expenditures will never be allowed to exceed 1993–94 levels.

Worse yet, the paper confirms that other cuts will be included in the next budget. All those who are familiar with public finance management know that the federal government's budget measures are similar to those imposed by the International Monetary Fund on countries that will soon no longer be able to pay off their debts. To get out of the financial abyss it threw itself into, the federal government is trying to pass the buck to the provinces and to individual Canadians while continuing to impose its own programs and priorities.

The Bloc Quebecois is aware of the disastrous state of federal public finances. That is why, since we were elected to the House, we have been calling for a full, open and public review of all federal government spending. We are demanding a full, open and public review of the federal government's role so that responsibilities and taxes can go to the level of government that can do the best and most efficient job. We are ready to act now. We are ready for a comprehensive overhaul of a federal system that is driving us straight into bankruptcy.

After a year in office, the federal government has given us contract cancellations, closures, cutbacks and discussion papers.

• (2105)

In the weeks to come, Quebecers will be able to compare the federal government's inactivity with the aggressive job creation measures already being taken by Mr. Parizeau's government. I am convinced that the vast majority of them will realize that sovereignty means being served by a government which can get us out of the hole in which the federal government put us, before it is too late. I am convinced that Quebecers—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, but your time is up. On comments, the hon. member for Lévis.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Madam Speaker, the experience of my colleague comes through his comments and the way he resumed the whole situation. He ran out of time a little bit

towards the end. So, I would like him to elaborate on what he was saying at the end of his speech, but first I would like him to comment on the level of responsiveness shown by the Liberal government. He has more experience as a member of this House than I have. To his knowledge, have Reform members ever been forced before to fill in the seats of Liberal members?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. Members do not refer in this House to empty seats left by any party. I would ask the hon. member to answer only to the first question put to him.

Mr. Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I understand that rules must be followed, but I also understand that considering what is happening here tonight, sovereignty would be a lot easier for Quebecers to support, since this document that was tabled mentions jobs and growth in its title only. There is nothing in all its 102 pages on job creation and as for the rest, I think my colleague have already described it.

It is clear that we in Quebec will soon take charge of our future and say yes to our sovereignty. And the Reform members now present in this House—if we cannot talk about the members who are not here, we can at least talk about those who are in the House. I know that Canada is—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am clearly under the impression that a certain member is making fun of the Speaker and I do not like it. I said we can never refer to absent members. Members of all parties have to be away sometimes. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Laval–Centre.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond–Guiral (Laval–Centre): Madam Speaker, it is obvious that in unveiling the draft of his reform of social programs, the Minister of "Curtailment of Human Resources" created social insecurity in today's Canada and tomorrow's Quebec.

That insecurity hits the unemployed, students, young people looking for jobs, low–income families, single–parent families, in short, all the have–nots in society. When you know what this far–reaching reform proposal is all about, there is no doubt that its first objective can be summarized in one word: cuts.

Furthermore, it is clear that the first victims of these cuts will be the people in our society who are least able to bear them. In an effort to save the Canadian boat from sinking, the Liberal government will throw the poor, the disadvantaged and the unemployed over board. Among the poor in our society, women and children will undoubtedly be the designated victims of this big cleanup.

This government, which loudly professes its firm commitment to help children, is very careful not to recognize the paradox inherent to the present review of the social security program. Child poverty cannot be isolated from poverty of Canadian and Quebec families. In its 1993 report, the Canadian Action Committee on the Status of Women showed that 62 per cent of one–parent families headed by a woman were living under the poverty level.

For those families, more than any other family, poverty is a day to day reality. If we want to get rid of the spectre of poverty, it is the economic status of women that we must resolve.

• (2110)

In that context how can this government justify cutting $7.5 billion in social security without making his credo of the necessary cost effectiveness of the Canadian social security system? The opposition between the statements and the intentions of the Liberal government are blatant.

The following example proves it. One of the goals of the reform is to increase the economic security of Canadians. In the documents tabled by the minister, the government recognizes that the best way to tackle child poverty is to guarantee jobs to parents. Yet, there is not even an iota about job creation in the document.

Mrs. Françoise David, president of the Fédération des femmes du Québec said: "Is it not cynical on the part of that government to pretend that it wants to eliminate child poverty while saying absolutely nothing about job creation for parents?" Empty words and vague propositions is how the government sweetens the pill for the citizens of this country. A few examples will suffice.

The report contains a plan to increase child tax benefits for low–income families. The plan does not consider the impact of those changes on middle–class families who will probably bear the burden.

Mrs. Madeleine Bouvier, of the Fédération québécoise des familles à parent unique, denounces eloquently the shamelessness with which middle–class citizens, who are more and more crippled, are asked to help the government in assuming its responsibilities. Once more the government vision is out of focus: How can you pretend that you are helping children living in poverty when you weaken the social safety net? Clearly, neither Canada nor Quebec will fall for that.

The real agenda of the government is getting clearer by the day, suffice it to look at the reform proposals for unemployment insurance. I am referring in particular to the principle of family income to determine the right to UI payments.

If the spouse—understand husband—earns $50,000, his wife will not be eligible for unemployment insurance.

Gérald Larose, president of the CNTU, does not mince his words. To him, it is clear that this principle is directed towards women, since their salaries are lower than the salaries of men. How ironic that the only tax proposed in this reform project is directed towards women!

To the fund you shall contribute
Though no benefit will you see
For your husband still retains control
Thanks Mr. Axworthy.

Not only is it frightening to see how this government is getting ready to destroy our social security system, but it is just as frightening to discover the tactics it has perfected to save our ailing federalism. Throughout this document, the Liberal government's intentions are clear: it wants to get into areas under provincial jurisdiction. And all excuses are valid. Child care is a good example.

While the minister recognizes the responsibility of provincial governments with regard to the definition and management of child care services, he explains in the same breath his clever participation in this area: to give funding, of course, as long as this funding is tied to national standards. I know that Quebec will not be fooled by such a deal, and I am convinced that the provinces will certainly not be taken in so easily.

Here is another example of federal incursions into provincial areas of jurisdiction, and I mean post–secondary education. The tidy $2.6 billion cut into transfer payments in that area will have an enormous impact, as much on students as on colleges and universities.

The provinces will have no choice but to increase their deficits or accept the erosion of their education systems. For universities, there will only be one solution: to increase tuition fees. Quebec university student associations are against these reforms, because they fear that tuition fees might increase to some $8,000 a year.

• (2115)

The federal solution in this case is simple: you have only to make more loans available for students. Here again, the solution is unacceptable, and the government knows full well that imposing the debt burden on our young people is untenable. Such an option will discourage many of them from attending university. How can we explain that, on the one hand, we praise the merits of learning while, on the other, we do not hesitate to charge prohibitive fees for access to education?

This leads me to make a few comments on another element of reform. I want to talk about the government's intention to promote on the job training for UI recipients.

In its analysis, the government recognizes the need to reduce overlap between the two levels of government. That intent is part and parcel of the myths of federalism. We know that only sovereignty will allow Quebec to eliminate overlap and waste. Obviously the government of Canada does not share this outlook.

The reform's central theme is "Jobs and Growth". We thank the Liberals for having targeted the two big failures of our system. But job creation and economic growth are sadly missing from the paper published yesterday. A better title would have been "Cuts and Decline".

I wonder how, in this country, one is expected to find a job when there are none.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Madam Speaker and colleagues, it would appear we are coming to the end of a fairly long day. It has been interesting as this debate has unfolded because most of the comments of our colleagues from the Bloc have to do with the fact that: "There are some things that could be improved in this package but it could be improved a lot more if we did it. So why not let us do it and we will do it better than you anyway".

The Liberal platform is "This is really just a discussion paper. We have not really thought anything out but by the way it is going to be finished in about a month and this consultation that is going on across the land really means something. Yes, we are going to have a 1–800 number but we do not have it yet. By the way we are going to change the way the whole country works and we will let you know how we are going to do it as soon as we figure it out. We are going to study it some more and hopefully we will not have to make any decisions that could embarrass anybody".

By and large we are saying: "It is a few cautious steps in the right direction but if you are going to do it for heaven's sakes do it and get on with it. If we are going to repair our country, we cannot play at it any more. We really have to start getting serious about it and do it".

There is one thing all of us here as parliamentarians probably share regardless of the party we represent. That is genuinely if we did not care about our children and about making a better country and a country of opportunity for our children, we would not be here. We would not be here as members of the Reform Party, members of the Bloc or the Liberal Party. We would not be here. We are here for the children, the younger generation. Perhaps if we looked at it from that perspective we could see whether or not this is at least a step in the right direction.

First, we have an aging population in Canada. That is not news to anybody. In 1994 right now 12 per cent of Canadians are over 65 years of age. In 16 years over 25 per cent of Canadians will be over 65 years of age. Our median age is 34 and we are aging fairly rapidly. There will be fewer consumers in the market, fewer taxpayers, higher taxes, more pensions to pay and probably a diminishing amount of money to do it.

• (2120)

At the same time, we have increasing demands on poverty and children. Now we have to spend a whole lot more money on young people in order to equip them so that they can become productive in later years. That is right into post–secondary education.

I did not even finish high school and yet I was able to go along quite well and do fairly well. So did many people of my generation but the nature of work has changed dramatically.

As we all know work is now very much a cerebral thing. Work is determined by brainpower and not by brawn. We are going to have to make sure that we put a foundation together that allows us to invest more in students and more in education because that is the only way we as an economy are going to get a return on the investment.

We have heard a good deal here today about the travails of people born into poverty or into into two or three generations of welfare families. However we have not heard a lot about the success that comes from families.

Why is it that sometimes in a family with very modest means the children can grow up and do very well and be quite successful? Sometimes in families of more modest means or of means much more substantial, children do not do as well as kids who grew up in poverty.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I wonder if the member realized that I had called for questions and comments and then called her riding.

Would the hon. member for Laval Centre care to comment? Then he can pick up on his time for debate.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dalphond–Guiral: Yes, Madam Speaker, I wish to react. I listened to my colleague, and he said, of course, that we argued that if we ran our own affairs, it would probably be easier for us to solve our economic problems.

I would like to remind my colleague that running a small house is always a lot easier that running a big one. We can see the problems more clearly and we have fewer constraints of all kinds.

I invite my colleague to reflect on that important factor in our big federal system and I am sure that if he has a small house, it is very well managed.

[*English*]

Mr. McClelland: Madam Speaker, I apologize to my hon. colleague. I was so keen to wrap this up and get home, I just lost myself. I am sure that hon. colleagues probably felt much the same. In any event, we were talking about these children.

Why is it that children from modest means sometimes do very well and children that have lots do very poorly? Some of that has to do with nurturing. All of it has to do with nurturing. If one is wondering what the difference is between perhaps kids who are doing better than kids who do not do so well, it has a lot to do with encouragement from family and friends. It has a lot to do with having a sense of self worth and a sense of confidence and optimism. It has a lot to do with the sense of opportunity.

Our kids grow up in an environment where we are saying to them that this is a land of opportunity. We are people of opportunity. Our opportunity and what we can do in our life is very largely determined by what we think we can do in our lives. We can if we think we can. These are all the kinds of things that we can only achieve if we can achieve it within an atmosphere that values initiative, that values reward, that values the kinds of things that built our country in the first place.

• (2125)

A lot of things go into making a family and making a better life for our children. We all recognize that there are single parent families. We know that it is far more difficult in a single family environment to raise children and give them the kind of nurturing necessary because usually when the parent arrives home he or she is so tired that the last thing in the world he or she can do is think of all this nurturing. We understand and know that.

Therefore, anything that can be done in this social reform that can be aimed at giving children a sense of security and opportunity and the parents a feeling that they are not doing it alone is going to reward us as a society tremendously.

We also need to make one other very important consideration, in my opinion, in order for this new Canada to work. When people work and make an effort in society they need to be rewarded.

I just got off the phone with my ex–wife who, as a single parent, has done a great job in raising our son. He is just about finished high school. She was saying to me: "Look, I just got a bill from the tax department. I have to come up with another $1,800 on top of everything else I am paying. I don't have it and it is driving me crazy. Every time I think I am starting to get out of the glue, the taxes go up".

How on earth can we, as a country, continue to spend so much and put such a tax burden on everybody at all income levels? Everybody is crushed by this tax burden. The tax burden is there because we have been spending beyond our means for years and years.

That is why it is so absolutely important that we get this under control. It is going to hurt. We know it is going to hurt but it absolutely must be done. If we have the wherewithal, if we have the courage and the fortitude, we should be able to make a much brighter future for the children who are going to be coming in the next generation. That is where our focus should be. If we do that as a Parliament we will be rewarded for it.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dalphond–Guiral: Madam Speaker, I cannot resist such an invitation.

I listened carefully to the part of the hon. member's speech where he alluded to the fact that if we are all here in this House, it is particularly for our children, and it is very true for me. I will remind you of something which concerns me. My hon. colleague gave personal details, so I can do it too.

Last year, on November 15, when I took my oath in this House, I did it with my grand–daughter. It is quite clear that I sit as a member in this House because I have faith in young people and children and because I believe Quebec will give them the society they deserve.

If my colleagues discussed this reform proposal today, it is precisely because they have faith in young people, and feel a responsibility towards them.

I guess I am closing the debate or almost. This is amazing.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being 9.30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 7, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 43(2) the parliamentary secretary will be speaking for the regular allotted time of 20 minutes. All other government speakers today and for the remainder of the debate will be sharing the time in 10–minute sections.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. We finished off yesterday by announcing that under Standing Order 43(2) we would be splitting our time. We had the last speaker last night. The hon. member for Edmonton Southwest had 10 minutes and 5 minutes. I believe we should be up first today to continue our allotted time, finishing from yesterday.

• (1005)

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the social policy review, the discussion paper, the Liberal plan tabled by the Minister for Human Resources Development.

The credibility of the political process right now in Canada remains very low. People are looking to politicians to be specific, to demonstrate that they at least know where we are going, but what a lackluster performance; a discussion paper which makes a vague attempt to shape a social system which is collapsing.

The minister acknowledges the obvious, a desperate need for change, but how do we get there? We diverge substantially. I would like to see a plan that recommends some courageous and creative changes but the minister obviously prefers to consult, discuss, review and study for another year before he institutes any changes at all.

Adding to the confusion of the Liberals' plan for social reform is the damage created by the leaked details to the press regarding the $7 billion cut to support programs. The Liberal agreement has now been reduced to merely an issue over money. There are no numbers in the plan to support any defence the government may put forward to stem this challenge to its credibility.

How can the minister in all good conscience continue with his consultation process until all of the questions have been answered with hard numbers to validate his approach to social reform?

This government continues to spend taxpayers' dollars, giving the appearance of action, but it continues to be the Liberal version of action, continued overspending while doing nothing to reduce Canada's deficit and debt load.

The Reform Party has always supported the idea of listening to the voice of the people, what we call the grassroots of Canada. We listen to what they have to say and we have tried to do for them what they have asked.

Canadians are being quite clear. They want leadership and they are challenging government to produce real legislation to reform a shockingly wasteful and battered social safety net. We cannot afford to wait. Canada's debt and deficit are lodestones around the necks of Canadian taxpayers.

The government spends $110 million a day more than it earns on programs that are antiquated, misguided and that Canadians no longer believe in or support. Given this mindset the government now has an excellent opportunity to begin to overhaul the system and to redirect funds to individuals who need it.

The Reform Party believes that the people of Canada are this country's most valuable resource and that the nurture and development of human knowledge, skills and relationships are the keys to full participation in the 21st century.

We affirm the value and dignity of the individual person and the importance of strengthening and protecting the family unit as essential to the well–being of individuals and society.

Page 9 of the discussion paper states: "As too many older workers and young families have been squeezed out of the middle class our society increasingly has begun to be polarized between well educated, highly skilled Canadians in demand by employers, today's economic elite, and less well educated people without specialized up to date job skills who have been losing ground. Thus the key to dealing with social insecurity

can be summed up in the single phrase, helping people get and keep jobs".

How specifically are the Liberals going to ensure people get back to work? It is evident in Canada that the median family standard of living is falling even with two wage earner families. The number of people living in poverty is growing and within that group the number of those who work full time but are still poverty stricken is growing even faster.

The number of unemployed, even counting the part timers as fully employed and not counting the 100,000 who are too discouraged to seek work, is at a shocking 1.1 million Canadians. It is time to get to the root of the problem facing Canadian families and their children.

This problem is ultimately the state of the nation's finances. The reason so many children are reported to be living in poverty is that many are the children of parents who are unemployed. Unemployment still remains above 10 per cent in this country. Even though the Liberals have been throwing billions of dollars into the so–called infrastructure program the unemployment rate has only dropped two–tenths of a point.

Why is the infrastructure program not working? The government is giving billions of dollars to infrastructure projects. Yet here we are one year after the election, billions of dollars poorer and the unemployment rate has barely moved.

We are experiencing an economic polarization that affects everyone.

• (1010)

Canadian taxpayers are less able to buy the products that big industry produces. Industry consequently has fewer opportunities for further expansion. The rich consequently have fewer opportunities for investment. Workers consequently have fewer job opportunities. Less money now flows into normal projects and investment cycles. Wages are affected and further restrained and the end result is reduced employment. Who suffers? Our families.

The Liberals continue a status quo approach to Canada's employment dilemma and divert attention from this problem by calling it child poverty. The Liberals suggest that Canada's children live in poverty. The Campaign 2000 group issued a report that condemned the Canadian government and indirectly the compassion and generosity of Canadians. It is alleged that our child poverty rates are higher than all other countries in comparison except for the United States. The statistics that are tossed carelessly about would have us believe that fully 20 per cent of all Canadian children live in poverty. This condemnation leaves a very graphic image in the minds of all who hear it. Children are seen to be living in a deplorable state: malnourished, poorly clothed, poorly housed and under loved. Such careless statements damage the image of Canada both within the country and internationally. This repeated suggestion that 20 per cent of children in Canada live in poverty is not defined. What does this really mean?

The report of the standing committee on health and welfare, social affairs, seniors and the status of women stated on page 5 of its report that the Statistics Canada measures are continually and deliberately misused as poverty measures.

When the Liberals state that 20 per cent of Canadian children live in poverty they are using a definition of poverty that does not conform to what most people think it to mean. This is where the confusion begins. This government is purposefully perpetuating this confusion and is misleading the Canadian public in terms of what the real problem is. Perhaps it has become easier to create a problem that does not really exist than to fix the real one.

Let me explain to the House how this interpretation has been purposefully and carefully crafted. When the Liberals refer to poverty they are referring to a financial state measured by StatsCan low income cut–offs. Each year, StatsCan produces a series of income cut–offs that marks the level of gross income below which families must spend disproportionate amounts on food, clothing and shelter. The cut–offs are commonly referred to as poverty lines. They are adjusted for family size and size of the community in order to reflect differences in basic expenditures. StatsCan considers those whose incomes fall below these lines to be living in straitened circumstances. A poor child is one who is defined as one who lives in a family whose total income is below the low income cut–off.

When StatsCan states that 20 per cent of children live in poverty what it means is that 20 per cent of children live below the low income cut–off point. This LICO is purely relative and does not relate in any way to actual comparable standards of living. Fully 18 per cent of Canada's LICO population own their own homes mortgage free. This issue becomes a matter of responsibility on the part of not only government but Canadians. My party supports the legitimate role of government to do for people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all—or do as well for themselves—individually or through non–government organizations.

The solution to Canada's dysfunctional social support system is less government interference. Provide assistance in meaningful ways. We need to offer incentives for parents in determining the best choices for child care. Social engineering policies that force parents to place their children into day care are intrusive and discriminatory. Treat all families fairly and remove the day care expense allowance.

Support single parent families by allowing private collection agencies to go after deadbeat parents delinquent on maintenance payments.

Provide good jobs for Canadians and cut their tax burden, creating a climate of initiative and investment. Stop overspending, balance the budget and begin to pay down our debt which now totals over $533 billion.

While I recognize the attempt that has been made to wrap some protective arms around Canadians in the name of social reform, the discussion paper is mere rhetorical flourish, long on words, short on numbers and devoid of any plan.

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the hon. member's speech. I have one very short question.

The hon. member's party has repeatedly criticized everything that we have put forward so far, and the social reform is no different. It has said, and I caution it is in *Hansard*, that it is going to cut $15 billion. From where?

• (1015)

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be quite blunt this morning in my response to the question from the hon. member on the other side of the House.

All that happened yesterday during question period was an attack on the opposition side by the Liberal side of the House. Genuine questions were placed yesterday during question period and all we saw was an attack.

I am going to give an answer this morning to the hon. member and ask him to look at the big picture because this government has failed Canadians financially, socially, economically and constitutionally. Quite frankly, Canadians are fed up, like I am, with this kind of approach to social reform. That is my answer.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Human Resources Development and this government for taking on a very important initiative. It is an initiative of historical proportions and is extremely important for this generation of Canadians as we deal with changing dynamics and the changing configuration of the Canadian economy.

If there is one thing that is constant about our society, it is change. If we look at the social, technological and economic changes that have occurred over the past 30 years, it would follow logically that our social programs which were initiated many years ago need to be altered to better deal with the present reality.

Our social programs touch every single individual who resides in this country. It is about the people in this Chamber. It is about our neighbours. It is about our friends. It is about this country's children. It is about the young people who today are struggling to get that very first important job, to reach that milestone of getting the type of training they require.

Underneath this change and new configuration there is a very simple notion, a simple premise which ties all the issues together. The best form of security for Canadians comes from having a job. That premise underlies every part of this discussion paper.

Canadians want to work not only for economic security but for the sense of purpose and dignity that work provides. The Catholic Children's Aid Society in Toronto expressed this point very well in its submission to the parliamentary standing committee earlier this year. It said that people receive meaning and a sense of who they are from their work. Their well–being, social involvement and contributions are defined by their work. That is what social security reform is all about.

If the best form of security is a job, then our social programs should help people get jobs. Unemployment insurance should really be employment insurance, a springboard to launch people back into the workforce. Employment programs should be measured by one simple criterion: Do they help people get jobs?

Social assistance should help people find jobs, not hinder them. It should provide support where it is needed, but focus on helping people gain independence. That is not the way the system works now. For too many people it does just the opposite, making it harder for people to gain that independence, to access training. For too many people the system gets things backward.

• (1020)

This debate is about addressing the real challenges and real problems of real people throughout this country.

In a letter to the Minister of Human Resources Development a divorced mother of two writes about how she tried to get off welfare and how the system abandoned her as a result. She says: "It is very backward that I had to quit my job to provide better for my family".

A young man writes about his pride in staying off UI by taking short term jobs in his desire to improve his job prospects through training, training that he cannot afford unless he quits work and gets UI benefits. He comments: "The price of values is extremely high under the present system". How in heaven's name can we motivate youth with things as they are?

An unemployed worker writes about the bureaucratic red tape that has delayed the training he needs while his UI benefits run out and his life savings are depleted.

A young woman who lost her job writes about programs that seem irrelevant and ineffective. After a year in the system she finds herself no closer to finding a job than the day she started.

A disabled athlete writes with enthusiasm about his plans to get off welfare and start his own business. He expresses his frustration with the welfare rules that stop him from raising the capital he needs to get the business started.

Is the status quo working for these people? Is the system working for these people? Or is the system that is supposed to help these people actually denying them their rightful opportunity to bring about positive change to their lives?

We could have chosen to do what past governments have done and shy away from this very difficult debate. However we asked Canadians and members in this House to take on the challenge of changing people's lives and their children's lives by providing them with a better tool kit.

Everywhere I go, in every city and town, on every street and avenue, citizens of this great country are looking for change. It is our responsibility to bring about that change. It is our responsibility to give our young people a green light, not a pink slip. It is our responsibility to get people off the welfare rolls and on to the payrolls of our businesses. That is what this debate is all about.

It is clear that things are not working. We can sit idly by and not answer to the changes which are occurring all around us, or we can take some tough decisions and engage Canadians in a meaningful debate about the type of social security system they want.

I would like to look specifically at the options proposed in this debate. Let us look at increasing investment in our people through better employment programs, refocusing unemployment insurance to help people get jobs, and helping parents to balance work and family responsibilities through such measures as funding for better child care.

• (1025)

Let us bring children into the fold and give them opportunities. Let us get started the right way. Let us give young people, our children the support they need. Start them off on the right foot so they can look to the future with confidence because they have been given the tools, the nurturing and the love so many of them require. Let us support a welfare system that opens up opportunity and hope instead of locking people into dependence and keeping too many of our children in poverty.

I hear the hon. member from the Reform Party heckling. I think the Reform Party should come clean with Canadians. The only thing it has offered in this debate is that the way to erase poverty in this country is by lowering the level at which we define poverty. That is a simpleton's approach to a very important problem.

The federal government spends more than $3 billion on employment programs and services like job counselling, training and labour market information. It is or should be a good investment. It should help people get off UI or welfare and back into paid work. However, far too many people end up in programs that have little to do with opportunities or their needs. Many get training for jobs that do not exist locally. Many are shunted from one training program to the next when all they really need is some basic counselling and advice on what jobs are available.

The key is to build a flexible system. Social programs should serve people, not the other way around. People should not be made to fit into programs. Programs should be made so that people can have access to training. There should be flexibility so that people can go from one program to another to obtain the tool kit they require to participate fully in our economy.

For example only 10 per cent of all UI claimants receive counselling. We have to change that. We have to provide Canadians with wider opportunities, a bigger menu. Sometimes we put people in training programs when what they really require is some counselling and a personal action plan. Give them better labour market information. Tell them where the jobs are and what they should be training for. Tell them what the opportunities are in the present market and give them the required tools so they can get back into the labour force.

The action plan we are talking about would have to be supported by more flexible programs. As I said earlier, people need good information about the job market, more accessible training programs, different kinds of training, classroom training, on the job training, computer based training and distance learning to ensure they get what works best for their situation in their community.

Let us talk about incentives for hiring unemployed workers. In some cases government could pay part of the wages for those unemployed workers who need experience and on the job training. This would make it easier for employers to hire people with employment problems. Funding could also pay wages for unemployed workers to do useful work in their communities or to help unemployed individuals start their own businesses using the available tools. We have to pay more attention to getting results, to making sure that people get the help they need to get jobs. This means less attention to rigid rules and procedures set in Ottawa, more flexibility in letting communities manage their own programs. Businesses, workers, and others in the community can often decide what kind of programs work best at the local level. Let us put the words empowerment for communities, empowerment for the individual, a reality. It is by far the best way to deal with the issues ahead.

• (1030)

Let us look at better ways to deal in a co–operative manner with the provinces. Let us talk about a single window approach. People should not have to go to 7, 8, 9, 10 different offices to find out who is going to help them during these difficult times of unemployment and restructuring in our society.

Let us establish single windows in co–operation with the provinces, with local communities. Let us reach out at the community level and use what we have at our disposal to make sure that people are provided with better services, with better assistance, with a more efficient system that can help them deal with the challenges they face.

In addition, discussions with the provinces should look at improving the federal vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons. This exercise is about maximizing human potential. It is about giving our country the best possible, best skilled workforce available so that people, so that businesses, will be attracted to our nation. They will invest and we will create the type of vibrant community business environment that will speak to generating wealth for our nation.

Better employment programs will depend in part on designing a better UI program. The UI program works well for people who require short–term support while looking for a job but it does not work well for those who need help adjusting to the changes in the job market.

Canadians who find themselves repeatedly out of work need better support to get and keep jobs. The program often discourages adjustment. For some unemployed people there is no incentive to learn new skills that are in demand by employers.

The program is easily abused. Some workers and employers plan their work schedules around the UI program, alternating employment with UI benefits as a way of life. Many working Canadians, such as people in part time jobs or the self–employed, are not covered at all by the existing program.

What does that say about a society that on the one hand speaks about self–employment, promoting business, but then does not provide the support mechanism that is required for business to prosper?

The discussion paper outlines two basic proposals for unemployment insurance. One would work more or less the same way it does now but what is really the key is the adjustment component. Forty per cent of all UI claimants in the past five years have had at least three claims. That tells us that there is a dysfunctional relationship between that individual and the marketplace. So what do we do. We have to provide people with a tool kit that can reintegrate them into the workforce. These are new problems. We are not dealing with cyclical unemployment, we are dealing with structural unemployment. We cannot have the old form of unemployment insurance dealing with the new reality, the new economy. We need to change it, and this is proposed in the discussion paper.

• (1035)

There are many options to explore in this approach. For example, we need to decide how long claimants can draw adjustment benefits, and how much they should get. Two of the hardest questions would be the following.

Should benefits be income tested so that the amount a person receives depends on what other family income is available? That is one question we have to openly debate.

Is it fair that an individual who makes $40,000 or $50,000, working eight months of the year, receives UI benefits? Is it fair that somebody somewhere making $18,000 or $20,000 a year, working 12 months of the year, actually subsidizes that other individual? Is that fair?

An hon. member: Not fair, no.

Mr. Bevilacqua: Is it worth debating?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Bevilacqua: It is worth debating, and that is why the government has placed it in the discussion paper.

The second approach to UI reform does not distinguish between occasional and frequent users. It adjusts the eligibility requirements or the benefits available to all claimants. This involves increasing the time a person must work to get benefits, reducing the length of time that people can draw UI benefits, or lowering the amount a claimant receives.

This approach could save money which might be re–invested in employment services. However, I feel it does not in itself address the real problems of people who have trouble getting and keeping work. Under either approach we should consider the needs of workers in non–standard employment.

More people today work in part time or temporary jobs, or have more than one job. Also there are more self–employed people. Many are not fully covered by unemployment insurance. Some are excluded entirely from UI. If the current trends continue many of these kinds of employment will not be non–standard for long, they will set new standards. If the UI program is going to stay in touch with the needs of Canadians we will have to start thinking about where the new kinds of jobs can fit in.

The discussion paper talks about child care. It talks about restructuring and modernizing Canada's social security system. Many questions need to be answered. I ask Canadians, members of Parliament who will be holding town hall meetings, Canadians whom I think should be sitting around their kitchen tables discussing these key issues, to participate in this historic debate so that we can bring about positive change to the lives of our people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development. There was much that was well–intentioned, but instead of all these words, I would have liked to hear figures and specific proposals.

I would have liked the parliamentary secretary to tell us how much will be cut from employment programs, student assistance programs and income security programs for the neediest in our society. I would have appreciated some figures.

When the Minister of Finance brought down his budget, the figures mentioned were in the billions of dollars. I would have like the parliamentary secretary to show us the courtesy of explaining how this applies to the government's proposals, or in any case, the proposals mentioned in the paper. If that means three or four or five billion dollars less invested by governments in social programs, it would have been nice if he had said so. I think that is the least we could expect.

• (1040)

I also wish he had elaborated somewhat on the implications of the minister's proposals for provincial jurisdictions. We are getting into a big federal–provincial squabble here. Of course, as a sovereignist Quebecer, I do not really mind because I see the federal government and the State of Quebec as having entirely different objectives, and I think they should each have their own policies. When I see the federal government massively invading provincial jurisdictions, it merely confirms my arguments in favour of Quebec's sovereignty. I should be pleased, but in a way I am not because, once again, the neediest in our society, in Canada and Quebec, will have to wait and listen to all these discussions, and meanwhile, there will be no solutions on the horizon.

In other words, I would have liked to see some clearcut proposals at last. Basically, the minister is inviting us to participate in a big dialogue. It is like being invited to *Parler pour parler*, on TV. For six months, Canadians and Quebecers will discuss the minister's proposals but there will be no solutions on the table. I would have like to hear this: "We, as a government, propose to deal with unemployment this way; we propose to deal with unemployment in another way; and we propose to invest certain amounts in income security". Nothing is being proposed. We are invited to talk about it, to discuss it amongst ourselves. That was the comment I wanted to make.

I also have a question for the parliamentary secretary. So far, I can see no proposals in this document concerning employment. However, the parliamentary secretary did say that some jobs in Canada were not being filled because Canadians lack training. I wish he would tell us which newspaper today, in English Canada or in Quebec, has pages and pages of want ads with jobs that will not be filled because people lack skills. We do not find that in the papers. The papers tell us that the unemployment rate is between 10 and 12 per cent. The papers tell us that people want training but are not getting it.

We have a society that tells us: "We are going to help you find a job", but as far as anyone can see, there are not that many jobs to go around.

So I wish the parliamentary secretary would help me in this respect. Where should my constituents in Jonquière look to find all these job offers in Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Bevilacqua: Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to what the hon. member said. I have a bit of a problem with some of the comments he made vis–à–vis federal–provincial relations.

If the hon. member takes some time to read the program as outlined by the federal government, he will see that we have a very caring federal government which is reaching out to the provinces in a number of ways.

We have a federal proposal dealing with the management and planning of the labour market, a single window approach which I am sure the hon. member would like to support in the province of Quebec, to make our system more efficient and to avoid the waste and duplication that occur in various programs we deal with as federal and provincial governments.

On the issue of fiscal parameters, the hon. member should read that section once again. It is in the green paper. It is quite clear. We spoke about it in the last budget. The hon. member knows about the $2.4 billion that we cut from UI. That is in here. The government was elected on a commitment to reach 3 per cent of the GDP deficit reduction target. That is in this book.

• (1045)

We are being extremely upfront with Canadians. In reference to job creation, I find it quite ironic that we have created over 275,000 jobs. Nothing illustrates more the success of the government than what we have been able to do in the riding of the official opposition critic of human resources development. When she came into office in October the unemployment rate in her riding was 12.3 per cent. I am happy to report to the House of Commons that the unemployment rate in her riding is now 9.1 per cent. I do not hear members of the Bloc Quebecois congratulating us on such initiatives, and may I add that members on that side rise in the House day in and day out.

When we look at job growth the province of Quebec is number two in Canada. That speaks to the type of programs the government has initiated in bringing about what we refer to as positive change in the lives of the people of Quebec.

On the issue of the general philosophical thrust of the government, when we look at legislation that has gone through the House already; when we look at the fact that our Canada student loans legislation, which was approved by the House, has a section that deals with special opportunity grants for disabled Canadians, for women who are pursuing doctoral studies, for high need students, and for people who come from lower incomes; and when we look at the whole notion of deferred grants where students graduating with debt loads of $22,000 are seeing them reduced by $6,000 by the federal government, it speaks to the spirit in which we operate.

Let us also look at the unemployment insurance changes we made in the last budget. Low income unemployed Canadians with dependants are receiving the highest possible benefit rate of 60 per cent; 27,000 people have benefited from that change.

For the life of me I do not know where the hon. member has been in the past few months. We have moved very quickly since the October 25 election when we received an overwhelming mandate from the people of Canada on legislation that speaks to improving the quality of life of Canadians from coast to coast to coast, including those in the province of Quebec.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested to hear the member mention in his speech that we may have to take a look at the size of family incomes when we talk about social services. I think that is a really great idea.

The biggest problem we face at the end of the process is that most members in the House will not be permitted to vote freely on whatever legislation the government decides to bring down. They will end up having to toe the party line regardless of all the consultation that took place in the ridings. As the House knows, I am originally from New Zealand and I have seen what happens when consultation goes on and on and on.

Is the member taking responsibility for letting his constituents know that the whole area of social programs is costing a phenomenal amount of money?

Mr. Bevilacqua: Mr. Speaker, I engage in very extensive consultation in my riding. I take great pride in representing the views of my constituents.

Talking about free votes, I have not noticed too many people voting against their own parties; everybody stands at the same time. Let us put the rhetoric aside for a second and address the reality of the fact that the Reform Party operates more or less like any other traditional party.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important subject.

I recognize, as do many of my colleagues in the House, the need to reform our social safety net. There are several compelling reasons for that reform. We live in a world where more and more skills are needed to meet the needs of more and more jobs today. It is also a world of rapid technological change and we have an aging labour force.

• (1050)

We live in a society where unfortunately marital breakdown has become more commonplace, leading to poverty. That is one of the reasons I am a strong advocate of returning to traditional family values and of polices which help families stay together. We live in a society where those in need can rely less and less on their families and communities for help.

Canada's current income security programs were set up at a time when unemployment, regardless of skills, was a brief condition between jobs; when the one–income two–parent family was the rule; and when child poverty was hardly talked about, let alone measured.

Canada has seen great change in the last decade alone. The former government was working on reforms that would help Canadians meet today's challenges, reforms that would reorient passive income support programs to an active investment in people; reforms that would remove barriers that prevent many from becoming active members of the labour force; reforms that would replace disjointed programs with a coherent system.

Social policy must be designed for people. More specifically it should be designed for the people who need the most. Canadians already pay enough taxes to have some of the most generous social programs in the world. Our challenge is to use the money already in the system to make programs as flexible as possible so recipients can receive the benefits to meet their needs and become self–reliant.

We must encourage individuals to break the cycle of dependency and help them to help themselves. I realize, as many Canadians realize, that if we do nothing the quality of these programs will deteriorate. Social policy must be updated to fit the realities of the nineties and the 21st century so that all Canadians can participate and face the opportunities and challenges ahead with confidence.

I will be listening to my constituents in the days, weeks and months ahead and getting their input, but these are some of my initial concerns with the green paper. I am not convinced the government's discussion paper contains a coherent set of proposals that will let us move in the direction which I have been talking about.

I am deeply concerned about the time it has taken the government to bring forward the discussion paper. It was a paper that we were supposed to see in the spring. We should now, according to the original timetable, be looking at legislation. While we were waiting and as we continue to wait, thousands of people and thousands of mothers and families wanted and want to leave welfare but could not and cannot because they would lose the dental and medical benefits their children need.

As members of Parliament we are often called on to help people in dire straits, people who are not worried about constitutional niceties like a division of powers. For example, I know a family with a severely disabled child. In the past the family has been able to count on government support to help meet the needs of their child, but no longer.

Families such as these look to the federal and provincial governments to work together to rationalize programs so they help those most in need. Some of the most worrisome parts of the paper are the suggestions for changes in UI, worrisome because in its two–tier proposal the government was unable to offer a definition of frequent user.

In areas of Atlantic Canada we have people who can be considered frequent users of UI. It is not because they are abusing the system. Nor are their employers abusing the system. It is because some parts of our economy are highly seasonal. That is why Atlantic Canadians need a coherent system of programs that will allow them to move with the changing times. What they do not need are proposals that cut them off at the knees.

Canada's strength has always been to combine a strong economy with a commitment to a secure social safety net that supports the needs of Canadians. Historically we have proven to be practical people who see that we have to move forward and adapt to changing conditions in order to keep our high quality of life.

I am not convinced the government's proposals will let us do that. This has been said in the past but let me repeat it because I am a firm believer in it: Good economic policy goes hand in hand with good social policy and vice versa.

We should all want to protect programs that work and change the ones that do not. We should all want to see to it that our workforce is trained to the highest standards. We should all want to make sure that our educational system produces graduates who can take full advantage of opportunities in a constantly changing economy. We want those graduates to have long term, high paying jobs. We want an educational system that encourages lifelong learning.

• (1055)

I do not believe Canadians will be well served by an approach to social policy that wants governments to borrow billions of dollars or impose more taxes on Canadians to retain a false and unrealistic sense of security. Nor will they be well served by an approach that will simply rip apart the social fabric. We need a reasonable approach with the watchwords of fairness, efficiency, self–sufficiency and dignity.

I will support proposals that advocate that approach and make the system more proactive. Hopefully before it is too late the government can offer such suggestions because I fear the discussion paper released yesterday does not. In fact in the words of a wise man, "never has a government taken so long to say so little".

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member across the way that this is a discussion paper. Some of the things I have heard over the last day have really concerned me; I heard a lot of partisan politics.

We were elected this time to do the very best we could. We should offer strong, viable solutions rather than rhetoric, niggling and sniping. I have heard very little concrete suggestions or very little from members about what they will actually do for input into the government before this is made government policy.

I am really looking for some concrete suggestions. What will the member who has just spoken with such heartfelt feelings about some of the suggestions in the paper do to ensure that there is good input into this paper?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will have time to answer the question after question period.

It being 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, October has been proclaimed National Lupus Awareness Month. Lupus is an autoimmune disease that affects thousands of Canadians, mostly women during child bearing years.

The cause of Lupus is yet unknown. As one of its priorities the government has issues relevant to women's health. Here we have an example of an illness that affects women for which treatment is limited and about which medical science has yet much to learn.

I encourage all members of the House to support the many volunteer groups at work all year round to help and support the individuals affected by the disease.

Please join me in extending best wishes to Lupus Canada for a successful awareness month.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. Ivan Grose (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, today I address an annoying action being taken regularly by some hon. members opposite. Each day they list the current amount of national debt, down to the last penny.

What they fail to do is list the assets balancing the debt. I have no doubt that if they were asked to list their personal net worth they would declare their property mortgage, car loan, credit card balance and maybe even the balance owing to their tailors for the suits they are wearing. I have no doubt hon. members would then list their property, cars, et cetera, as assets, pointing out the equity they had in the items.

In the interest of fairness, if they persist in these statements I will at every opportunity list the assets of our country from each plane, train and ship, down to the last public toilet, bus and buffalo.

We could start with the building in which we stand. I trust it is paid for by this time.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MEMBER FOR BONAVENTURE—ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, to our great surprise, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the Liberal Party's specialist on statements under S.O. 31, has dissociated himself from his party's caucus and expressed reservations about the proposed reform of social programs. He said: "I have some reservations about occupational training, etc."

To show his dissent and to distance himself from his party, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine joined a strategic friend in his party, the member for York South—Weston, who said: "For the ten years we were the Official Opposition, we accused the Conservatives of reducing the deficit on the backs of the poor and we are doing exactly the same thing".

I therefore call on the Liberal Party's No. 31 to pay attention to his fine career, because breaking the party line is unlikely to please his Prime Minister or many other people, for that matter.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, Monday night the Reform Party heard the views of thousands of Canadians during an historic nationwide electronic townhall meeting.

Unlike the Prime Minister, these Canadians are willing to look at new methods of solving the problem. Ninety-three per cent of the more than 10,000 callers want to see an end to the national unity issue. Fifty-seven per cent believe the best course of action is to change the system for all of Canada, with 92 per cent saying that change should come from the people.

While the Prime Minister has stated that he finds referenda revolting, he might want to pay attention to these results. The Prime Minister has also said that Reform wants to discuss this issue because we are a failure with other issues.

Failure is defined in the dictionary as a falling short of what is wanted or expected, in not doing, neglecting. Based on these definitions, it would appear that the word failure is best used to describe Liberal policies when they have them.

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ST. CATHARINES' OKTOBERFEST

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, the fall season is upon us and in St. Catharines fall means Oktoberfest.

This year Oktoberfest will be held from October 15 to 23. It features special events at local clubs, pubs, city hall, the St. Catharines centennial library and much more. The festival means music, food and the occasional beer, a nine-day celebration of Bavarian fun.

As Canada's oldest Oktoberfest, St. Catharines is very proud on this its 34th annual festival.

Special thanks and congratulations to the St. Catharines Oktoberfest-Pumpkinfest committee and to the many volunteers who will make this event great.

I encourage everyone to visit St. Catharines next week. As president Stephen Ruf and CHSC Morning Mayor John Larocque say, come for the friendship, come for the music, come for the food and come for the fun.

* * *

AIDS

Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, look around the House. Many persons are wearing red ribbons.

The red ribbon has become the symbol for AIDS, the commitment to end this tragic disease and a memorial to the men, women and children who have died in its lethal grip.

Last Sunday I attended the 8th annual walk for AIDS in Vancouver. Thousands of men and women, seniors and families walked to raise badly needed funds for community services and to increase public awareness of this tragic disease; walking in solidarity against a virus that wreaks global devastation but also walking in triumph of life over death, of compassion over prejudice.

Sadly some still remain ignorant of the origins of the HIV virus. They stigmatize and stand in judgment of those who are sick and dying from AIDS. Therefore in this week of AIDS awareness, I implore all Canadians to fight ignorance and prejudice, to wear the red ribbon in celebration of the courage of those who live with AIDS, in respect of those who have died of AIDS and in hope of the day when AIDS will be banished from our world.

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[*Translation*]

MANPOWER TRAINING

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, after the referendum episode, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is still up to his tricks, with a skill and subtlety that no one expected.

This time, the incorrigible minister is telling us what he thinks about labour force training: he is offering the provinces half a loaf and suggesting that the other half will be negotiated later. He might as well have added that the federal government will take the best part and leave the crumbs for the provinces.

However, the minister should understand that Quebecers were not born to accept crumbs.

His intention not to transfer full responsibility for labour force training to Quebec, on the pretext of national standards, is the cavalier response of the federal government to the broad consensus expressed by Quebecers.

Drawing on the famous cartoon character Gaston Lagaffe, I say to the minister: "Keep it up and thanks!"

* * *

• (1105)

[*English*]

BREAST CANCER

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to challenge the medical community to assume a more aggressive approach to breast cancer research.

Women are asking why it is taking so long to answer questions about breast cancer. No one even really knows what causes it.

The cancer establishment continues to focus on basic research, treatment and diagnosis. We should be exploring further than that: toxins in the environment and their effects, the relationship between smoking and breast cancer.

I know what it is to feel the abject terror of a potential breast malignancy. There is nothing lonelier or more fearful and there is not anyone who can remove that fear.

We need to consider this statistic: one in nine women will get breast cancer. Look around this Chamber, that means six of us here.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is time to refocus our energies and find a cure.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the 23rd anniversary of a visionary policy that recognizes the cultural diversity of Canada and ensures the cultural freedom of all Canadians.

Former Prime Minister Trudeau said in this House: "There cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others".

Designed to integrate and not assimilate all Canadians in every facet of Canadian life, the policy of multiculturalism has become the envy of countries around the world struggling to integrate minorities into the mainstream of their societies.

Today multiculturalism continues to contribute to a shared sense of Canadian identity and societal cohesion.

Let us reaffirm through this policy our commitment to managing the diversity within our society to the benefit of Canada as a whole, that it may remain a united, strong and prosperous country.

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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of Canadians the importance of business development corporations. At the same moment that we are looking at a wide ranging revision of our programming through human resources development it is important that we recognize programs that work well.

Since 1981 over 200 BDCs have been providing loans to small businesses. In Ontario 55 BDCs have granted over $115 million in loans to almost 5,000 businesses. Companies exist today which otherwise would not.

The job creation impact has been impressive. In Ontario the program has created 10,926 jobs at an average cost of only $6,200. Even more impressive is the realization that the corporations make loans which have been turned down by traditional lenders and that in 93 per cent of the cases the advances are repaid in an orderly fashion.

BDCs are a success story of small business support and job creation. They deserve continued support.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIDS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, AIDS is now an unavoidable reality in Quebec and Canadian society. It is more than ten years since the first AIDS case was diagnosed in Montreal. The AIDS epidemic is far from abating

and it is now reaching population groups that so far were thought to be safe from it.

Unfortunately, no effective remedy to relieve the people affected exists yet. Only prevention can stop the virus from spreading. A public inquiry revealed that less than a third of high school students said that they used a condom the first time they had sex. These facts clearly show that governments must support community organizations which, better than anyone else, reach people where they live. In closing, I want to thank all the community organizations for the support that they give affected people.

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[*English*]

SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the Minister of Human Resources Development gave a speech on social programs. In that speech he outlined the type of attitude he felt would be needed in examining Canada's social programs, the need for co–operation, earnest debate, the free exchange of ideas and, most important, the need to refrain from deliberate, partisan cheap shots.

No sooner did he get those words out of his mouth than he proceeded to deliver a cheap shot of his own by repeating the ludicrous charge that the Reform Party would cut $15 billion out of social programs. This is rubbish, old style politics and he knows it. It is the Liberal government that is facing $15 billion in cuts out of total program spending if it is to meet its meagre deficit targets.

Canadians deserve better than this type of irresponsible scare mongering. Preying on the fears of the needy is no way to garner the respect of the people of this country.

When it comes to partisan cheap shots the do as I say, not as I do attitude is totally unacceptable. The minister should reread his speech and follow his own advice.

* * *

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle): Mr. Speaker, on October 2, the Montreal daily *La Presse* published an article entitled "Le Bloc lance ses troupes à la chasse au vote souverainiste sans attendre" (the Bloc decides to go after sovereignist vote now).

In it, we learn that the official opposition whip is exhorting the separatists to infiltrate local community service centres, school boards, municipal governments and any other organization or body controlled by so–called federalists.

The message is clear—the Bloc cares not a whit about the administration of government and the quality of services delivered to the public. The Bloc is now pushing an out–and–out sovereignist propaganda campaign. This will rapidly turn into a exercise in demagoguery that can only destroy the country.

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[*English*]

SOCIAL POLICY REFORM

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to commend the Minister of Human Resources Development on his discussion paper on social policy reform.

We made a promise last fall that there would be a different way of doing things in Ottawa. This week we proved that. The road to social policy reform will be navigated by the entire country, not just by politicians and bureaucrats in Ottawa. This government, unlike the previous one, is not interested in fighting the deficit on the backs of the poor and the unemployed. Nor are we interested in the system collapsing and serving nobody. By working with all Canadians we can deliver what we promised, a vibrant and prosperous economy in a country in which the need for social programs will decline.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, as of September 28 the government's infrastructure program claims to have created 71,000 jobs. Even if that were true, these jobs are only short term. By its own admission with the total expenditure of $4.5 billion just 10 per cent of these jobs are permanent. It comes as no surprise on this side of the House that some provinces have received no long term jobs at all.

B.C., Prince Edward Island, Yukon and First Nations people have none. Saskatchewan, though, has six long term jobs and, hurray, Manitoba gets three. The most obvious fact is even less of a surprise; the lion's share, 73 per cent of the long term jobs, has been created in one province alone. Which province could that be? Of course, that province is the minister's own.

The infrastructure score is Ontario, 5,140; British Columbia, zero. The taxpayer, as usual, loses the entire political shell game by $4.5 billion.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada will soon undertake an important trade mission to Asia with his provincial counterparts to try to find new markets for Canadian services and products.

[*Translation*]

The objective is to find new markets. In line with the decision taken last December, the Prime Minister was to go to Asia with his provincial and territorial counterparts. Until recently, all the premiers were to accompany him with one exception: the premier of Quebec is still refusing to be a part of Team Canada.

Contrary to the explanations of the leader of the Bloc Quebecois that Mr. Parizeau has more pressing obligations, we have just learned that the Quebec premier will in fact be taking a holiday at that time. Instead of representing Quebec on Team Canada, he will apparently be on vacation. Imagine! This is shameful!

* * *

[*English*]

ST. ANDREWS

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, this past Monday the town of St. Andrews, New Brunswick launched its daffodil project by planting several thousand bulbs. This project is being carried out for two major reasons: for the beautification of the town and to complement the already thriving tourist industry in that area.

These are the types of initiatives that assist in moving our tourism industries forward. I would like to congratulate the town of St. Andrews and its citizens on this worthy project. Not only did the community participate in its own program, but the town was also kind enough to provide daffodil bulbs for planting here on Parliament Hill.

I am sure that next April when they bloom we will all recall this donation from St. Andrews by the Sea.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte–Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The centralizing offensive being mounted by Ottawa with its reform of social programs has already caused a general outcry, and not just in Quebec. Yesterday, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs categorically rejected, for the first time moreover, the complete transfer to Quebec of federal responsibilities in the area of manpower training.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development confirm the statement by his colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs that Ottawa is announcing that the federal government will refuse to transfer full responsibility for manpower training to Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, last spring we proposed a new three year agreement on manpower training to all the provinces. As I said yesterday in the House, it included a transfer of responsibility for institutional training and training that is purchased in community colleges and CEGEPs.

We indicated our willingness to invite the provinces to plan priorities for federal resource investments in each province. In the case of Quebec where we spend about $800 million, that takes in an envelope of almost $500 million. We indicated our willingness to work with them on a system of guichet unique, of single window deliveries. We also indicated that if the provinces would be willing we would look at transferring responsibility for some of the programs which are more clearly in the educational field, such as stay in school programs and others.

Several provinces have responded positively and quite constructively. We are in the process of negotiating with them. We have not heard officially from the new Government of Quebec as to what its response to that agreement would be.

Let me make one important point. These are our proposed three year agreements. There is no point in having longer term agreements until we know what the new structure of our programs will be. There is no point in reassembling or reallocating programs that may not exist or that may be changed or altered. Therefore, the three year interim agreement is a very good demonstration of how we are prepared to be flexible. We are prepared to assign more responsibility to the provinces in areas of their competence. We want to work in co–operation with the provinces.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte–Marie): Mr. Speaker, the minister has perhaps not heard back from Quebec, but former premier Johnson, a Liberal and a federalist as well, said during the recent election campaign in Quebec that he was not interested in this sort of half–measure from the federal government.

I come back to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who said that what they were proposing did not run counter to Quebec's demands, that they were meeting Quebec halfway. What they are saying is "Take half the loaf now and we'll negotiate the other half later".

Does the government realize that in stubbornly refusing to give Quebec the whole loaf in the areas of training and manpower, it is perpetuating the duplication and waste that are costing Quebec over $250 million, at the expense of those people who would like to return to work?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. The federal government is showing a great deal of interest in working with provinces to redesign how we can better deliver services and programs.

We already have agreements in place with a number of provinces. We just signed one with Ontario four weeks ago to establish a new Ontario training board where the federal and provincial governments would co–operate with business and labour to deliver services. We are certainly interested in doing that with other provinces as well.

The study referred to by the hon. member, frankly, was a study not based on sound analysis. The hon. member took analysis done by the OECD covering 15 countries. He took an artificial figure and applied it across Quebec. He did not take the actual numbers. Therefore, any judgments being made are really subject to serious reconsideration. We have already submitted to the province of Quebec a reassessment of those numbers. I think you will see the duplication that is there is primarily because in many cases it is not on the federal side. We would like to see single window deliveries, and I think that is the key to it.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

We need single window capability. All partners, the community groups, labour, the business community, the provinces and the federal government would share the work and collaborate on the review of services to serve every member of the public better.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte–Marie): Mr. Speaker, when he questions the $250–million figure, the minister is actually questioning Robert Bourassa, Daniel Johnson and former minister Bourbeau, all of whom happen to be Liberals as well as federalists. In fact, they should have said so during this past election campaign, but they chose not to for quite understandable reasons. It did not make much difference anyway.

When the minister talks about co–operation, does he realize that, for two or three years now, there has been a consensus in Quebec amongst unions, business circles, the co–operative movement, the academic community and even the Liberal Party of Quebec that all powers concerning manpower should be repatriated in Quebec?

How can the minister contend that his government is committed to discussing, or even co–operating, with the provinces, while it rejects from the outset one of Quebec's fundamental demands which enjoys widespread support among all the socio-economic stakeholders in Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first answer, we have already made an offer to all the provinces to transfer training responsibility to them. The member does not seem to have understood the importance of that particular statement in his scripted lines. It seems to me that would be a good demonstration at this time of how we can share.

One thing not on the table is the unemployment insurance program. It is a national program. It is clearly in the Constitution. It is one program by which we can ensure that this country's resources are shared from one region to another to help those most in need. By the way, the hon. member well knows that Quebec has benefited mightily under that sharing over the past many years.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Not only does the reform herald an unprecedented centralization effort, but one of its objectives is to reduce substantially the federal contribution to social assistance funding. This will leave the province no choice but to either increase their tax rates to compensate for the withdrawal of the federal government or cut back welfare benefits.

How does the minister want us to take seriously his government's stated objective to do more for children living in poverty, when Ottawa is cutting its transfer payments to the provinces for social assistance? How can it be taken seriously? How contradictory, Mr. Speaker!

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member was last February or where he has been since, but that was clearly announced in the federal budget last February. I am glad that after nine months he is finally able to catch up with the figures.

There was a clear declaration in the budget that we were going to hold transfer payments under these programs at the 1993–94 level. As a result we have started to work with the provinces to find ways of more efficiently dealing with the problems of social assistance. We have already worked with provinces to find collaborative ways of enabling people on social assistance to get back to work, to begin to change the rules.

That is one of the things which is part and parcel of the green book. We are prepared to immediately work with the provinces to change the rules under the Canada assistance plan to enable almost 50 per cent of those who are on social assistance and want to get back into the workforce to do so without being prohibitively discriminated against by losing income. The best way to handle the social assistance problem is to get people a job.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, the minister wishes to know where I was in February. I would like to tell him through you that, if he was to the left of the Liberal Party in the past, he is moving far to the right with this reform.

How can he claim that he wants to help disadvantaged children, when the main consequence of his reform would be to impoverish the parents? How can he claim that he wants to help disadvantaged children?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member has not talked to the people who are on social assistance. They want to have self–sufficiency. They want to have independence. They want to be able to earn an income for their families. They do not want to stay on dependency.

• (1125)

That is what this green paper is all about. It is about giving people real hope that they do not have to be dependent on a program and cheque, but once again can go to work.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the government claims to be concerned about education and job skills for Canadians but the social policy discussion paper tabled yesterday calls for the virtual elimination of federal transfers in support of higher education.

At the same time the government continues to spend billions of dollars on subsidies to businesses, interest groups and crown corporations. The minister must have had some set of spending priorities in preparing this paper. I ask the Minister of Human Resources Development, where does the funding of post–secondary education come in the government spending priorities?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it clearly comes very high because we are committed to an expenditure of over $8 billion to help the provinces in the area of higher education. It seems to me that we are prepared to put our money where our mouth is, unlike the hon. leader of the Reform Party.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, slashing $1.5 billion from transfers to higher education hardly seems like an indication of high priority.

In developing our approach on this issue, Reformers have said that the federal government ought to maintain as its highest spending priorities transfers in support of health care and education. We have advocated cutting virtually everything else in order to sustain those spending priorities.

I ask the minister, why does the government not preserve federal funding for post–secondary education at current levels and get more bang for the buck by transferring that funding directly to students through educational vouchers rather than to the provinces and the institutions?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the question posed by the hon. leader of the Reform Party shows one thing clearly: He has not read the green book. If he had read it, he would have learned a couple of important facts.

He likes to deal in facts. I am going to give him some facts. Number one is that present transfer arrangements under the existing EPF means the provinces are getting a substantial increase in revenue by the tax points we transfer to them. Therefore the revenue to provinces is going up for education through the tax points, but as a result of the existing formula the cash transfer declines over a period of time on a proper ratio.

If the hon. leader of the Reform Party would understand that fact, he would not be using the kind of nonsensical statement that we are slashing programs. In fact the revenue is growing. We are saying that rather than having the cash disappear over a 10 year period, let us use that money in order to lever an additional $3 billion back into higher education to assist all kinds of Canadians in going back to school. That is what is called creative government.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, students know the difference between a repayable loan and a non–repayable voucher. I was endeavouring to get the minister to consider this more innovative way of transferring funding for higher education by paying directly to the students through non–repayable vouchers rather than through either tax points or transfers directly to the provinces.

Hundreds of thousands of students are worried that the federal government's withdrawal from federal support of higher education will damage the quality of their education. Students worry that the minister's scheme will end up loading themselves with a higher and higher debt load. Is the minister in his vaunted consultation process intending to travel and talk to university and college students to explain his position to them? I am certain he will get a warm welcome if he does.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the whole point of having an open consultation process which has been opposed by the members of the Reform Party is to allow a forum in which new ideas can come about.

They say they did not do it. They have changed their minds since yesterday because five members of the Reform Party, including the leader of the party, got up yesterday and said: "Do not have consultation. Do not have open participation. Do not consult the people. Do something now". We do not believe in that philosophy. I say to the leader of the Reform Party that if he has a better way of proposing aid for students: "Put it forward. Come to the committee. Here is the chairman right here. Suggest it to the committee. That is why we have an open process".

• (1130)

I also say to the leader of the Reform Party: "That is called democracy".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The social program reform proposes establishing two classes of unemployed workers: occasional UI claimants and frequent UI claimants, that is, 40 per cent of recipients, notably seasonal workers. We know that the Government of New Brunswick is particularly critical of the reform on this point.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development realize that the UI reform he proposes will heavily penalize the economy of the regions, which is very dependent on seasonal activities like fishing, forestry and tourism?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased the hon. member asked that question, because just about 45 minutes ago I had the privilege of being with the premier of New Brunswick in a public session wherein he said very explicitly that he supports the philosophy and direction of our reform paper.

Furthermore he said that he appreciates the efforts we are making in the announcements we made last Monday in terms of a new employment enhancement program for seasonal workers, a new program of earning supplements and the experiments we are trying on UI eligibility requirements in the Atlantic provinces, particularly in Prince Edward Island, as a way of providing real support to make that transition.

If the hon. member is at all interested I invite him to sit down with us. We would be prepared to go through with him, as we have done with the premier of New Brunswick, about how we can use this important time to have a real serious examination of the interest and concerns of industries with seasonal workers. That has not really been examined in the country for a long time; we have simply let things happen.

Under this kind of review process we can seriously begin to look at the conditions and concerns of seasonal workers to make sure we build a new social security system that meets their needs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that Mr. McKenna was admonished by his federal big brother. Will the Minister admit, as his colleague of Intergovernmental Affairs did, that the reform he is proposing is not a miracle cure, that it will hit seasonal workers very hard, and particularly those in forestry who cannot work twelve months a year?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate when members of the Bloc run out of any substantial argument that they turn to personal insult. The fact that they would have that kind of attitude toward one of the most distinguished public servants in Canada simply does not deserve a response.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, my question is unexpectedly for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Yesterday the minister promised that he would make available technical papers containing estimates of the costs and savings of the reform alternatives he has set out in the green book. These estimates are demanded by everyone taking the reform proposals seriously. They are absolutely essential for the upcoming budget consultations by the House finance committee.

Will the minister assure Canadians that these technical papers will contain estimates of costs and savings and give us a precise date for their publication?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can give the assurance that we will give the economic scenarios that are required. We will work as quickly as we can to have all the papers.

As the member can understand, they are quite copious and we were busy printing the report. We will make them available as soon as possible, certainly for use by members of the committee when they begin the consultations.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately time is of the essence. Budget consultations will have to be completed in seven weeks.

Yesterday the Conference Board of Canada and a number of business economists predicted that this year's budget plan would not be met and that more spending cuts were needed to prevent a financial crisis for the country. All these experts say that cuts in social programs are needed.

• (1135)

Could the minister tell these financial experts and anxious Canadians that his reforms will lower social program expenditures in the next budget?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have regularly told the House and the country that we will meet our targets.

During the consultation process we will welcome suggestions from the opposition and from our own members on how these targets can be met effectively for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Human Resources Development. On page 63 of the document he tabled yesterday, it is said that, and I quote: "It is true that replacing federal cash transfers would put upward pressure on tuition fees. This may be a necessary price to pay to put in place a permanent system for ensuring accessibility to post–secondary education".

How can the Minister pretend, as he did yesterday, that his reform will not limit accessibility to post–secondary education for thousands of young people when the proposed reduction in transfer payments will result in an increase in tuition fees? According to a Treasury Board memorandum which will not be released by the government, these fees could even double.

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, as we have pointed out in the House, tuition fees have doubled over the past four or five years. They have already gone up that amount under the existing system. At the same time I point out that enrolment has substantially increased in that period.

We have been providing through our student aid program, the student loan program, very successful forms of resources, but more is needed.

In the document we have said that the decision on tuition increases is not ours to make; it is up to provincial governments to make them. If the provincial governments are prepared to use the additional revenue they will be receiving through the EPF transfer of tax points to keep tuition rates down, it is their decision to make.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, the minister also says in his document that students could use their RRSPs to repay their debts.

Is the minister really serious when he suggests that students use their RRSPs? Does he really think that students have the means to invest in RRSPs while having to borrow even more to study?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we did not say that students could use their RRSPs. We said RRSPs could be used to help people get an education.

That means parents who presently hold RRSPs could decide to use them to help their kids with an education. We want to develop other financial vehicles by which people could begin to invest in their children's future at an early age. We want to provide investment vehicles so that parents, grandparents and other relatives can begin to put money aside with some form of incentive from the government to save for education and training, not just for income security.

I find it incredible that the Bloc Quebecois and others would somehow say it is wrong for the Government of Canada to encourage parents to invest in their children's future.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development has claimed repeatedly that he wants to consult widely with Canadians. I think he used the *c* word about a dozen times yesterday in question period.

Perhaps the minister could tell the House why his department was actively promoting special interest group funding programs related to his discussion paper weeks ago, long before ordinary Canadians even knew what was in his discussion paper.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, when I announced last January that we were to undertake a process of reform I indicated we would be prepared to help groups that wanted to make presentations and consult their membership, particularly women's groups. We have provided funding at this point for 19 different organizations in the name of equity. There are organizations and groups that have substantial resources. Business organizations, labour organizations and the Reform Party have all kinds of money they get from private donations which they can use to make their case.

• (1140)

There are many groups, particularly anti–poverty groups, women's groups and aboriginal groups, that do not have access to the same resources. In order to ensure there was full access and full participation we wanted these groups to be able to work with their membership and do the proper research so that we could have proper dialogue and debate in the country.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how the minister interprets equal access by funding special interest groups. I am pleased he has admitted that is happening because I was prepared to table a letter in the House showing that it was indeed the case.

I would like the minister to tell the House again why he feels it is necessary to give special interest groups priority over individual Canadians. Where is the evidence that ordinary Canadians will have even the slightest influence on this social policy reform?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I realize the hon. member is new to the House, but it would seem to me that one of the first responsibilities of a member of Parliament is to ensure that individual Canadians in his or her constituency have their voices and points reflected.

The hon. member has a break next week. We have sent him all the information. I would encourage him to get back to his riding as fast as he can and start talking to his people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Initial reaction to the discussion paper on social programs was unanimous in denouncing both the approach and the content of government proposals. Some critics even come from Liberals. A colleague of the minister said out loud what many secretly think when he stated that "the minister has taken a baseball bat to go after the poorest ones".

How can the minister hope to convince Canadians of the validity of his reform when he cannot even convince his own colleagues?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read part of an article written by Mr. Alain Dubuc in *La Presse*, a highly respected newspaper in Quebec.

—first, we must commend the Liberal government and minister Axworthy. They are the first ones to tackle head–on the interrelated problems of economic slump and social assistance.

This article shows how independent observers, not partisan ones, support our government's efforts to develop a new approach towards poverty, unemployment and the problems of the poor in our country.

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, would it not be simpler for the minister to admit that this discussion paper fully contradicts the principles which he supported when he was in opposition?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I came into elected politics over 20 years ago with a couple of basic ambitions in mind: first, to make sure that people were treated fairly throughout the country; second, to make sure that people who had disadvantages were given opportunities; and, third, to make sure that we had a strong, effective country that could maintain its independence and integrity.

Those values and purposes still exist. The green paper is reflective of how we can get those values and purposes to work better in today's world.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

As the House knows, the social reform program is of crucial importance to the aboriginal peoples of Canada. We are the poorest of the poor. We see it as an opportunity to address the unacceptably high level of poverty among our young people. Our children face this prospect.

• (1145)

What assurances can the minister give to the House that the aboriginal people will be heard in this important and pressing review?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

First I can indicate to the House that I have asked my colleague, the secretary of state for training, to undertake a special process of consultation and work with First Nations people. Because of their special problems and because of the very important initiatives by my colleague, the minister of Indian affairs, to move toward self–government, there is a need for a particular track of consultation and discussion.

We have provided to this point close to $600,000 worth of support for a wide variety of aboriginal groups across the country to consult with their membership, to work with them and to begin to develop an ability to work in those very poor communities across the country to make sure there is a grassroots feeling of how they can participate.

I am very pleased to see that in the last day or two we have had major support from some of the national aboriginal organizations, like the National Metis Council, who say they too, like many other Canadians, want to co–operate and participate in finding a new and better way to help their people.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Human Resources Development spoke repeatedly about the need to co–operate with and consult with the provinces. In fact I can recall one quote where he said: "We have to really rely on wholesale co–operation by all levels of government".

He will know that since the paper has been tabled, there has been severe criticism of it by several provincial governments, including Ontario and Quebec. Yesterday his response to the premier of Ontario's concern was to take partisan and political cheap shots at the premier.

Is this an example of how he intends to gather provincial co–operation?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we are faced with a curious and interesting piece of political acrobatics. We now have a member of the Reform Party defending Bob Rae. I am sure the folks at home in Calgary will be very pleased to know what the member has now committed to do.

The fact to remember is that we are open to co–operation, but we ask the provincial premiers, as we have, to also reciprocate and show that they are prepared to participate in the national interest.

The time has come to stop simply defending in an isolationist way their own interests province by province. It is time for Canadians to join together, as the premier of New Brunswick did this morning, and say this is something that is bigger than all of us. We must work together in a co–operative fashion. That is the kind of spirit and co–operation I would like to see from all the premiers.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, the House will note that the minister responded to concerns about partisan attacks on the premier of Ontario by taking more partisan attacks on the premier of Ontario and on the Reform Party.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. Does the minister intend to adopt the domineering and centralizing attitude of past Liberal governments, or will he recognize that his proposals have an impact on areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I understand now why the hon. member from the Reform Party is supporting Bob Rae and the NDP. They are both at 10 per cent in the polls. They have something in common at this time.

The hon. member once again professes that he wants to express himself in the spirit of co–operation. If he had read the green paper—I would suggest he now has a whole week to go home and look at it carefully—he would see that we have indicated very clearly various options under which we are proposing decentralization, not centralization.

We talk about a new block funding arrangement on social assistance with the provinces. We talk about evolving many areas of training. We talk about how we can work to disentangle from education. Then the provinces would have clear authority over their educational institutions. These are the kinds of things that we want to propose.

It is time for all governments to begin to think about how they can decentralize their bureaucracies, whether they are federal or provincial, and put more power in the hands of people and communities because that is where the real decisions should be made.

* * *

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond–Guiral (Laval Centre): Mr. Speaker, it may surprise you that my question is not directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development. In fact, it is my privilege to direct my question to the Minister of Justice.

At a recent international gathering of gynaecologists and obstetricians, Dr. Patricia Baird, formerly chairman of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on New Reproductive Technologies, once again emphasized the need for Canada to regulate this field.

When does the Minister of Justice intend to table in the House a bill to regulate practices connected with new reproductive technologies?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted with the question. I thought members had forgotten me. As far as new reproductive technologies are concerned, we are now working on a regulatory framework.

I may add that we will have to work together with the provinces and other groups to deal with all the problems in this area. There are jurisdictional problems, and as members of the Bloc Quebecois are well aware, it is always important to talk to the provinces in order to avoid encroaching on their jurisdictions. So we are doing our job.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre): Mr. Speaker, I realize that because of the party-like atmosphere in the House for the past two days, everyone in this cabinet feels like getting up. I must point out to the Minister of Health that my question was directed to the Minister of Justice. I will put my second question to him, as I imagine he still remembers the first one and should be able to respond.

Would the Minister of Justice agree that, as pointed out by Dr. Baird, action is urgently needed to prohibit the marketing of human embryos and thus preclude the possibility of research activities that are not ethically sound?

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I am the minister responsible for that particular file, I am answering. Perhaps the member across the way does not realize that.

We are working with other jurisdictions to regulate where we can and to bring forward a report on the whole issue of new reproductive technology as quickly as we possibly can.

* * *

SOCIAL POLICY REFORM

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are beginning to suspect that the government is using consultation as an excuse for inaction. It says it is consulting on the GST, on immigration, on agriculture, yet when it does not get the answers it wants from Canadians it ignores them.

Why does the Minister of Human Resources Development keep talking about wanting to hear from Canadians when it is clear he only listens to the people he wants to hear?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, members of the Reform Party should begin to take the same line. Consistency has not been a virtue they have honoured very often, but I think it is about time.

On the one hand we have a member this morning asking: "Why don't you have more consultations? Why don't you broaden it up, make it genuine, give people a chance." Now we have the hon. member for Calgary North saying not to have consultations at all. They cannot have it both ways, but they seem to want to have it both ways.

I want to point out one important point. The primary consultation will be by a standing committee of the House of Commons which has representatives from all parties. If they bring an open mind to the issue and have a meeting of minds, then we can have a very genuine consultation.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, as we saw yesterday, the minister seems determined to attack proposals Reform did not make instead of defending proposals he did not make. When we talk about consultation, we talk about honest consultation, giving Canadians the truth and information including real costs, not rigged consultations and rigged government funded special interest groups.

• (1155)

How will this process be different? How will ordinary Canadians be heard?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, we heard yesterday from the leader of the Reform Party about how they have been consulting for a year on social programs.

The only result of that year long process was a statement by the hon. member for Calgary North that the Reform Party wants to cut $15 billion from social programs. He would not detail where, how or what. Reform members are now beginning to preach to us about putting the facts out. Where are their facts? Where is their study? Where is the result of their year long consultations?

I have one simple piece of advice for the hon. member. Join the standing committee on human resources. Go back to your constituency and talk to the people. As parliamentarians we have provided the best place for Canadians to be heard, in this Parliament and through its committees.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Since the Liberals came to power, employment has gone up significantly. We saw that 339,000 jobs were created, most of them full-time jobs. More than 97,000 jobs were created in the Atlantic provinces alone. Which policies helped to bring about this remarkable turnaround?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. Unlike the negativism we have been hearing, we can now explain to Canadians the positive news. Since this government was elected there have been 330,000 new jobs, 90 per cent of which are full time jobs.

One of the most important elements is that Canadians have confidence and trust in the government. Therefore they know we will have a good economic future and they are prepared to invest.

Second, the infrastructure program has had a stimulating effect on the economy as have the employment programs we announced last year for young people; the youth services corps, the apprenticeship intern programs. The initiatives we have been taking recently like reducing UI premiums are now having a real impact.

We are able to prove to Canadians that with a Liberal government we know where the jobs are and it is shown by the evidence we have today.

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PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–22 has once again been rejected and sent to committee by the other place.

Will the Minister of Transport admit that this bill is not going to go away and that he has absolutely no plan as to how to deal with this ill–conceived legislation?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the bill has not been rejected. As the rules allow it has been sent to committee. The committee will report again and the decision will be made by the other place.

Let me remind the hon. member that before the election the Prime Minister made it very clear that we would review the deal. However the maker of the deal decided to sign and went ahead despite the warnings. After we took office the Prime Minister reviewed the deal, found that it was not in the interests of Canadians and it was cancelled.

Why does the Reform Party want to have Canadian taxpayers pay the $440 million? I thought they were for deficit reduction.

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[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Bernard St–Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice, if the Hon. Minister of Health allows it. We were amazed to learn this week that the judges of the Supreme Court now admit extreme drunkenness as a legitimate defence for sexual assault. This attitude suggests that people can commit serious crimes with impunity if they have consumed enough alcohol or other drugs.

• (1200)

My question is this: Does such a judgement mean that someone with a .30 blood alcohol level could be acquitted by a court while someone with a .09 level would be convicted? It does not make any sense.

Does the Minister of Justice agree that it makes no sense?

[*English*]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, without agreeing to the interpretation put on that judgment by the hon. member I can tell him and the House that I am concerned about the implications of the judgment. I share some of the concerns that have been expressed during the week in the wake of its release.

The whole general part of the Criminal Code has been under study for some decades actually. However in the coming weeks we are going to be releasing a discussion paper with respect to it. It includes the question of defences, including self–intoxication. We are going to make proposals for public discussion including the possibility that we can avoid this controversy by creating a criminal offence of criminal intoxication leading to misconduct.

That approach which was discussed by the Law Reform Commission as long as eight years ago has its merits. It has disadvantages as well. We will hear during the discussion period how people feel about that approach and we will learn from it.

In any event, I want to tell the hon. member that we are aware of the concerns arising from the judgment last week. We are examining alternative ways to ensure public safety.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

I have been informed by the department that it is presently working on pension reform legislation that will greatly fast track veterans applications and I appreciate that. However does the minister recognize that additional changes must be made to Bill C–84? If so, will these changes be put on the legislative agenda? Time is running out for the merchant navy veterans.

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we are looking at ways to speed up the processing of veterans claims. For too long veterans have found they have had to wait two or three years before particular decisions are adjudicated. We are looking at making structural and legislative changes. The hon. member and the House will be advised in due course as to when we will bring forward those changes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and an undertaking I made last Monday in the House, I would like to table in both official languages a document entitled: "Executive Floor Refit".

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CANADIAN COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to table a document entitled: "The Canadian Companies in South Africa". It describes the code of conduct and the practices of Canadian companies for the period July 1991–94 and I present it in both official languages.

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ERITREA, ETHIOPIA AND EGYPT

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on my visit to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Egypt in September. My participation there preceded the Cairo Population and Development Conference.

Eritrea and Ethiopia are countries in which Canada directly, and indirectly through our non–government organizations, has a long and important involvement most recently through periods of drought and conflict. Egypt as you well know is a crucial country in the politics of the Middle East.

Let me begin my comments with reflections on Eritrea and Ethiopia. These two countries were cut from Canada's bilateral assistance program by the previous government. By failing to emphasize that humanitarian assistance was exempt from the cut, Canada appeared to be abandoning Eritrea and Ethiopia just when peace was finally being realized after 30 years of civil war.

• (1205)

My visit provided an opportunity to convey several important messages, the first being that Canada remains committed to maintaining bilateral relationships, if not assistance programs, with both countries. The second message was that while future bilateral assistance and partnership programs will await the outcome of the foreign policy review and be a function of our overall budgetary position, we will continue to contribute to the efforts of these countries to rebuild.

By rebuild, we mean two things. The first is to help them make the shift from relief to recovery. The second is to help them begin building structures and institutions such as the constitution by which they will govern themselves more democratically and we hope more peacefully.

Within the February budgetary allocations we have been able to provide $18 million in food security to Ethiopia and $7 million to Eritrea this year. In addition we have provided $400,000 in assistance to Eritrean refugees returning from the Sudan. We have established a $500,000 fund for democratic development activities in each country.

While there I applauded the efforts of the Ethiopians and Eritreans to promote regional peace and stability, certainly not an easy task. Both countries have been prominent in the Sudan peace talks which Canada is supporting. My meetings with the secretary general of the OAU, Salim Salim, the president of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, and Eritrea's minister of foreign affairs, Petros Solomon, touched on this issue.

I want to inform my colleagues that much more attention will be needed by western countries to support Africa's own efforts to bring peace to the horn of Africa. Within our budgetary and human resources limitations, Canada will continue to seek ways to facilitate this peace process as well as to help refugees in the region.

Now for Egypt, a country with one foot in Africa and another in Asia. Over the past decade Egypt has taken on the role of bridge builder in middle eastern affairs. Its place on the frontlines has drawn it into many conflicts and the government is currently struggling to liberalize the economy while dealing with sporadic acts of terrorism. Rural Egypt where I also had the opportunity to travel is close to Africa in its poverty and in the severity of its ecological crisis.

Canada is helping the Egyptians deal with their most precious resource, the River Nile. I journeyed to Qanater to see the strategic research unit on the second cataract of the Nile north of Cairo. This is only one project in which Canada is involved bilaterally but from conversations with senior Egyptian officials, one that is very much appreciated.

In keeping with a longstanding commitment to help women in Egypt, Canada sponsors a range of projects. A creative effort is being undertaken in the Qena region in southern Egypt by the Foundation for International Training. It is trying to open the banking system of the country to women who are small scale entrepreneurs. In tiny workshops, in back rooms of houses and even in courtyards women have started small enterprises with backing from CIDA through the Foundation for International Training. The results to date not surprisingly for those of us familiar with the Grameen Bank, are a very high repayment record and a rapidly growing clientele.

It was in these crowded homes and workshops that the hidden tragedy of rural Africa was revealed: the number of young girls who are not in school. UNICEF statistics tell us that 80 per cent of girl children in Egypt reach at least grade 5 in primary school. For Ethiopia the figure is only 10 per cent.

On my last day in Egypt I announced on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs that Canada is contributing $14.9 million to support primary education for girls in 15 African countries, to be channelled through UNICEF. I believe the education of young girls in Africa is the touchstone in a brighter future for the whole population. There is growing consensus that donor dollars spent on education of young girls has a positive impact not only on their lives, but on their families and on their communities. It was my privilege to be the bearer of this message of support to Africa.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis–Hébert): Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to thank the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa for the report she just gave us on her recent trip to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Egypt and on Canada's aid initiatives in those countries.

In the first place, let me point out the respect which the Secretary of State has for the work of the joint committee that is reviewing Canada's foreign policy. I would like to thank her for this. Her colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, shows little respect for the committee's work, which he himself initiated, need I remind you, and which is not yet finished; he is making choices and setting foreign policies that take for granted the results of a major review which is not yet complete. At least the Secretary of State has the decency to tell us that she intends to wait for the committee's findings before developing new bilateral aid and partnership programs.

• (1210)

That being said, I think that Canada's efforts and initiatives, of which the Secretary of State has just informed us, should be well received. Canada must provide continuing tangible support for the colossal efforts that the Africans are making to establish peace and democracy in the Horn of Africa.

I would like to take a moment to talk about Eritrea. As you know, Eritrea became a sovereign state following the April 1993 referendum, in which Eritreans answered a very clear question: "Do you want Eritrea to become a sovereign and independent state?" The result was dazzling. Over 90 per cent of the vote was for sovereignty.

Canada was one of the first countries to recognize the achievement of independence in Eritrea and we should be proud of this. Canada must make a clear commitment to recognize such democratic decisions when these are made in a context that meets criteria that appear to comply with the rules of democracy.

This being said, we think that the government of Canada should feel a special duty to Eritrea, in that it represents a promise of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa region. In our view, this would warrant the allocation of special assistance to a long–term development and recovery program. Indeed, Canada should undertake to grant substantial assistance to this sustainable development and recovery program.

I listened to the hon. Secretary of State as she told us about the strategic research unit in Qanater, north of Cairo, one of the projects in which Canada is involved. I sincerely feel this is a step in the right direction. In fact, sustainable development must be an objective that transcends Canadian foreign policy. I would even go as far as to say it should be the basic objective of Canadian official development assistance.

We welcome the Canadian government commitment to help Ethiopia and Eritrea make the transition from humanitarian assistance to economic recovery. One of the main goals of our international assistance must indeed be to promote the development of self–reliance in assisted countries. We have to help these countries set up structures and institutions, including a constitution which will allow them to govern themselves more democratically and peacefully. The Secretary of State recognizes this essential condition.

Finally, we must absolutely, through dialogue and co–operation programs, seek to reinforce respect for human rights, democratic development and good government. The promotion of sustainable human development and human rights must be at the centre of our policies. The Bloc Quebecois insists on that aspect. We feel that these factors are the key elements of any Canadian foreign policy.

The commitment made by the Secretary of State towards Egyptian women and the announcement of a $14.9 million contribution to primary education for girls in 15 African countries, through UNICEF, is a step in that direction and we applaud that initiative.

In conclusion, we believe that the government must nevertheless make other concrete commitments, including the promotion, through existing Canadian and UN programs, of the development of Erytrean NGOs and the use of local expertise in reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives. These efforts must be pursued.

[*English*]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the secretary of state back from her overseas trip. We are glad she has arrived safely.

From our perspective the secretary of state speaks on several positive developments. On behalf of the government she has spoken supportive words for the most needy people of the world.

We are glad the government has committed some more funds to Eritrea and Ethiopia, which have been areas of such heart rending famine and war in recent years. We need to help rebuild their shattered economies and make peace between neighbouring countries in that region. We applaud the government in its efforts.

The secretary of state seems also to imply that the government may or will restore bilateral assistance to these countries. We are certainly not opposed to that as long as the governments in those countries do not siphon off our aid for military or other purposes.

• (1215)

Because of my association with the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, I do receive regular news bulletins about, for instance, the government of Ethiopia. There are encouraging signs of a trend toward democracy and stable, market oriented businesses in those newsletters.

I do hope that these reports accurately reflect a growing reality.

I wish to contrast her words with the current direction of the foreign affairs standing committee which at this moment is drafting its final report to the minister. Although I do not know what the final report will look like, and these matters are all a matter of negotiation, I am very concerned that the committee may fall to the lowest common denominator in order to try to please everybody and offer very few concrete recommendations in its report.

I am concerned, for instance, that there may not be a legislative mandate for CIDA and that the committee will not recommend that our shrinking aid dollars go to the most needy people of the world. Examples of what she has brought to our attention today is the direction we need to head in the future.

I am sure that someone in the minister's office, as well as the parliamentary secretary, is listening to this speech. I trust that whoever is listening will take note, especially in the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I believe we need a very strong report, one that will reflect the secretary of state's words in support of the impoverished masses in places like Eritrea, Ethiopia and Egypt.

Ministers, including this minister and the foreign affairs minister, need to speak to their Liberal counterparts on the foreign affairs committee and encourage them not to be tentative in their recommendations but to be firm in their support of the poorest people of the world.

With regard to Egypt, there is no comment about the minister's participation in the population conference in Cairo. No doubt this is because of the contentious issues that were raised there. I just want to say a word about that conference. It is a well documented fact that the best determiners of population growth are the industrialization of a country and the health and education of its citizens.

The best thing we can do therefore is to concentrate a good portion of our foreign aid on basic health and education in the third world. CIDA spends $120 million a year on Third World higher education degrees like masters degrees and doctorates. I believe we are developing, maybe wisely, but we are putting an increasing emphasis on the ruling classes in those countries where there are just a very few well educated people but the masses are ignorant and unhealthy.

I note that CIDA also gave no less than $28 million this year to the International Planned Parenthood Federation. I trust that most of those dollars will go to the basic health and education in the Third World rather than to coercive population control measures and abortion which proved to be such divisive issues last month in Cairo.

The way to avoid these negative practices is simple: educate the needy and upgrade basic health services for the general population.

That is why we applaud the minister's travelling in rural Egypt, going to where the problems are the worst. We appreciate the programs she described to educate girls and we are very supportive of those as long as we do not also forget that boys also need basic education.

We do not approve of every trip that this government takes, far from it, but in this case we think that this particular trip was very worth while in affirming Canada's support for the most needy people in the world. No doubt the minister's heart was touched with compassion by the poverty that she saw and no doubt her heart was also filled with satisfaction in seeing the difference that Canada can make even if it is in little ways.

I can only hope that the minister will communicate the things that are in her heart to her Liberal colleagues on the foreign affairs standing committee and that she will use her influence to strengthen the committee's recommendations in these areas.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the Report of the Canadian Section of the International Assembly of French-Speaking Parliamentarians on the second Jeux de la Francophonie, held in Paris, from July 5 to 13, 1994.

Routine Proceedings

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 39th Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the list of associate and permanent members of committees. With leave of the House, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later this day.

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development regarding Bill C–36, an act respecting Split Lake Cree First Nations and the settlement of matters arising from an agreement relating to the flooding of land, without amendment.

* * *

• (1220)

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–54, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act, the Canada Pension Plan, the Children's Special Allowances Act and the Unemployment Insurance act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

YUKON SURFACE RIGHTS BOARD ACT

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–55, an act to establish a board having jurisdiction concerning disputes respecting surface rights in respect of land in the Yukon Territory and to amend other acts in relation thereto.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Mr. Jean–Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–283, an Act to amend the Official Languages Act (review of the Act).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and friend from Nickel Belt for supporting this bill. This bill amends the Official Languages Act and provides that the governor–in–council, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of Canada, must appoint a person responsible for reviewing this act and the consequences of its implementation. I stress the word "implementation". The person appointed must submit to the Prime Minister a report on the review's findings in the year following the beginning of his or her mandate, while the Prime Minister must table the said report for consideration in both the House of Commons and the Senate.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 39th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to this House earlier this day be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

REVIEWING CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move that the date for the final report of the special committee reviewing Canada's foreign policy be extended to November 15, 1994 and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint their honours thereof.

TCC
(Motion agreed to.)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 56.1 I move:

> That a subcommittee of the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories during the month of October 1994 to undertake a study of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and that the necessary staff accompany the subcommittee.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

• (1225)

PETITIONS

ETHANOL

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present this petition on behalf of the people in my riding and from Alberta who call upon the government to support the ethanol industry over the long term, in light of the fact that the U.S. is already planning 49 new major ethanol plants and Canada now imports most of its ethanol, creating American jobs and helping American farmers.

I support my constituents in urging our government to get its act together and get moving before the world passes us by on this renewable, sustainable industry.

VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here whereby the men and women who have signed it point out that violence and abuse in radio and on television have become real concerns in Canadian society.

These petitioners want the CRTC to regulate and if possible control all forms of abuse in radio and on television. Obviously, they would like it to cease if at all possible.

They request the government ensure that the CRTC does this. Parents point out that very often abuse in radio and on television counteracts the efforts that they are undertaking to raise their families in safe, healthy environments.

[*Translation*]

SENIORS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition concerning seniors.

[*English*]

Seniors want us to remember as parliamentarians that they have contributed and continue to contribute significantly to the quality of life that we enjoy in this country. They point out that they are growing in numbers and I guess all of us will eventually, perhaps too quickly sometimes, get there. They point out that programs such as pensions and health will experience additional growing demand. These seniors need comfortable housing, social and community involvement, and they want to make sure that they have the medical care that they require.

They simply ask government that whenever it undertakes either budgetary or legislative or program changes, we remember the contributions they have made and the contributions they continue to make. I support them totally.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting three separate petitions today that all touch on the same subject. Altogether another 262 of my constituents have taken the time to sign petitions stating that the majority of Canadians believe that privileges extended to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationship couples.

Petitioners also ask that the Canadian human rights code should not be amended to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

I concur with these sentiments.

• (1230)

ETHANOL

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to table a petition today signed by the constituents of Lambton—Middlesex pursuant to Standing Order 36 and duly certified by the clerk of petitions.

The petitioners call on Parliament to maintain the present exemption on the excise portion of ethanol for a decade, allowing for a strong and self-sufficient ethanol industry in Canada, an industry which would provide an environmentally friendly fuel from renewable resources and provide definite stability for Canadian agriculture and the Canadian economy in general.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I would like to present a petition from Cindy Silver and 98 others where the petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

JUSTICE

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present petitions on behalf of my constituents and others to request Parliament to enact legislation against permanent appointments of justices.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I stand before the House to present a petition signed by residents of northern Ontario.

The heading of the petition reads: "The majority of Canadians believe that physicians in Canada should be working to save lives, not to end them".

Therefore the petitioners pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

I would like to thank and congratulate the petitioners for their efforts in making their views known to me and to the House. I concur with and support their efforts.

ABORTION

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. Very briefly I present one petition on behalf of constituents who wish the Criminal Code to be amended to prohibit abortion.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I present a second petition on behalf of my constituents who do not wish sidearms to be banned.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I present a third petition on behalf of my constituents who express the desire that the present Criminal Code provisions against doctor assisted suicide be strictly enforced and that Parliament not change the law.

KILLER BOARD GAME

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table 7,012 signatures in petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. The petitioners call on Parliament to ban the product known as the serial killer board game.

These signatures are in addition to the 111,638 tabled already for a grand total of 118,640.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I note that the parliamentary secretary has asked that all questions be permitted to stand. I know that is the standard procedure. We also have an understanding in the House, in fact an order, that says that responses are to be made within 45 days.

I am sorry to take some time but I wish to point out an experience I had recently. Just last week some questions were reported from me.

As you are probably aware, Mr. Speaker, compound questions no longer seem to be permitted. If we have a question that has three or four elements, we have to use up the four spaces in our question quota all at once. Then we sit and fidget for 45 days, hoping that eventually the paper will clear and we can ask more questions. Last week I was faced with having to wait 135 days, which means that I am effectively muzzled for three times as long as I ought to be.

• (1235)

To add insult to injury three of those questions elicited the response that the department, the ministry and the agencies did not have the data to provide answers. Why did I have to wait 135 days for the department to know it had no answers?

I urge the parliamentary secretary and the government to respond much more promptly, particularly where they have no answer, because they are effectively treading very close to the privileges of members' rights to information in this Chamber. By their slowness they have effectively kept me from looking for answers to further questions for almost 100 extra days beyond what should have been my right as a parliamentarian.

I am not raising this as a question of privilege at this time, but I ask that the parliamentary secretary urge the departments to be much more prompt and forthcoming in their responses and if they do not have answers to let us know immediately.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I sympathize with the hon. member in the predicament that he has outlined. I know the government makes every effort to respond promptly to questions.

Sometimes questions are very lengthy in that they involve extensive consultation with numerous departments in the government. That often takes some time. In the case of the particular questions that the hon. member put on the Order Paper, I may say that the answers we received initially were sent back, because we were unhappy with the responses.

I understand his unhappiness with the responses, but the agencies in question were not prepared to disclose, or were not able to disclose, or did not have the figures. We could not imagine that was possible. The questions were sent back to those agencies to make sure the answers were correct. That was part of the reason for the lengthy delay. Of course, the House was not sitting during the summer, which adds to it as well.

I sympathize with him. I hope he will put more questions on the Order Paper. We will do our very best to answer them as we do for all hon. members.

Mr. Althouse: Briefly, Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member raised the problem of eliciting information from the agency involved, which was the Grain Transportation Agency under the WGTA, from whom a joint committee of agriculture and transport last May 6 found similar problems in getting information.

They have urged the Minister of Transport to immediately appoint another person to take over from the WGTA the administration and control of the allocation of the grain car fleet in order to ensure that an adequate supply of rolling stock will be provided to producers for the efficient, reliable and effective movement of grain.

Their response to my questions, which indicated they had no idea how many cars they had in the system or where they were, adds fuel to that. This was the finding of the joint committee as well. I think—

The Deputy Speaker: We will let it go at that. Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 14 minutes pursuant to Standing Order 33(2).

* * *

[*English*]

MOTION TO EXTEND HOURS OF SITTING

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker I move the following motion. I believe you will find there is unanimous consent, after consultation with whips across the way. It is the following:

That, the hour of adjournment be extended a further 30 minutes and that during the said extension, notwithstanding any standing order, the Chair will not entertain any dilatory motions or quorum calls.

The reason this motion is put forward is to hopefully enable the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing to be able to make a speech that he wanted very much to be able to deliver to the House today. Hopefully the extension of hours by a further half hour will permit that with the usual allocation of time.

(Motion agreed to.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saint John has the floor. She has the right to reply to the question that was put from the other side of the House.

• (1240)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member stated that she felt we should not be playing politics, that we should all deal with the social reform policies in a very responsible way. I agree with her on that.

However I have to say that the starting point for social policy reform has to come from the provinces. If the Liberal government and the Minister of Human Resources Development do not have suggestions from the provinces, then in my opinion they do not have the solutions.

The federal and provincial governments need to rationalize the programs they have to make sure there is no overlap, and eliminate the duplication and overlap.

Also, the hon. member mentioned meeting with one's constituents and getting back. It is my intention to meet with my constituents. I hope the Minister of Human Resource Development will take the suggestions of the people of my constituency under consideration, a little better perhaps than the Minister of Transport did when it came to transportation.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in debate on the discussion paper tabled by the Minister of Human Resources Development entitled "Improving Social Security in Canada".

Over the course of this debate, a few basic themes keep returning over and over. One of the most important is that any government program reflects the realities of the time in which it was created. That is certainly true of the status quo of social programs.

They were designed at a time when most people needed relatively few skills to get and keep work. What they picked up in school and on the job was usually enough to build a lifetime of earnings. People needed financial help between jobs. Others needed support if they could work at all, due to disability or family commitments.

The old system was based on a stable world with stable skills and stable jobs for the vast majority of working people. Is there a person who believes that holds true now? Too many people have learned the hard way that the programs and services we have are designed more to keep people where they are than to help them to get where they could be.

We have a system that gives people barely enough money to live but not enough opportunity to thrive, a system that at times rewards those who can manipulate the rules better than those who simply want to make something of themselves.

People see that. People know there is an activity that fits the letter of the law while offending the spirit. For example, I have a letter from a man in Ontario who points out how larger employers use the UI system to encourage workers to take early retirement. It may not be literally against the rules but it is hardly consistent with UI as a source of income for people who are genuinely between jobs.

Another person wrote about watching an economy develop in a small B.C. town around the unemployment insurance. He sees young people learning from their parents that it is all right to leave school relatively unskilled, work for only enough weeks to qualify for benefits and then collect UI benefits for the rest of the year.

Is there a member who has not heard these concerns? What do we say to people who raise these issues? It happens too often to say simply: "It is just an isolated case". It shows us that the status quo no longer works well enough and is in real danger of losing the support of Canadians. It goes a long way to show why

78 per cent of Canadians believe our social programs are essential but 85 per cent believe they must be reformed.

The polls say it. Our mail says it. Canadians are not satisfied with the status quo. They know that a more effective and a more cost effective social safety net is not just possible, it is necessary.

• (1245)

The value of the discussion paper on social security reform is that it lays out facts, ideas and real choices. It is helping Canadians to translate their feelings and experiences into useful advice to their government about social programs.

Canadians want to work. They want their fellow citizens to work. But between those goals and the reality of creating jobs and getting people into them lie a series of challenges. Some lack basic information on the labour market. Others are illiterate. Some have jobs but get little training to improve their skills. Other people face the issue of the lack of high quality, affordable child care. People with disabilities can list the barriers they face each and every day. The challenge is to set priorities based on needs and the probability of results given the real fiscal constraints that exist.

One of the central ideas in the section of the discussion paper on working is the value of community involvement. In setting priorities the federal government fully recognizes there can never be enough money to meet every possible need. That is why the discussion paper suggests that some mechanism which allowed communities to set priorities and to act on them would be appropriate.

What might our unemployment programs look like in the wake of real reform to social security? To begin with we might see communities with a centre of social program delivery. Some mechanism that allowed people to come together to determine local labour market needs and priorities would be a start. Using the best and most up to date information on what works in training, they might invest in a mix of employer based training and wage subsidies for the long term unemployed and for young people, and other forms of training from many different sources.

A partnership between governments in that community might lead to the creation of one location for all unemployment and income support services. Picture a person looking for income support who could be referred for counselling and assistance in developing good job search skills. Picture the sole support mother getting help with child care, housing and literacy training in the same place.

The agreement between the federal government and the province of Ontario to set up local labour force development boards offers a sign of things to come. These governments have agreed to work together with communities across the province.

Local boards with people from unions, businesses, education and many other segments of society will have the ability to determine and set priorities for government labour market spending. They will decide what training is needed and what employment development should be emphasized. This will be a case of people who know the regions and who care about building a better future having control of the tools to help realize those visions.

This kind of co–operation could lead to governments and communities working together to break the vicious cycle of UI dependence. Efforts to give people real skills, create real jobs and enable a real economy to flourish could all come together.

The paper looks at the issue of how unemployment insurance could better help people find and keep jobs. We are asking Canadians if we need two approaches within our insurance system, one that would provide a straightforward insurance coverage and another aimed at people who face regular unemployment and may need more assistance. We are asking them if tightening the current program is a better option or whether we should take both approaches at the same time. We want to know how they would deal with the needs of part time workers, self–employed contract workers and other people who get no help now.

These are real choices. Canadians deserve the right to determine their own priorities. We believe and they agree that giving people the skills and incentives to work is appropriate. We want to go a step further to explore what makes sense with the money we have.

How to balance the social and economic priorities of Canadians is not a simple task. We recognize that to meet our social program goals and to meet our fiscal obligations to Canadians will require some hard choices. Our citizens are capable of those choices however.

• (1250)

It is obvious that no one wants us to create some new scheme and impose it on Canadians. They want us to listen to them, not just to special interests, not just to the experts, but to the people who may need these programs and who will pay for them. This government is committed to doing just that.

With the release of this discussion paper we are saying we can get people back to work. We can build a society with skills that attract investment. We can help individuals meet the challenges of life in a society and an economy that face constant change. We can take steps to ensure that more people are better off in the long term, thanks to our actions in this House. The status quo will not be satisfactory. The time has come to act.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's speech. I am glad someone on the Liberal side recognizes there is a danger

of losing broad public support and confidence in our social safety net and the ability of government to deliver services on behalf of all of us. I am saying that confidence has already evaporated.

I am also encouraged to hear the member admitting that change is inevitable, that the current situation cannot be sustained. It would not matter what political party was in power, we would have to move toward the reform of our basic social safety nets.

I am also encouraged to hear that the member is looking at the priority of needs, focusing on social spending. In fact, a lot of what I heard from the hon. member today sounds like it could have come from a Reform member of Parliament. I detect somewhat of a divergence however in the encouragement and hopefulness he has and what his minister is saying. I hope he will do what he can from his side of the House to encourage his minister to truly live up to the optimism the hon. member has.

I am not so encouraged by this hon. member's optimism that the government's plan is actually going to be delivered by the minister. Certainly there are hard choices to be made. He is suggesting there will be ongoing consultation to let the people speak. He certainly gives lip service or acknowledgement to a philosophy I agree with. However, I hope there is real substance. You might ask: "Where's the beef?" Well where is the real substance in what the minister delivered? I hope his optimism is not lacking in the long run.

Mr. Szabo: Mr. Speaker, throughout this debate there is going to be a lot of smoke and mirrors based on the partisanship in the House. Unfortunately, Canadians from time to time are going to wonder if what members are saying is clear to all concerned.

The Minister of Human Resources Development tabled a discussion paper. Yet time after time when I hear opposition members address the discussion paper, they criticize it as if it were a piece of legislation. As the member has just said, they ask: "Where's the beef?" Well, if it were a piece of legislation it would have each and every single step and program the government was proposing to address the problems, but this is not a piece of legislation. This is a discussion paper for all Canadians.

The government has said very clearly that we can no longer simply tinker with social programs. It is necessary for us to make some major changes in the way and the kinds of programs we deliver to Canadians. That is why we have this discussion paper. That is why Canadians are being given the opportunity through their members of Parliament to express their views to make absolutely sure that all hon. members understand the needs, the desires and what we can afford to deliver to all Canadians.

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight for members of the House a number of initiatives in Atlantic Canada that reinforce the need for social reform and place a stronger emphasis on the federal–provincial co–operation and consultation.

• (1255)

At the forefront of the social reform process is a discussion paper tabled by the Minister of Human Resources Development. Throughout the discussion paper and at the core of social security reform is a vigorous emphasis on the need for continued and effective consultation. That means talking with Canadians, hearing their views and responding to their needs. However, consultation with Canadians is not enough.

Every section of the discussion paper produced by the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, be it on learning, working or security, stresses that successful social reform is contingent upon a strong co–operative working relationship with the provincial and territorial governments. The key to developing that relationship and intrinsic to the social reform process is the strategic initiative program approved by the cabinet last May.

This program provides a unique mechanism for both levels of government to take actions in the high priority areas of employment, learning, education, income security and social services. Approved projects are funded on a 50:50 basis with the province or territory. Not only will this initiative promote an open dialogue with the provinces and territories, co–operation of this nature will also help us to eliminate waste, inefficient allocation of moneys and duplication in the existing systems.

There are many reasons why a strategic initiatives program is a critical component of the social security reform and there are many reasons why it is working. First and foremost, it gets Canadians back to work. It helps Canadians to help themselves.

We have made tremendous progress already, particularly in the Atlantic provinces. The initiatives that have been launched in co–operation with Atlantic Canada governments will touch the lives of over 10,000 Canadians currently at risk of becoming dependent on social assistance.

In New Brunswick over 1,000 Canadians will take their place in the ranks of the New Brunswick job corps. This program will give volunteers between the ages of 50 and 65 the opportunity to put their talents and expertise to work in their communities.

In Prince Edward Island the ready to learn and adult peer literacy tutoring project will make it easier for young adults who have found it difficult to gain access to traditional education facilities. The project will provide literacy training, life skills, academic upgrading and skills training to unemployment insurance and social assistance recipients. It is hoped that the ready to

learn project will remove the barriers to education that many Islanders have historically encountered.

In Newfoundland more than 5,000 Canadians will benefit from the transitions initiative. This three pronged program targets the young people, candidates for post–secondary education, recent university and college graduates, and working age adults.

In Nova Scotia 3,000 Canadians will benefit from four new programs designed to provide training and employment opportunities to working age adults currently out of work. The compass initiative targets those who need it the most, those at risk of long term dependency on social assistance: unemployed youth, single parents, and laid off fishers.

Each of these initiatives will not only help get Canadians back to work, they will return a sense of dignity and pride. Unfortunately, these things are often forgotten when one becomes lost in the maze of the current system. But these efforts are just the beginning.

Just this week the minister announced a new initiative in Charlottetown. Choices and opportunities will reinforce and strengthen social assistance for mentally challenged individuals. In St. John's, Newfoundland we have launched a pilot project centred around an earnings supplement initiative.

• (1300)

The spirit of co–operation that now exists between the federal and provincial governments indicates the importance of the federal–provincial collaboration and is indeed welcome. It is exciting to know that our provincial colleagues, Premiers McKenna and Wells, have announced their support and enthusiasm for the discussion paper, for this government's approach to social security reform in Canada, and for the initiatives that have already had an effect on their constituents.

To date, the Atlantic provinces have been most involved in the consultation process and in the implementation of the strategic initiatives program. But this is only the beginning; there is much more to be done.

Many workers in the Atlantic region are seasonal workers. The contributions of seasonal workers and seasonal industries are significant to our economic future. Tourism, fisheries, agriculture, forestry and construction are all extremely important industries and will remain so well into the future.

For this reason I feel the government must make a commitment to ensure these people receive help in adjusting to the changes that are adopted, whatever they might be.

As the Minister of Human Resources Development has indicated, this is a consultative process. I consider it very important to my constituents. That is why I have arranged for public forums next week and in November, in my constituency of Carleton—Charlotte, to provide the opportunity for direct input by my constituents.

We cannot rebuild our social security system overnight. Successful and effective reform tailored to the needs of this and coming generations require a strong foundation. We must build our future system one day at a time. Together with all provinces and territories we must work with Canadians to create an improved social security system. We will mould it to meet the requirements of Canadians. We look forward to a stronger and more cohesive working relationship with our provincial and territorial counterparts.

Together we can forge a social security system that will lead Canada into the 21st century.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague used the word consultation many times in his speech. Consultations must be based on real information. If the public is to decide or to give broad support to the hard choices to be made, it must be told the truth about the numbers and the real tradeoffs. The discussion paper is a reflection of the concerns the Liberals can no longer deny or avoid.

Will the member return to his riding and outline in cold, hard terms the choices to be made with the dollar value and the direct community result, not just for the few items in the green paper but for the whole social safety net package?

Mr. Culbert: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member indicated, it is my plan to go through the consultative stage with my constituents and offer them every opportunity to bring forward their ideas and their suggestions.

One of the early things I did, in conjunction with this paper the minister brought forward, was to have the minister confirm to me the exact opportunity he has put forward for the consultation. I wanted to be assured that it was true and factual that the consultation was going to be listened to and we would have an opportunity to make change.

The minister has assured me of that. I am very confident my constituents will have suggestions and ideas that can be brought back to the standing committee, the minister and the department. This is helpful in the process of coming up with a plan and a program that will be beneficial to all Canadians for the 21st century.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to tell the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 43(2), the following period of debate allotted to our party will be divided in two.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak about the reform of the Canadian social security system. Earlier I heard the hon. member say: "We have difficult choices to make". It seems to me that the choices are not so difficult.

I also often heard the other side ask us to propose something. I have a proposal for you. I realize how difficult it is for the other side to make choices. When a bill aimed at changing the rules of political party financing was introduced 15 days ago, some members on the other side voted with us but most voted against us because their very wealthy friends put money in their coffers. It is easy to understand how subsequent choices can be extremely difficult to make.

True, there are two choices. But why did we have to choose? In Mr. Trudeau's time, the government got this country into debt by going on a spending spree that continued under the Conservatives. It was not the fault of the opposition parties, not the Reform Party's, not ours and not the NDP's. They were not in power. Who got Canada into debt during the past 30 years? The two parties that were in power. We have a debt of $530 billion, with $40 billion worth of interest payments, and as a result there are some choices we must make.

Which option do we choose? Are we going to take money from the haves or are we going to empty the pockets of the have–nots? We say get it where it is to be found. Let us do it, let us raise billions of dollars from family trusts, people who do not pay income tax and the multinationals in this country. That is where we should get those billions of dollars. Not the pennies in the pockets of the poor.

That is what I would do. And now, a look at the other side. Last week, the Canadian Council on Social Development again sounded the alarm when it noted the distressing fact that more than one million children do not get enough to eat. One million children! In the schools where I taught, many children went without lunch. Fortunately, there were some Good Samaritans who paid for their meals. Why did these children go without food?

Their parents were in debt. They had three or four children, and they bought a car, chain saw and boat on credit, and when school started, they also had to buy books and exercise books. They had to pay the student association membership. There was no money left for food. I am convinced that the purpose of social security reform in this country should be to fight poverty, not the poor. So far, the trend has been to take money away from the poorest in our society, and that is how I see this reform.

• (1310)

The objective should be,in this supposedly great and beautiful country, to create more social justice, not to come down harder on the neediest, the disenfranchised and the weakest members of our society. The objective should be to ensure a better distribution of wealth, which is not the case today. The rich are getting richer, while the poor have for years and years been getting poorer.

I am not convinced that this is what the minister responsible had in mind, and I am not convinced that what he had in mind is right for this government. The unstated objective of this reform, as I see it, is solely and entirely to reduce government spending by penalizing more and more the disadvantaged, those who cannot speak for themselves.

Conservative policies of this sort have the effect of causing a dramatic rise in unemployment and poverty levels in this country. Conservative policies are directly responsible for the systematic impoverishment of the middle class and lower–income taxpayers.

This government acts like a producer who would stop feeding his cattle. Do you think that is the way to increase production? Do you think he would achieve better results by cutting rations? Do you think he would get a better yield if he stopped cultivating his land? To get results, investments must be made in the right places and cuts must also be made in the right places.

Cutting in postsecondary education will make it impossible for a large number of people to get adequate training. Because, as I have pointed out repeatedly, there are still no general and vocational colleges in my region—there is one in Matane— and no universities—you have to go to Rimouski, Quebec, Laval, Montreal— cuts in postsecondary education will mean that hundreds of students will not be able to further their education.

If the costs double or triple, we will no longer be able to afford sending our young people to university. The university in Rimouski is great, except that it does not offer all programs. That is why we have to go to Laval or some other university. Cutting in postsecondary education certainly is not a good way to help the labour force adjust to the present conditions of the future labour market.

Literally crushing seasonal workers and the poorest of the poor by creating two categories of UI recipients certainly is not the best way to restore hope in our society. In our region, forestry workers have work for only four or five months each year; those who get to work five months are considered extremely lucky. During this period, because it is a very short period, they start work very early in the morning and finish very late at night. Many totally wreck their health in the process. If they undergo any more conditioning, this will increase their stress load.

• (1315)

A few years ago, a family man had to keep chopping down trees even if he was very sick because he had to collect enough stamps, not because he did not want to work. Quebecers, especially the people in my riding, want to work. The unemployment rate in my riding is among the highest. The people want to work. They want the jobs that were promised by the Prime Minister during the election campaign. That is all we heard during the election campaign: jobs, jobs and more jobs.

The lack of jobs makes these people feel insecure and helpless. They appear to be almost ashamed, even when they are working.

This government has waited much too long, even if it has been a year—just as previous governments waited too long—to find decent jobs for the people in the regions, especially rural regions. If this government wants respect, it should start by respecting the poor. Only then will it command our respect.

[*English*]

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker I thank the member for his dissertation. I found it extremely interesting. He is right in a lot of respects. Poor people have to be fed. When they are young it is very important that they are fed and oriented properly in order for us to prosper as a society.

A very perplexing thing has happened to me since I came to the House. I understand that over the years we perpetuate things. Members of the opposition, and perhaps members on all sides of the House, get into political discussions and dissertations about how the pie should be cut. They want to keep the existing structures and situations because it is politically expedient to do so.

At the turn of the century we changed from steam power to electricity. Right now we are at the advent of the information era. We know what has happened to Bill Gates. It is a good example of what happens by using resources and entrepreneurship and getting into new technology. If some of us had embraced that approach it would have helped us out of the economic recession which started in the sixties and is being perpetuated now.

The objective of the whole exercise of social reform is: What do we do from here? How can we get people more prepared? How can we use resources better? How can we make sure that debt does not climb?

I ask the member opposite to give us some ideas, notwithstanding the concerns. We all know about those concerns. The whole object of the exercise is to make the process better. How can we make it better, not complain about how many pieces of pie we can keep or whether we belong to one region or another?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Canuel: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked a very good question and I am very proud of him. Of course, there are ways to make it better. I will give you at least one example. The money we could spend on forestry, say, is not a subsidy but an investment. Mr. De Bané himself said when he was a minister a few years ago—he is now a senator, unfortunately—that it is an investment. Replanting forests no longer replenished by nature is an investment. There are so many other examples I could give you. We could hire twice as many forestry workers since lumber is now in great demand. They are reluctant to do that.

• (1320)

In my region, they have the Eastern Plan, which my colleague from Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine is very familiar with. We fervently hope that it will be renewed as it can put people to work. Let me give you just one example in forestry.

Most farm owners tell me that they only have two people working on their farms when there is often enough work for five people. These small farmers cannot afford to pay decent wages to their employees. Something could be done. We could create hundreds of jobs that would be extremely valuable to the whole community and would in turn benefit both the federal and the provincial governments.

I could of course give you other examples but I will limit myself to these two just to show you that it is possible to create jobs.

The federal government is very wary whenever we offer solutions.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor. It is always a pleasure to speak when you occupy the Speaker's Chair.

I want to say right away that I am pleased to speak in a debate like this because I represent a riding in east–end Montreal which of course went through some very bad times in the last two recessions, in the 1980s and the 1990s.

On listening to my colleagues, I said to myself that I am not a supporter of the status quo. I want to say that at the outset of this debate so that I can perhaps discuss it later in answer to a question that our colleague might raise.

I think that the minister did something laudable in proposing social programs, but there is a paradox. The minister proposes—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ménard: I am grateful for the kind of co–operation from my friend, the member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine.

However, there is a paradox because social programs are basically tools that now belong to the provinces. That is how it should be, with one exception: unemployment insurance is the only program where the federal government has any legitimacy at all to act. Let us remember the context. When the federal government announced the unemployment insurance plan, it was the first amendment to the 1867 constitution and it came in the wake of the Rowell–Sirois report. We know what things were like at that time: it was a time of trouble and war, which gave rise to heated discussions.

What a paradox! Imagine the 33 Fathers of Confederation—I apologize for the fact that there were no women—including Cartier, Langevin, Galt, Baldwin and others, coming back here to see the central government of a federation want to interfere in social programs, when neither those 33 Fathers nor their successors gave that government any authority to do that. That, in my opinion, is the problem with the Canadian federation.

The problem is that when you are in Ottawa, you think that there is a single labour market. However, this is not possible, it is not true and it would not be good in a continental country like Canada. The fact is that there are fewer and fewer continental countries with a federal regime like Canada. And that does not make me sorry.

The problem for any federal government, regardless of its good intentions—and I am prepared to admit that the minister does have good intentions—is that there are several labour markets. Canada is a continental country in which the job market in Rimouski and the Gaspe peninsula obviously does not reflect the same reality as in Calgary, for example. This is why social programs administered by Ottawa, because of their structure, are of course very inadequate.

Many economists—and I hope we have an opportunity to discuss this issue during the referendum debate—see a rather direct link between the growth of the Canadian debt since 1970 which, as the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane mentioned earlier, is around $540 billion, and the government's will to interfere in the social program sector through various schemes. What we are saying, and I think this is a reasonable suggestion which deserves to be looked at, is that the federal government has money.

• (1325)

The first part of the document, which includes an inventory of the federal initiatives as well as an overview of labour market patterns, is well done. However, things deteriorate in the second part. In the first part, we are told that federal contributions amount to $38 billion. How do you explain the fact that a government which has nothing to do with social programs would invest an almost unprecedented $38 billion?

I was looking at the study released by the OECD during the last summit attended by the Minister of Industry. With its $38–billion contribution, the Canadian government is among the top investors; yet, because this money is badly invested, because it is not allocated where users could be the primary beneficiaries, the official unemployment rate in our country is still at 10 or 12 per cent.

These are complex issues and we must be careful not to view them in an overly simplistic way. However, I am convinced that all of us, wherever we are, must work towards the implementation of a full employment policy. It is quite a paradox to see that the expression full employment is not used even once in this document.

The minister's objective is to look after the jobless. This is a noble goal but it is not enough. We would have expected this debate to start with a policy on job creation, because the idea is not to manage the unemployed but indeed to integrate those trying to enter the labour market.

When you look, as the hon. member for Mercier and other members of this House have, at the conditions under which a country, regardless of its political structures, can achieve full employment, you note a rather obvious correlation between the size of the communities or countries—the smaller the better—and the level of success achieved in that respect. This is understandable. To achieve full employment, you must first get the national partners to sit at an employment table so that, together, with their legitimacy, they can set economic objectives.

We will never be able to have a national table to discuss full employment in Canada because the Atlantic fishermen, the people of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec all have employment structures that differ radically one from the other. This is the first impediment, one that I consider to constitute a systemic barrier, therefore confirming to the federal government the fact that the greatest favour he can do the public as a public administration is to decentralize funding towards the authorities who are in the best position to achieve full employment, that is to say, in the first place, the provinces. Municipalities could even be made choice partners in this process. Why not? This government however yearns for visibility and it will soon, as soon as possible, have to face the Quebec electorate who will make a constitutional decision. I can understand the difficulty for a government like this one to readily accept to withdraw from this kind of visibility. However, that is the price to be paid if you want to put people back to work, in my humble opinion.

In addition to the debt and other barriers to full employment, there is something else that is very disturbing. It is the fact that from 1990 onward, and especially the jobs are created in the year 2000—we both expect to live that long, Mr. Speaker—that those jobs will require 16 years of schooling. Sixteen years means a CEGEP technical diploma, that is what it means. However, and the minister said so in his paper, more than 100,000 students drop out of our educational institutions every year.

The obvious challenge for those who want to put people to work is to make the connection between training, education and the jobs available. In Quebec, we say that education is a priority and vital to our identity, and that is of course the choice we made.

• (1330)

This is different from the 19th century, when the job market was linked to immigration and to means of transportation, which is understandable from a historical perspective as they had to build a very sparsely populated country where immigrants' contribution had a major impact on labour policies. No wonder we talk about employment and immigration centres. That is no longer the case. The three components of labour force access are education, which is a provincial jurisdiction, as well as—I think the minister was right to mention it in his paper, although it is outside his mandate—all family support services.

Things have changed since the typical family included a breadwinner working outside the home, a homemaker and children from a first marriage. This is no longer the Canadian reality.

In conclusion, that is why we believe that the minister must tackle social program reform. But he must be generous, sensible and compassionate enough to recognize that the best thing he can do is to decentralize this money and allow the provinces, especially Quebec which has considerable experience dealing with the issue of full employment—A national forum on employment was held in 1985, and I must say that one of the first things the Parizeau government did was to make plans for creating a ministry of state mandated to consult on employment. The best thing this government can do to put Canadians and Quebecers to work is to decentralize this money and recognize that it is not the government best able to put Canadians to work.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I recently listened to the two members of the Bloc. One thing we can all agree on is that the buzzword is choices. That is the operative word.

By talking about choices it assumes that we cannot have it all. The country is broke and we are still spending like a drunken sailor. The steering wheel of the ship of state is not being tended.

We are talking about cutbacks today because we cannot afford the current situation. I think the members have highlighted the kind of thinking that has got us into the present mess. Fight poverty and need with deficit financed assistance rather than appropriately building an economy of opportunity that will then be capable of adequately providing for those who are disadvantaged.

The present result is one of failure and his reasoning, continuing on the present course of continuing to deficit finance, will continue to bring us to where we are today where we cannot adequately meet requirements.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member for taking part in the debate. I think that what distinguishes us—and I say this up front—is that as a political party we are convinced that the best way to help the disadvantaged is not just to let market forces prevail. We admit that our society never had as many poor people as it does today. That is true for Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto and many regions of the country.

The difference is that we think what makes the government ineffective in fighting poverty is the political structure. Take the very concrete example of a man without work who comes to our riding office. Right away we see that various options are available if he is on welfare; they are not the same if he is on unemployment. Why? Because two levels of government administer these programs.

Nevertheless, the need is the same; he needs training so that he can re–enter the work force. I am convinced that things would be much simpler if we had the government that is closer to the people, namely the provincial government, the Government of Quebec to take the example that I know; I think that the results would be much more satisfactory if funds could be concentrated in the hands of one single manager and if all the available options and programs were offered in one and the same structure.

Sometimes people try to make a distinction between the constitutional structure and the labour market, but that is wrong. We must admit that the two are closely connected. If I were convinced that the central government is the best one to put people to work, I would not be a sovereignist.

• (1335)

I am not a sovereignist because I love the sound of that word. I am a sovereignist because I think that we should have only one government. When someone—who knows, it might be the member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine—proves me wrong, I will be pleased to review my position, but for now I am not convinced.

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis–Hébert): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve has demonstrated that the Canadian fiscal position has constitutional connections. In view of this fact, is the slow, stop–and–go approach the government is planning to take in this reform not paradoxical? One gets the impression that it is trying to put things off until after a certain event has taken place in Quebec. I would like my hon. colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve to comment on this.

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. Admittedly, the work plan presented to us a few weeks ago was supposed, as the minister stated repeatedly, to lead to the establishment of a much more precise schedule than the one before us at this time.

Like my hon. colleague, I note and share the opinion that, having nothing to offer in terms of job creation and knowing the disastrous results the referendum will have from its point of view, this government has decided to buy time and defer the objectives it had set for itself.

[*English*]

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I would like to develop a little on the topic that was raised by my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby.

Here we are 12 months downstream from the election with our total debt around about $45 billion higher than it was a year ago and with our entire social safety net in danger of collapse. In the time that it takes me to give this short speech our debt will have gone up by about $1 million. By the time this government actually gets around to doing anything we probably will have added another $10 billion to the debt. We will be that much closer to a total economic collapse.

Governments always seem to take too long to take care of fiscal problems. This House knows that I am originally from New Zealand and that I am very familiar with the fiscal crisis that hit New Zealand in 1984. Dependence on social programs in New Zealand was in the end reduced not by consultation and not by long delays and green books. Instead it ended up being slashed to the bone because the country went bankrupt.

A New Zealand style debt crisis is not the most pleasant way to reform social services.

I think perhaps it is worth reviewing some of the things that happened in New Zealand. This may help some of our government members understand the seriousness of our debt and deficit situation and the threat that the debt holds for the very survival of our social programs.

Getting control of government spending is a tough job and we know that. New Zealand's debt doubled from $22 billion in 1984 to $46 billion in 1994 by the time the first surplus occurred. These numbers are small compared to the numbers for Canada, but the fact is that the total debt doubled before expenditures came under control in the New Zealand situation.

When New Zealand hit the wall, the annual deficit could not be reduced to zero overnight. Emergency IMF funding permitted continued deficits while the economy restructured. It was these deficits over the 10 year period that caused the debt to double.

Think about what would happen to Canada in a similar crisis. We all know that the only way to balance the budget overnight would be to virtually eliminate every existing social program—welfare, UI, pensions, you name it—in order to save the necessary $40 billion.

In practice this could not be done because of the social consequences. The IMF would allow Canada to continue to incur decreasing deficits as social programs were abandoned and the population adapted to the changes. Just as in the case of New Zealand, this could easily result in the doubling of Canada's debt by the year 2004.

In other words, if we hit the wall tomorrow it is quite likely that our debt would balloon to a trillion dollars or more before we began showing surpluses.

• (1340)

By then, even if we have stable interest rates, the interest payments on the debt will be over $100 billion a year. Growth in the economy would help reduce the relative size of that interest payment but it is virtually equal to 100 per cent of today's tax receipts.

This is a very serious situation and just like New Zealand, it will not be solved with green books and discussion papers. Every single month that we delay the decision to make significant cuts, we add another $3.5 billion to our debt load and we simply cannot go on this way.

New Zealand was forced to take drastic action but a phoenix has risen from the ashes. New Zealand had a $600 million surplus this year and is forecasting $2 billion for next year. The government has promised tax reductions beginning in 1996 but a key to this is that New Zealanders must refrain from demanding any expansion of government programs or services.

This is very important. Canadians too must learn to refrain from demanding any expansion of government services and programs. In fact they must demand less. In 1984 immediately after the debt crisis the New Zealand dollar dropped about 20 per cent to be worth 62 cents Canadian. It held there until about 1992 by which time the reorganization of the economy had taken place.

Since August 1993, it has gained 17 per cent against the Canadian dollar and now stands at 84 cents. In the same time, it gained 8 per cent against the U.S. dollar, a significant measure of the strength of the New Zealand economy.

New Zealand introduced business style performance standards for public servants. The equivalents of deputy ministers were renamed chief executives, hired on fixed term contracts and made personally responsible for delivering measurable results.

Like business executives, they had the power to hire and fire and to buy any equipment they needed but they had to perform. I wonder how long some of the government's deputy ministers would last if they had to deliver measurable results.

Along with requiring results of its civil service, the New Zealand government passed a law requiring any surpluses to be used to pay down the debt and thankfully it is now into that cycle.

New Zealand's youth now have a future of reducing debt burden to look forward to while Canada's youth still have a future of increasing debt burden. The enforced social program reform in New Zealand extended to farming and corporate welfare as well.

Almost overnight came the complete removal of subsidies for farmers. Bankruptcy for farmers and the loss of food production was widely predicted but in fact there are more farmers farming today in New Zealand and making more money per farmer than they did before the government subsidies were taken away. They now grow what the world needs instead of what the government was paying them to grow.

There is a lesson there. When one pays people so much that it is more attractive to sit at home than to work, when one subsidizes farmers to grow crops that the world does not need, when one gives out grants to business and special interest groups one produces a dependency that kills jobs, kills initiative and kills individual responsibility.

When I left New Zealand in 1979 to emigrate to Canada, I left a socialist country very close to bankruptcy. The writing was on the wall there just as it is here in Canada today. However New Zealand today is a free enterprise country, very different to the one I left.

I am absolutely convinced that by studying the New Zealand experience we will be far better equipped to handle our own debt and deficit situation. If there was one MP travel junket that would actually be in the interests of Canadian taxpayers, it would be an all expenses paid trip to New Zealand for the Minister of Human Resources Development. He needs to see what is coming and he needs to see it soon.

There is no doubt that we need social service reform but it is highly unlikely that the 89 pages of fluff in the minister's green book will make any significant contribution.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with some interest to the comments made by the hon. member.

We often hear this New Zealand example being given either by the opposition members or certain doomsayers of all kinds. If I am not mistaken, the population of New Zealand is three million and the active economy is not any larger than that of Alberta. I understand the process in what it had to go through in restructuring its economy and what not. If we look at the industrial and economic profile of New Zealand in comparison to Canada there is very little to compare except the debt figures that the hon. member would probably like to bring to our attention.

• (1345)

I would like him to give us a better description of what the realities were at the time in New Zealand versus Canada. Canada has a population ten times that of New Zealand with an economy which is closely linked to that of the United States and other western powers. We are a G–7 nation and we have a lot of things going for us than New Zealand had at the time.

Mr. White (North Vancouver)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for paying close attention to my speech and asking interesting questions.

The population of New Zealand is a fraction of that of Canada. The only message we can get from that is we are going to be given a lot more rope to hang ourselves than New Zealand was given by the international buyers of its debt load.

Up to 60 per cent of our debt today is being purchased by foreigners. The day they pull the plug on us it will not matter what sort of resource base we have. We will be scrambling to find money.

Sweden has had difficulties with its international financing. It is really not related to population other than you get, as I said, more rope to hang yourself.

The New Zealand model is a very good model for what will happen here. It was pretty tough right after the debt crisis. However the average person on the streets in New Zealand was extremely happy to see the government finally taking the initiatives they had wanted them to take all along.

It is no good pretending there are not people abusing our social services system. There are lots of them and we had better be prepared to stand up, admit it and get on top of the problem. New Zealand was forced to because the money tree was taken away. That may well happen here. But I hope we come to the realization that we have to do something before the plug gets pulled on us too.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, one of the great puzzles surrounding Canada's social programs has been that they have had very little success in reducing the country's social ills. This is so in spite of the fact that expenditures per capita in real terms have increased dramatically since they were initiated during the post war years. What has gone wrong?

This question has occupied my academic research for some time. In the short time available to me today I want to share with you some of my insight on this matter. I do so because from these insights emerge policies appropriate for revisions of Canada's social programs during the present financial crisis and as we enter the 21st century.

It is part of folklore that restaurants that have fire insurance burn more often than those that do not. The insurance industry attributes this increase to what is known as moral hazard phenomenon. In simple language it is due to insurance induced changes in behaviour. The greater number of fires that occur in insured restaurants is due in part to outright arson. However, many additional fires are started because in insured restaurants less care is given to the cleaning of greasy vents and other fire hazards. They are less likely to have sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers.

The Government of Canada provides insurance against the hazards of unemployment, poverty and old age, disability, illness and a wide range of other calamities befalling people. As in the case of fire insurance these kinds of social insurance programs induce changes in the behaviour of the insured that result in higher claims and costs.

• (1350)

Let me illustrate in the context of unemployment insurance. Undoubtedly unemployment and the costs of insurance are raised by some criminal cheating through the filing of multiple claims or receiving benefits while holding a job.

Some claim that such illegal acts are rare while others think they are frequent. By the nature of the crime it is not easy to obtain reliable estimates. At any rate, clamping down on such cheating is not a contentious issue.

Of greatest concern for the present discussion of social insurance reform is the fact that much of the present high unemployment is due to individual Canadians reacting rationally to the changes in the environment in which they operate.

For example, persons with unemployment insurance benefits have higher standards on a new acceptable job than those without. The former will reject jobs with longer commutes, lower pay and higher retraining requirements than the latter.

People who behave in this way do not break the law. They act rationally in response to opportunities created by the government. They can afford to hold out longer for a better job because being unemployed costs less. Such legal and rational behaviour nevertheless increases the rate of unemployment and the cost of the unemployment insurance program.

Similar forces act on the welfare program, as was demonstrated when in the summer of 1993 in Ontario a woman created headlines with the revelation that she quit her job deliberately and went on welfare. She argued that by doing so she enjoyed a higher living standard than when she worked for $40,000 a year.

The media made much out of the question of whether this was true. In my view, this question misses the main point. Consider as a thought experiment that the woman's income was actually reduced by $6,000 by going on welfare. This means that full time work brought her only $500 a month and the loss of time with her family in leisure activities and valuable work in the home.

I know few people who condemn Canadians who make the choice this woman made. She was not violating any law. She was simply taking advantage of choices created by the system. Yet such behaviour swells the number of welfare recipients and raises the cost of welfare programs.

The cost of unemployment insurance is increased even further by the adoption by society of institutions which take explicit advantage of the opportunities offered by the system. Industries with seasonal employment expand. Some governments arrange hiring to accommodate eligibility requirements. They all act rationally and within the law. No one is to blame but the system which allows the creation and exploitation of these institutions.

How large is the cost of social insurance programs due to the insurance induced changes in behaviour and institutions? Social scientists do not have precise answers to these important questions. I have been the coauthor of studies of the effects of unemployment insurance on the unemployment rate and venture to guess that without the increased generosity of the UI system introduced in the 1970s, Canada's unemployment rate today might be about two to three percentage points lower than it is.

More generally, there is little doubt in my mind that insurance induced changes in behaviour explain the puzzle of the post war years, the ever increasing costs of social insurance programs and the constancy of the problems they were designed to cure.

The green book contains a graph of Canada's unemployment rate since the 1950s. It is on a steady upward trend. My analysis suggests that this is due to the effects of insurance induced changes in behaviour, institutions and the overall increased social acceptance of such behaviour.

• (1355)

What does my analysis imply for social policy reform? The answer is found in the practices used by private insurance companies to limit opportunities for risk increasing behaviour. Fire insurance premiums are lower for buildings with sprinkler systems. All forms of private property and health insurance carry deductibles, co–insurance on claims, waiting periods and rates that differentiate between people according to the riskiness of their behaviour. For example, life insurance premiums are higher for smokers than non–smokers; sky–divers face discriminatorily higher premiums.

It is important to note that the private insurance industry knows that moral behaviour cannot be controlled completely. Consequences of it are reflected in insurance premiums. Where control is extremely difficult and the costs vary as in the case of insurance against business losses, premiums have to be so high that no one is interested in buying the insurance. That is why there is no insurance against business losses.

For very noble reasons the architects of Canada's social insurance programs have made only limited use of such private insurance methods for controlling insurance induced behaviour.

To me the most logical solution to the excessive cost of these programs is to introduce more of the true and tried methods of the private insurance industry. Deductibles can be raised. In the case of unemployment insurance and welfare this would take the form of longer waiting periods before benefits are paid.

Co–insurance can be increased by lowering the benefits relative to previous earnings. Pensioners receive benefits only when they are older. The receipt of benefits can be lessened by requiring frequent reporting and evidence of job search, retraining requirements and a host of other measures which are equivalent to increasing co–insurance rates.

Other countries which have had similar experiences to those of Canada have taken such measures. Sweden has cut housing subsidies and brought in vouchers for child care payments. Norway is tightening disability insurance payments. In France social assistance is tied to signing on for a work training scheme. In the Netherlands young people up to the age of 27 have their social assistance set at no more than 50 per cent of the minimum wage. Germany and Italy are raising the age at which pensions can be claimed. In Britain income support is made available only on the basis of need and after means testing of applicants.

I believe that the phenomenon of insurance induced behaviour holds the clue on why in Canada and in other countries of the world the cost of social programs has run out of control. It also provides the answer for stopping these runaway expenditures. We could do better than listen to what other countries are doing to control their problem with insurance induced behaviour.

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge many of the fine points that the hon. member made. His description of a disincentive to work is one of the cornerstones of what is in the green book.

I would like to ask him a question. I acknowledge that unemployment insurance social benefits may raise the unemployment insurance rate. That is hard to quibble with. Some people think we should do away with unemployment insurance or lower the benefits of unemployment insurance. They often point to the Americans and say: "Look at their unemployment rate. It is much lower than Canada's and the main reason is because they have less generous unemployment insurance benefits".

Is there not going to be a cost if we toughen up the system? Many thousands of people lose their jobs through no fault of their own. They have no available work to go to. I come from a community on the north shore of Lake Erie that suffered greatly in the last recession. We lost 5,000 manufacturing jobs in a town of 30,000 people. There were no real options for those people.

• (1400)

If we look at the American example we see that they do not have decent unemployment insurance programs. They have people living on the street. They have entire families living on the street. They have charities for no other purpose than to provide medical care for children of people who live on the street.

Is there not going to be a cost? We are going to have more poor people in this country. While making the system tougher will encourage some people to find jobs, there will be vast numbers of people, through no fault of their own, who will simply be put in a worse situation than they are. Crime rates will go up and all sorts of other terrible social conditions will come into the foray.

Mr. Grubel: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his thoughtful comments. Clearly this is the tradeoff we face as a society.

I can assure him that in the sixties we expected a never–ending flow of funds. People thought so what if there is some insurance induced increases in the demand for services; we can afford it. The problem is we cannot afford them any more. We are being asked what kinds of tradeoffs there will be to reduce the expenditures.

The green book is full of ideas which will hurt someone. If we are reducing expenditures, as we have to, in order to increase spending on some other worthwhile thing or to eliminate the deficit, as we would do, then somebody has to suffer.

I am suggesting that it would be a good idea to imitate what some other countries have been doing that have thought about it a lot. If some people have to suffer let it fall primarily on those who have been induced by the system to change their behaviour. Clearly there is no such thing as a free lunch. I wish there were.

Mr. Knutson: On the member's last point, he wants the cost to fall primarily on those who change their behaviour, but there is no way to distinguish them. If we toughen up the UI rules there is no way to distinguish between persons who take a longer time to look for a job than others would and persons who legitimately cannot find a job because all the factories in their towns have closed.

There is no way; the system is not that specific that we can say some persons are not looking hard enough for a job so we are going to toughen up on them.

Mr. Grubel: I fully agree and that is the dilemma. What are we going to do about it? What is the member's party going to do about it? We have no choice.

As socialists are so fond of saying, if we want to make an omelette we have to break a few eggs. If we want to bring the country from the brink of bankruptcy we are going to have to impose on some people a reduction in the proportion of replacement of earnings they will obtain. We will have to impose on some people a longer waiting period. The co–insurance deductible will have to go up in all programs.

If we look at the green book and reinterpret some of the ideas for savings, in the light of the analytical scheme I have presented, namely how does it limit insurance induced changes in behaviour, we will see that many are directed in this way. My plea is that we recognize this explicitly and pay more attention in future debates in the House and by consultations throughout the country to this idea. I believe it underlies the problems we now have.

The first best thing society can do is to attack the problem directly rather than in some indirect way.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, as a New Democrat the issue of social programs is one particularly close to me. Our social programs essentially came about as a result of pressure from CCF governments, CCF politicians and New Democrats across Canada to address the concerns of people in times of need.

As a social democrat I am committed to ensuring that Canada is a more compassionate country rather than a less compassionate one. I am also committed to ensuring that if a person is unable to earn sufficient resources through the traditional economic marketplace to live in dignity, we as citizens owe it to that person to ensure that his or her basic needs are met. In order to do so we have to redistribute wealth from those who have to those who do not have.

• (1405)

The report we have in front of us called "Agenda: Jobs and Growth" is none of those things. It is neither an agenda nor has it anything to do with jobs nor anything to do with growth. It is a continuation of the Mulroney agenda. While that government is dead clearly its policies live on healthily with the new Liberal government. Last October we saw a government change but the bureaucrats and policies stayed essentially the same.

Those policies saw poverty numbers increase, taxes on middle and lower income Canadians increase, the deficit increase. Social programs kept for the last 10 years while tax breaks to the rich grew and while inequality in the country grew. We are now at a point where the gap between rich and poor is roughly where it was at the end of the second world war, after some gains in between. We are now heading backward to a situation of haves and have nots with an enormous gap between them.

The Liberals are continuing the same Mulroney agenda in terms of the same monetary policies, the same fiscal, economic and trade policies which have failed Canada and Canadians so completely.

Canada and Canadians support the reform of social programs. There is no doubt about that. We have a system of social programs and we have a society or an economy that is not working well for about four million Canadians. There is support for reform. There is the political will to look at reform.

Canadians want real reform. They do not want empty words, which is what this book contains. They want to have proposals they can look at and be consulted on in a meaningful way. It is not possible to consult with Canadians if there are no specific proposals with which to discuss the issues at hand.

There are a number of general criticisms that one can make before going on to suggest what might have been done. Clearly, as I have said, there is very little in the way of specifics in this paper. It is much too vague. The government has said that it is not committed to any of the proposals that are put forward in this paper. It is difficult to consult if something is not put forward that people can get their teeth into.

Where is the leadership in this paper? What is it that the government really thinks? When will the government finally start to govern after a year in office of doing almost nothing? This has not progressed us very far along the way in actually dealing with the problems of either social programs or the economy or the deficit.

It is clear, in spite of the government's attempts to hide this fact, that deficit reduction is a serious element or a serious component part of this so–called review. I would suggest that deficit reduction drives the social security review in the way it has been driven over the last 10 years. We are seeing an Americanization of social programs as our social programs continue under this government. There are choices, as many have indicated today and yesterday, between more people oriented social policies and those American ones the Liberals have chosen to follow.

The paper does not really deal with the problem we face. It does not deal with the job side of the equation. It does not deal with the taxation system whereby we will ensure we have both the resources to address the problems we face and the incentives to ensure that economic activity continues unabated.

Where are those issues in this whole debate? They are absolutely critical if we are going to ever appropriately reform social programs. It seems to me, and it seems to most Canadians from what I can understand, that the Liberals are continuing the attack on the deficit on the backs of the poor.

It is time we took a more balanced approach to dealing with the deficit. It is time that we did not foreclose on all those options that would require the rich to provide for their fair share of deficit reduction costs. It is time that we had a balanced approach to dealing with the deficit, not just one targeted at social programs.

• (1410)

Last, as a general comment, it is pretty clear that the consultation process with the provinces has been totally inadequate. Otherwise we would not have received enormous criticism from all across the country, from all parties both within the federal

Liberal caucus and outside, and from the leader of the Liberal Party in Ontario. We would not have had this enormous outburst of criticism of the paper had there been effective consultation with the provinces.

Clearly the process of social security reform can only take place with the close co–operation of the provinces. As long as the provinces feel they are right in that the government's main intention is to slough off the deficit on to their already difficult financial situations, they will not co–operate and they should not co–operate in the whole process.

Let us look at the words of the green book. I wonder how many different coloured books we are going to have. Its main focus appears to be that Canadians are unemployed in the numbers they are because they do not have the skills to fulfil the jobs of the new economy. We all have to support increasing training, upgrading and education for Canadians. We can only see the benefits from that. It is good to focus on these issues but, as we see from the green book, the expectations are modest. Above all, there are no jobs out there for people to take once they receive this training. We have already a serious expectation of finding people continuing to live in poverty but being a bit better educated and having a few more skills.

Until we address the real problem we will continue to attack social programs. Unless we solve the jobs problem we will continue to have more and more people flowing on to unemployment and social assistance rolls and we will continue to see pressures to address the overburdened system.

We need to ensure that the skills we have are adequate. We also need to ensure that the paper deals with the so–called disincentives to work. Those programs which make a transition into the workplace more difficult need to be addressed too.

There are some specific proposals that need some attention. Among all the words here, one proposal more specific than the others deals with changing the funding arrangements with the provinces. If all the federal government is going to do is continue to address its deficit problems, albeit not very effectively in this regard, by transferring the deficit to the provinces that have done a much better job of dealing with their deficits, we have not only the continuation of the Tory agenda but we have the continuation of the consequences that generates.

We have provinces, and I speak in particular of my own province of Saskatchewan, which have addressed the problem effectively. That particular province, under a New Democrat government, has reduced the deficit from the highest per capita in Canada to the lowest. It will balance its books in the coming year. It will be the first province to do that as a have not province, a province without enormous resources. It has done that in a balanced way while at the same time, I may add, it has increased social program spending. It is not a prerequisite of addressing a deficit to do it on the backs of the poor. The only way to do it is in a balanced way which requires all citizens to pay a share, to make a sacrifice in dealing with this problem which affects us all.

With regard to unemployment insurance, it affects many Canadians. There are 1.6 million people on unemployment insurance at the moment. Many more who would have been had previous governments not changed the rules. However to suggest, as this paper does, that perhaps we should continue to make unemployment insurance even more difficult—

The Deputy Speaker: It is 2.14 p.m. and there was an earlier order. I wonder if there would be unanimous consent to give the member a few more minutes to finish his remarks.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I really only need about five more minutes. I appreciate the co–operation of members.

It really is perverse for the green paper even to consider making unemployment insurance more difficult to get and indeed for the benefits to be further reduced.

• (1415)

It seems bizarre that we were focused on that as a solution to the problem, again continuing to blame the unemployed for their unemployment.

We need changes that would make unemployment insurance more encompassing with about 50 per cent of the population now being self–employed. Outside that system, we need to find a way though not easy to include them within the unemployment insurance system. We also need to include those part–timers who are not now included in the unemployment system.

We need to look for creative ways to ensure that all Canadians who need assistance are provided with it. Again we are seeing the emphasis on training but training out of funds which would otherwise go to those Canadians who are unemployed who need the resources to feed their families.

We still have to ask the question: Training for what? Are we really going to successfully train four million Canadians to re–enter the work place? That is simply unrealistic.

With regard to child benefits, we have here another suggestion that perhaps we should increase child benefits. Indeed the numbers suggested are to double them.

While that is fine as far as it goes, it is obviously much better for a child to have $2,500 to $3,000 a year than only $1,200, but this will basically merely delay the visits to the food bank by two or three days in a month. This will not address the problem and we cannot keep addressing problems in this band–aid way, responding to some of the symptoms of the problem.

Children are poor because they are born to poor parents. Their parents are poor because they do not have the means to feed their families simply because they do not have work.

The last point I would like to make with regard to the more specific proposals in the paper is with regard to post–secondary education. This really is a very perverse approach by the federal government. We all talk about and we all agree that a better educated, more trained, higher skilled work force is important in the new economy.

We would then anticipate if we all believe that that we will find ways to make post–secondary education more accessible and not less accessible. It really is difficult to understand how the government feels that by making tuition fees higher, perhaps five or six times as high, by increasing student loans from what are already difficult burdens for students to what would be almost insurmountable burdens and by reducing accessibility to post–secondary education, that possibly can move us toward a better trained, more educated work force. The opposition found the education community indicative of the problems with that.

Let me just close by suggesting two or three things which we really should do to address the problems that this green paper is attempting to address.

The real solution can only be to ensure that more Canadians are working, to develop the environment within the economy to ensure that good quality jobs are created and that there are enough of them to satisfy the demand. We have a long way to go on that. Other countries have been much better at that than we have. We really need a national consensus on how to move forward to ensure that all Canadians who can work will be able to work.

We also need to look at tax reform. We cannot continue to give $15 billion worth of tax breaks to those who can invest in RRSPs while children go to food banks. It is simply not possible. We have difficult choices to make as all members have suggested. That may be a difficult choice for the economy but we can clearly ensure a reduction in the deficit and an ability to fund more effectively our social programs if we look at serious, fair and progressive tax reform.

There are many innovative things we can do within the workplace itself. We can look at shorter working hours and overtime restrictions to share the work that is there. If four million Canadians are not working and another eight million are, it does not seem to me to be very effective to ensure that those numbers can continue.

There have been successes as we have seen in other countries with efforts to deal with that problem and indeed voluntary efforts on the part of trade unions and employers to move toward shorter working weeks. We have constantly done that. In past history people used to work seven days a week and now they work five days a week.

• (1420)

In closing I think this is a debate about the quality of Canadian life, about our collective responsibility to one another, about inequality and ensuring that social policy responds to deep insecurities, changing family structures, high poverty levels and great insecurity in the work force.

We have a lot of work today and I do not think this paper takes us very far along the way.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being approximately 2:14 p.m., the House shall now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion That Bill C–240, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a Committee.

Mr. Bernard St–Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, in this society of ours, criminality, and particularly the kind of sexual offences Bill C–240 deals with, is a very sensitive subject. Sure, we have to talk about it, but as parliamentarians we have the moral obligation not to turn this into a circus. This is a very sensitive issue.

The death of a child is always a tragedy. Whether a child dies in a car accident, of natural causes, or whether he is abused before being killed, it is still a death.

As individual members of a society, regardless of who and where we are, we have the fundamental and legitimate duty to protect children who, after all, represent the generation for which all of us here work. Indeed, we must protect children. We must do everything we can to provide them with the best possible future in the safest possible world. However, it is wrong to want to eliminate anyone who dares get close to a child.

I want to make it clear that the Official Opposition does not take lightly a tragedy like the one referred to by the Reform Party member, in his speech to this House, on June 10. I am alluding to the case of young Christopher Stephenson who, on the evening of June 17, 1988, was kidnapped and then physically

and sexually abused for over 24 hours by a 45–year–old individual named Joseph Fredericks.

No one in his or her right mind can tolerate tragedies like that. And I mean no one. We often hear people say that inmates are all like this or like that, but the fact is that they have their own code in detention centres. Indeed, even inmates who have committed crimes themselves do not tolerate such horrible crimes. All of us, including criminals, agree that to hurt a child is a terrible thing to do. In January 1992, some inmates in Collin's Bay penitentiary, Ontario, took justice into their own hands and Joseph Fredericks was stabbed while serving his sentence in that institution.

You know, the worst thing is that, whether they have raped, injured, killed or done all of the above, child molesters have to face the judicial system to be sent to jail. They have to go through the whole usual process to be sentenced. And then they end up behind bars.

• (1425)

Once inside the penitentiary, they have to face another type of police, as I indicated earlier. That is why these individuals need the form of protection commonly referred to as inside protection, or the protect as they say.

I am not here to champion unduly the cause of such offenders, but nonetheless, if the judicial system sentenced them once, we should not keep sentencing them over and over, any time we feel like it. The main fault we find with the correctional system is this huge number of inside policies that govern the parole procedure. In other words, giving too much of a free rein to individuals who are not necessarily appointed because of their high qualifications but, in some cases, because of their party affiliation. To put it bluntly, these positions are too often filled by party hacks.

Once a person has been sentenced, members of the parole committee should not be given the authority to "retry" the convict by trying to find out whether for some reason, it would have been better to, or not to, and so forth, because there is no end to the administrative maze. If we do that, we will get into an incredible mess, a real mountain of red tape.

When a judge hands down a sentence—it was a judge who told me this, and I think all judges would agree—he does so on the basis of his assessment that by the end of the sentence, the individual will normally have served his term and realize, after going through the system and the follow–up services that are available, that he must not repeat the offence for which he was incarcerated.

Of course, if this worked every time, it would be an ideal world, and we have yet to achieve that objective.

On the other hand, when we look at cases like the one involving young Christopher Stephenson, everyone deplores the mistakes that were made and, of course, mistakes were made, unfortunately. Everyone deplores such mistakes. However, statistics show—because we must look at both sides of the coin; we were not elected to act in demagogic or dramatic ways—that only 6 per cent of parolees reoffend within six months of their release. Granted, they can commit new offences after the six months are up. But even if we go up to 10 per cent, which is a large increase, it means that the current correctional system still works for 90 per cent of the people. After a period of imprisonment, 90 per cent of the people can regain the freedom to which they, like you and I, are entitled.

We live in a democratic and human system managed by human beings so, on the one hand, there will always be mistakes but, on the other hand, we must also work to improve living conditions for individuals like ourselves. That is what we call community.

There will always be marginal cases; there will always be people who take undue advantage of the system, be they insiders or outsiders. Of course some people will get away, but when a system has a success rate of 90 to 94 per cent, I think that we must start on that basis and try to improve it and not just focus on the 6 per cent and dwell on them and go after them.

Yes, there is work to be done, that is quite true, everyone agrees. But I think that letting people who are not even judges render a second judgement, as the bill would do, is going too far.

I will conclude with that. Of course there is a flaw, as everyone will agree. As I just said, the system is not perfect. Many people from all backgrounds are working on it in good faith, I think. Even people who do not always deal with the public but are in the community or are senior officials. They all work hard and listen to the people.

• (1430)

Yes, we have to look for a solution, but I really doubt that we will find it in Bill C–240.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Surrey—White Rocks—South Langley for moving such an important motion. We obviously need to better protect our children against repeat violent offenders.

As a starting point and proof that such action is necessary, my colleague referred to the crimes committed by Joseph Fredericks. The senseless death of young Christopher Stephenson, murdered in 1988 by this chronic paedophile from Brampton reminds us, in case we need to be reminded, that we must act quickly to deal with the weaknesses of our criminal justice system and reduce the risk of similar tragedies, in future.

The federal government, the provinces and all the various areas of the criminal justice system agree that they must work together to reach this common goal. As for the federal government, he is determined to act on this issue. This is why it has already taken measures to implement several of the recommendations made in 1993 by the coroner in charge of the investigation concerning the death of young Christopher Stephenson.

Finally, most of the federal measures recommended were implemented, which helped to improve the preparation of case management and risk assessment reports throughout the federal correctional system. We were also able to improve the exchange of information on offenders, the accountability mechanisms and the coordination of management and treatment activities for sex offenders. We have made some remarkable progress, but still have a long way to go.

This is why we will work hard to implement the few remaining recommendations. These recommendations address complex issues that cannot be resolved overnight. They require global and sustainable solutions. Bill C–45, which amends the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, is one measure that will help improve public protection. This bill, which was introduced by the Solicitor General last June, is now before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

One of the proposed amendments would make it easier for the National Parole Board to keep sexual offenders who have a preference for children in prison until they have served their full sentence. As the Solicitor General pointed out recently, this amendment does not mean that sexual offences against children are more serious than those against adults. However, in the case of children, it happens quite often that the National Parole Board cannot keep a high risk pedophile in prison because it is difficult to prove that he has caused serious harm to the child who was the victim.

The proposal would solve this problem by eliminating the need to prove that serious harm has been caused in these cases. The Board would therefore have the legal right to keep an offender in prison until he has served his full sentence if it believes that the offender is likely to commit another offence against a child. I think this proposal would be a great help in protecting our children against sexual offenders under federal jurisdiction.

However, we must keep in mind that real reform requires more than just amending the legislation. Sooner or later, most convicts are released. This is the reason why the government has taken a number of initiatives aimed at protecting society in the long run. Improving treatment programs for sexual offenders is a case in point. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on what we know about treating sexual offenders.

Research shows that sexual abuse has many roots and that there is more than one approach to treatment. However, clinicians agree that, in many cases, the chances of re–offending can be considerably reduced through continuous treatment and preventing relapses.

• (1435)

Preventing relapses is crucial as it helps sexual offenders control their urge when they are back in the community. In this context, the Solicitor General announced that, as part of the public security reform proposed by the government, programs for sexual offenders will be improved and reinforced.

To ensure that the corrections system makes use of the most effective means to deal with and treat sexual offenders, Correctional Service Canada undertook a complete review of its evaluation and treatment programs, last year, with a view to improve evaluation of sexual offenders' needs related to their criminal behaviour, to implement a series of treatment programs designed to meet the various needs of this group of offenders, to train corrections officers in the latest techniques for dealing with sexual offenders, and to conduct research aimed at improving the effectiveness of these approaches.

During the last five years, it made spectacular progress by increasing the number of places set aside for sexual offenders from 200 per year to over 1,800 per year.

In order to improve the national aspect of the management and treatment of sexual offenders, the Commissioner of Corrections recently announced the nomination of a senior psychologist as incumbent of a new position, that of sexual offenders program consultant. This is another example of action taken following the enquiry on the death of Christopher Stephenson.

In accordance with other recommendations made during that enquiry, the government will take measures in order to help local agencies better protect children against abuse in their communities.

The RCMP is at the forefront because it gives all police forces across Canada access to the data base of the Canadian Police Information Centre, the CPIC. Thanks to those data, the local police can determine the background of any person who applies for a job involving children and can transfer that information to local community organizations.

With these data, the organizations can make sure child molesters and sexual offenders cannot come into direct contact with children through community work.

In order that our national screening process be the best possible, some representatives of the Solicitor General, in cooperation with colleagues from Health Canada and Justice Canada, are studying possible ways of improving on the data bank of the CPIC so that the acquisition process would bring in more complete data on criminal convictions and investigations.

For our part, we will have a much better screening system at the national level and we will be able to prevent contacts between children and paedophiles or sexual offenders.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank once again the member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley who raised this vital issue in the House.

We have the responsibility, in memory of Christopher Stephenson and as a protection for all children and parents in Canada, to do everything in our power to protect our young people against sexual predators.

However, protection does not depend exclusively on legislation. It also depends on the design and implementation of effective treatment programs for sexual offenders, so the risk can be manageable once they re–enter society. It is only through a balanced reform of the criminal system that we will be able to build a safe society where children will not live in fear of violence or exploitation.

The initiatives I just described and the efforts we will continue to make over the next few months exemplify the commitment of our government to a better protection of our children. I am confident that all members will co–operate with us in the fulfilment of this goal.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C–240. This bill, introduced by my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, offers important changes to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

Once again the Reform Party has taken the initiative to ensure that dangerous offenders are not permitted to walk free and commit more deadly crimes and to threaten their victims' families. Reform policy supports tougher punishment of crime and the protection of law abiding citizens before the rights of criminals. It is unfortunate that members on the other side of the House continue to be so reluctant to introduce substantive reforms to the justice system.

• (1440)

The intention of Bill C–240 is not to lock up prisoners and throw away the key. Instead this bill protects Canadians by keeping the most dangerous inmates behind bars. As my colleague stated previously in the House: "This legislation is targeting individuals who are not designated as dangerous offenders at the time of their original sentence but their behaviour subsequent to incarceration coupled with their criminal record has led Correctional Services Canada and the National Parole Board to deem them too dangerous to be released into society".

On this side of the House we have often spoken of the need for widespread criminal justice reform and Bill C–240 would do just that.

Look again at the fear that Helen Leadley and her family face daily while they await word of the date of Robert Paul Thompson's escorted temporary absence. This House is well aware of the history of this man and his criminal record dating back to 1969 and I am not going to let go of this issue.

By 1983 Robert Paul Thompson had served time for aggravated assault on a former girlfriend and was incarcerated for two hit and run incidents. Even then with his record of criminal activity and violence he was issued a day pass from prison. While on this day pass Thompson went to the home of his former common law spouse, Brenda Fitzgerald. He tried to kill Brenda's male friend by beating him with a hammer and stabbing him. He then brutally stabbed Brenda Fitzgerald to death. How stupid, how irresponsible that he was issued this day pass.

For this brutal murder and attempted murder Thompson plea bargained and pleaded guilty to second degree murder. He was never classified as a dangerous offender. He was sentenced to life which made him eligible for parole in the spring of 1995. Is that not a flagrant contradiction in terms: sentenced to life yet eligible for parole.

The case does not end with Thompson's conviction and sentencing. Two and a half years later Thompson stabbed two prison guards and took a 63–year old prison nurse hostage. During the hostage situation it took 10 guards to restrain Thompson. For these subsequent attacks Thompson received a sentence of 11 years to be served concurrent to his original sentence with parole eligibility still in April 1995.

Even after these violent offences Thompson was still not classified as a dangerous offender. What does it take? What does it take for such a violent criminal to be considered a dangerous offender? The parole board recently approved an ETA for Thompson. His brother has a non–life threatening illness and is in hospital. Thompson wishes to visit him for two hours.

It was an irresponsible decision to grant this man a day pass in 1983. It is even more reprehensible that the parole board has elected yet again to grant this ETA. Despite the pleas of his victim's family who live in fear of this man, despite the fact that I have spoken in this House on this matter four times now asking that this man not be released on an ETA, despite all of this, the Solicitor General has chosen to ignore these requests. Apparently the parole board, correctional services and the Solicitor General do not consider Thompson's proclivity for violence to be sufficient to keep him safely locked away.

A member of the parole board in New Brunswick admitted that about 70 per cent of parole requests are granted and stated publicly: "Honestly, we would like to see 100 per cent". Vengeance is not part of the mandate of the board. Does the parole board not have a moral obligation to prevent vengeance against the victims and their families? That is what this is all

about. Thompson has been able to reach beyond his prison walls and terrorize Brenda Fitzgerald's mother. My colleagues and I are fighting daily to ensure that victims' rights are not compromised for the rights of the convicted.

The parole system allows offenders such as Thompson to serve only one–third to one–half of their sentences. The board even admits that fully one out of three violent offenders will re–offend, yet classifying an offender as dangerous can only occur at the time of sentencing. Even then current legislation only allows the correctional service to keep dangerous offenders in prison until the last day of their sentence. Then they must be released back into society.

Convicted serial rapist Larry Fisher served his entire 23 year sentence never once taking any rehabilitation program and he is now free to offend again.

• (1445)

Bill C–240 would put a process into place that would permit the re–revaluation of an inmate's release. Bill C–240 would allow the crown attorney to apply the dangerous offender provisions when recommended by correctional authorities.

When the evaluation of an offender suggests the likelihood of reoffending, the offender would face continued detention. The option for continued detention would include the imposition of a definite or indefinite sentence or long term intensive supervision of up to 10 years. Provisions such as these would permit the detention of offenders beyond their sentence for those who demonstrate their continued violent tendencies even while imprisoned.

Canadians are frustrated at the government's lack of real action to make criminals more accountable for their actions. They are growing tired of watching the government tinker with the edges and not make real changes. They are beginning to question the government's ability to keep Canadians safe on their streets.

This weekend is Thanksgiving. I find it appalling that the corrections system would choose today as the date to decide on Robert Thompson's ETA. It hardly seems fair that Brenda Fitzgerald's family will have nothing to be thankful for, while her murderer celebrates the holiday.

Bill C–240 introduced by my colleague introduces real changes to the corrections system. It is time the Solicitor General re–establishes some credibility and supports this bill. I will not let this rest. Thompson's parole comes up in April 1995 and I will be back.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on debate at second reading of Bill C–240, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

Sexual offending is an issue of great public concern. The Coroner of Ontario has used a series of inquests to focus public attention on heinous acts committed by individuals. The reaction generated by such cases often implies that there are no current provisions for dealing with such persons or that the mechanisms available are entirely inadequate.

The Criminal Code of Canada currently has extensive provisions regarding dangerous offenders. These provisions have evolved significantly over the years. In 1948 criminal sexual psychopath legislation was introduced, which permitted the court to determine that person was a criminal sexual psychopath if he had been convicted of an offence such as rape, carnal knowledge, indecent assault, buggery, bestiality or gross indecency, or an attempt at any of those offences.

If the court found the offender to be a criminal sexual psychopath it could impose a specific term of imprisonment for the substantive offence and an indeterminate period of preventive detention to begin after the initial sentence had been served.

The concept of criminal sexual psychopath was modified subsequently to specify habitual criminals and dangerous sexual offenders. There was particular concern to distinguish between dangerous sexual offenders and petty offenders. The Criminal Code was amended in 1969 and the concept of a fixed term sentence was removed from the dangerous sexual offender legislation, leaving only the indeterminate sentence. The Ouimet committee considered dangerous sexual offenders and recommended creating a new category entitled simply dangerous offender.

Dangerous offender legislation was enacted in 1977 to replace former provisions for habitual offenders and dangerous sexual offenders. The current law is described in the Criminal Code in part 24. In that part the definition of serious personal injury offence is given in section 752 and the practical definition of the nature of behaviours covered is given in section 753.

This section is applicable to offenders who constitute a threat to the life, safety, or physical or mental well–being of other persons. This threat can be established on four different bases. The first is that the offender has demonstrated a pattern of repetitive behaviour showing a failure to restrain his behaviour and a likelihood of his causing death or injury to other persons, or inflicting severe psychological damage through failure to restrain his behaviour.

• (1450)

The second is a pattern of persistent, aggressive behaviour showing substantial indifference on the part of the offender for the consequences of his behaviour.

The third is any behaviour by the offender that is of such a brutal nature as to compel the conclusion that his behaviour in the future is unlikely to be inhibited by normal standards of behavioural restraint.

The final category relates to any conduct by the offender in a sexual matter where the offender has shown failure to control his sexual impulses, and a likelihood of causing injury, pain or other evil to persons through a failure to control his sexual impulses.

If the court finds an offender to be a dangerous offender it may impose an indeterminate sentence on the offender instead of any other sentence that might have been appropriate.

I raise the history of the development of this section and the definitions in it to bring to the attention of the House that various governments over an extensive period of time have been involved in wrestling with the problem of dangerous offenders. The current provisions have been tested at the Supreme Court of Canada and have been found to meet appropriate legal standards.

The possibility of changes to the current provisions has been the subject of consultations with the provinces who administer the provisions and the result is that there is general satisfaction with the current state of the law among those required to apply it.

The issue of the potential danger of charter invalidation, which has been raised in respect to the content of Bill C–240, has been addressed by other speakers and I will not repeat those points at this time.

The important issue which has to be addressed here is whether it is good policy to consider amendments such as those proposed in Bill C–240 which carry a significant risk of invalidation, when we already have comprehensive and effective measures to deal with the criminal aspect of dealing with dangerous offenders. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for justice have recognized that there are other important areas that need to be considered. There are jurisdictional difficulties which need to be addressed through greater and more effective collaboration between jurisdictions. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for justice will be meeting with their health counterparts to address these concerns.

The identification and effective prosecution of individuals using the dangerous offender provisions is also a matter which has been recognized. A process to track high risk violent offenders and make information about these high risk individuals available to crown attorneys for subsequent prosecution is another important undertaking for dealing with these offenders.

In closing, it is important to reiterate that the current state of our law and practice is the result of a long evolution. It seems clear that the informed opinion among criminal justice professionals who administer provisions respecting dangerous offenders is that the Criminal Code is an effective vehicle for dealing with dangerous offenders.

The proposals in Bill C–240 present a significant risk of invalidation to a system that has evolved over a long period of time. We are much better served over both the short and the long term by improvements in inter–jurisdictional collaboration, and by administrative and procedural improvements than we are by proposals carrying excessive legal risks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the floor on Bill C–240, an Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

If this bill, introduced by the hon. member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, were passed, authorities would be able to review, while it is being served, the sentence of a inmate guilty of a serious and violent crime, if they believed he would reoffend upon his release.

Bill C–240 would even allow an inmate to be kept in jail for an indeterminate period of time if he were to be considered beyond rehabilitation.

• (1455)

As one can see, the judicial system would be given significant powers. Before I explain my reservations about this bill, I would like to clarify a few points to avoid any misunderstanding.

Like most Canadians and Quebecers, I am absolutely not in favour of releasing under probation offenders who are dangerous for society. I agree that violent offenders who are obviously not rehabilitated should be punished and serve their sentence. We must keep them behind bars as long as they are a threat to our society, and they should serve their full sentence. It is a matter of public security, and that position is generally accepted.

In a system based on the rule of law, the judicial system, the law enforcement agencies and the political institutions should make sure criminals serve their sentence and law–abiding citizens can lead a normal life. That is the basis of the social contract binding the citizens and the State.

We know that if we do not have clear rules and adequate penalties for those who break the law, we run the risk of anarchy.

The bill before us, if passed unamended, would seriously undermine fundamental rights and rules of justice we want to protect at all costs. Let me explain.

As I said previously, we live in a free and democratic society based on the respect of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. In the field of criminal justice, that means the inalienable right of every individual to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. This is a rule of law that we inherited from the British

common law and which still remains a basic foundation of our legal system.

Also, under these principles, an individual can only be punished once for the crime that he or she was found guilty of. In other words, no one can be tried and condemned twice for the same offence. Trying to forego this fundamental principle of justice would amount to unduly suspend the civil rights of the individual and to use the rule of the arbitrary. Obviously, this kind of situation is unacceptable in a society such as ours.

The bill before us contains, in clause 25, a provision which would allow a court to keep an individual in prison despite the fact that they served their time. This situation would result of the fact that, in view of new evidence which had not been or could not be produced at the time of the trial, the individual is considered dangerous and should be kept in prison.

From my interpretation of this bill, evidence that was not produced at the time of the trial against the accused could be introduced in court in order to keep them longer in prison. This provision, I think, would seriously undermine the fundamental rights of that person.

I remind you that since it was enshrined in the 1982 Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been the best means of protection available to Canadians against otherwise absolute powers of the modern state. The Charter provides a list of rules and principles intended to protect the fundamental rights of an individual. In this regard and for the purposes of the debate, section 11 of the Charter clearly states that: "Any person charged with an offence has the right (—) if finally acquitted of the offence, not to be tried or punished for it again and, if finally found guilty and punished for the offence, not to be tried or punished for it again". In other words, under the Charter, a person cannot be punished twice for the same offence in Canada. This is a fundamental right entrenched in the Constitution.

To me, some provisions in this bill clearly violate this principle, as we could, from now on, convict for a second time someone who has already served his sentence if a court finds that the offender still represents a danger for society. Clearly, we would have to wait for a Supreme Court judgment to determine if this bill could overrule the principles set forth in the Charter. And I think that the Supreme Court would declare the bill unconstitutional.

For the purposes of the debate, we must also consider that the Criminal Code of Canada already includes provisions for continued detention of dangerous criminals, even after their sentences are served.

• (1500)

Indeed, we know that the courts have the power to declare that these people are "dangerous offenders" who should be sentenced accordingly. But—and this is absolutely fundamental—the Crown attorney must make the point during the trial and not a few years later when the accused is about to be released, as would be allowed with Bill C–240.

Why should we pass new legislation to protect society against dangerous criminals while the Criminal Code provides us with all necessary tools to that end? Either we let the Crown attorney do his or her job, or we, as legislators, tighten the definition of a criminal offender.

Finally, according to this proposal, it would be the responsibility of the National Parole Board to inquire and determine if there is enough evidence to proceed to another trial and, ultimately, to extend the sentence. I think this would substantially increase the Board's case load, with all the additional delays and costs. Besides, this is not its jurisdiction in the first place.

To conclude, I want to reiterate my firm belief that fundamental human rights are inalienable and should not be suspended. Sure, we can present some foul crimes in such a light that people will think that, given special circumstances, fundamental rights should be disregarded. But I do not think this is justifiable, because as legislators we must uphold certain principles.

If Bill C–240 is adopted in its present form, it would be possible, I repeat, for the courts to detain individuals for longer than their original sentences, under the pretext that they still represented a danger to society. In other words, they could be punished for longer than their original sentences. It is obvious that this is unjustifiable.

Citizens must not be deprived of their fundamental rights under the pretext that society or the correctional system can find no other way to protect the public against dangerous criminals. This solution does not resolve the problem of dangerous offenders, who can pose a serious threat to society.

In conclusion, I would like to say that once society begins to make exceptions to the fundamental rights of the person, its members have every reason to believe that society is becoming dangerously intolerant and that, in the long term, their personal freedom is at risk.

[*English*]

Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–240 seeks to address concerns about the incidence of offenders repeating violent offences, particularly sexual offences.

The focus of the bill is upon the identification and further detention of a select group of offenders who are identified after sentencing during their period of incarceration as presenting a continuing and substantial threat of harm to the physical or mental well–being of other persons.

Predicting violent behaviour is undeniably a highly valued goal in terms of achieving community safety. Attaining this goal is very elusive. Other speakers have addressed the wide variety of measures which have been tried or which are currently under way to deal with the protection of society from dangerous offenders.

There are, however, a number of obstacles to effectively carry out this highly laudable goal. Approximately 10 per cent of all crime can be called violent. The base rate for violent behaviour is therefore quite low. For example, given the fact that only 10 per cent of all crime is violent, if we were to predict that no one would behave violently we would be correct about 90 per cent of the time.

The crux of our problem is that no one is satisfied with even a 90 per cent rate of prediction. Research over the past decade has made significant strides in the prediction of violent behaviour.

Correctional Service Canada has been working hard at developing risk assessment instruments and has developed one of the better assessment and prediction tools in the world.

The major predictors of criminal and violent behaviour have been reasonably well identified in research. These predictors include criminal companions, a history of anti–social behaviour, anti–social attitudes, family problems, cognitive dysfunction and low educational and vocational achievement. Some of the items in this list can be assessed relatively easily through extensive and detailed individual histories. Some, such as cognitive dysfunctions, require sophisticated testing.

• (1505)

One of the better predictors relates to assessment of psychopathy which comprises many traits including callousness, manipulation, dishonesty, irresponsibility and persistent anti–social conduct.

There are childhood predictors of violent recidivism associated with difficulties in pregnancy, especially the addiction of mother to alcohol or drugs, early childhood problems such as temper tantrums, and being the victim of or witnessing abuse or parental conflict.

Various conduct disorders characterized by stealing, lying, fire setting, truancy, sexual aggression, violence, cruelty and running away from home are strongly related to violent recidivism.

The research seemed to suggest that there is an increasing ability to predict dangerous behaviour. Accurate identification of the highest risk offenders can be achieved by combining measures of psychopathic traits, demographic variables and criminal histories.

Although using such tools will optimize the accuracy of predictions, it will not unfortunately identify all persons who will commit violent crime after release from custody.

Attempts to refine the predictions even further will result in high numbers of people wrongly identified as dangerous persons. It will greatly increase the costs of such measures and will impinge upon the rights of the many individuals improperly identified.

One of the striking things about the predictive factors which have been associated with violent recidivism is that virtually all of them occurred years before the violent offence for which we are concerned. They were known or could have been known at the time of sentencing.

The Criminal Code contains extensive provisions for dealing with dangerous offenders. The definitions in these sections have evolved over time and have survived or have been modified by a variety of legal challenges. Since we are increasingly able to predict dangerous offenders, the tools for managing the kind of problem being addressed in Bill C–240 already exist within the Criminal Code.

What is needed to address the kinds of cases leading to the current expressions of public concern is better early identification and prosecution of the most dangerous offenders. The various jurisdictions involved in administering criminal justice need to carefully scrutinize cases of violent and dangerous offenders to ensure that the appropriate use of existing dangerous offender provisions are made.

Finding ways to identify and track high risk offenders from as early as possible in their contacts with the criminal justice system throughout their involvement with the law will enable prosecutors to better apply the dangerous offender provisions of the Criminal Code. Finally it must be recognized that some offenders will slip through the net of criminal justice prosecution.

For these individuals, better co–operation and co–ordination at the policy level, at the level of prosecutions, in the correctional domain and, most important, with mental health can provide effective solutions to dealing with high risk offenders without exposing our current, effective and tested tools to the risk of invalidation on charter grounds.

In closing it is important to recognize an unpleasant reality. It is ultimately impossible to identify in advance all those individuals who will commit heinous acts. Our long term interests are better served by more effective crime prevention.

I quote from the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General entitled "Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward a National Strategy":

> The Committee accepts that crime will always be with us in one form or another and will require police, court and correctional interventions.
>
> At the same time, it believes that our collective response to crime must shift to crime prevention efforts that reduce opportunities for crime and focus increasingly on at–risk young people and on the underlying social and economic factors associated with crime and criminality.

This comprehensive approach involves partnerships between governments, criminal justice organizations, and community agencies and groups.

And it situates the crime problem in a community context and sees its solution as a social question.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill C–240, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

This is a private member's bill and we are debating it at second reading with the hope that it will be sent off to the justice and legal affairs committee of the House. Private Members' Business is one of the few opportunities members who are not in cabinet have to bring forward ideas in the form of bills or motions. They are debated and on some occasions are even put to a vote by members of this House.

• (1510)

I mention this because it was not so long ago that my private member's motion on relaxation of the confidence convention thus allowing freer voting in the House came forward for debate. It was a votable motion. Due to the support this motion found among members opposite it passed.

I mention this now because I believe it is important in the period called Private Members' Business that we as members should be able to use our own best judgment when determining how to vote on a particular matter. The whip should not be on for any vote in Private Members' Business. Members should be able to study the legislation on its own merits, not on the basis of its origin. That is the suggestion that all bills introduced by the government are good and must be supported and all bills and motions proposed by the opposition are bad and by definition should be defeated.

This idea is not conducive to allow parliamentarians to do their job which is to listen to the people of Canada. It prevents members of this House from truly working together in the best interests of our country's government and in the best interests of all our constituents, the Canadian people.

I remind members that this House did approve the motion I sponsored which endorsed freer voting. I hope members opposite as well as members of the Bloc will find this bill worthy of their support.

On the law and order issue which is being debated across this great country, there is no question where the Reform Party stands. It stands squarely in favour of law and order. That is why this bill is coming forward at this time.

Bill C–240 is one more initiative by Reform members to bring the necessary changes to our justice system to protect Canadians. It is a response to a need in our society, a need which has been eloquently expressed by those who are the friends and relatives of persons killed by criminals who are being let out of prison and who we all know will commit violent crimes again.

My hon. colleague from Calgary Southeast spoke a few minutes earlier about the need to retain such criminals as Robert Paul Thompson who murdered Brenda Fitzgerald in 1983 while out on a day pass. This offender has been sentenced to life and is eligible for parole in the spring of 1995. Such a bill as C–240 would allow corrections to keep dangerous criminals such as Robert Paul Thompson in prison.

As my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley has mentioned, under current legislation corrections officials have the power to keep dangerous criminals in prison until the expiration of their sentence. However, there is no legislation in place to allow the federal corrections system to keep high risk offenders in prison upon the expiration of their sentence.

At present there are high risk offenders who still retain violent intentions toward society but will be released on the Canadian public. The need for change is also expressed by families of murder victims and by those few who have survived brutal attacks by criminals who should have been kept behind bars for the rest of their lives.

This bill is similar to a bill that was introduced in the last Parliament and seems to be similar to proposals now being put forward for discussion by the present government. If that is the case, then why would any of us oppose it?

Let me take the time now to deal with two criticisms that have been raised. First, the government proposal is that public discussion and action on this matter should wait for the conclusions of this consultative process.

My riding has provincial institutions such as the Fraser River Correctional Centre, Alouette River Correctional Centre, Boulder Bay and Stave Lake Camp. It has federal institutions as well, such as Mission Institution and Ferndale Minimum Security.

Between the riding of Mission—Coquitlam and adjacent ridings we have provincial institutions such as Surrey Pre Trial, Ford Mountain, Mount Thurston, Centre Creek (Youth) and Chilliwack Community Correctional Centre. There are also federal institutions such as Matsqui, Kent, Elbow Lake, Mountain, Regional Psychiatric Facility and Harrison Mills. That is a lot of prison institutions.

The people of my riding and the surrounding ridings know of whence they talk. The people who work and live in the cities and towns found in Mission—Coquitlam want this type of legislation put in place immediately. They do not want violent offenders who have caused sufficient trouble in prison and therefore have been required to serve their complete sentence getting out and living unsupervised in the community. This bill only applies to the most potentially violent of incarcerated prisoners. I am sure the people in my riding would much prefer that such offenders stay in jail.

• (1515)

My householder contains a questionnaire to my constituents with questions relating to reform of the criminal justice system. I received what I believe is a very good return, over 6 per cent, on questions relating to criminal justice reform, particularly 87 per cent and 95 per cent who wanted changes to respective criminal justice reforms.

What is even more interesting is in the top concern in the general comments, over 76 per cent commented on changes to the Young Offenders Act, to sentencing, the parole system, victims' rights and it goes on and on.

Canadians want change.

Listening to my constituents is all the consultation I need to convince myself that this is a necessary piece of legislation. Moreover, with whom is the government going to consult if it asks the person in jail what to do as part of the consultation process? It is quite likely the response would be that that legislation is not needed.

If government consults with the friends and relatives of those who have died at the hands of recently released offenders I am sure the response would be that legislation is needed.

In her speech on this bill presented to the House on June 10, 1994, my friend from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley eloquently pleaded the case in support of her bill by giving us details of the murder of an 11–year old boy at the hands of such an offender. I believe his parents would support this bill. Therefore I believe the people with whom the government is going to be carrying on discussions have already spoken and spoken eloquently in favour of this bill.

The second criticism raised against this bill is that it might contravene the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Yes, I suppose a bill which deals in a harsh manner with dangerous offenders could be found in contravention of some section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms but is it? The charter has a saving clause, clause 1. By virtue of clause 1 the charter may be violated by a statute but if such a statute would be acceptable in a free and democratic society then that statute is valid.

This is one of the compromises that went into the charter when it was drafted and I believe it is helpful in relation to Bill C–240.

I submit that in a free and democratic society that it would be unacceptable to deal in the way proposed by Bill C–240 with society's most dangerous offenders.

My Liberal friends will say that such treatment violates the convicted person's individual rights. That would be the classic argument raised by Liberals but is it not time that we looked at the rights of the community as a whole? Is this not a case where the greater good for the greater number of people in our society should win out over the rights of an individual, the rights of a person who is so dangerous to society?

I believe in cases such as this the rights of society as a whole should be protected and, yes, protected at the expense of the rights of a very few to whom this bill would apply.

I endorse what my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley said when she first spoke in support of this bill, that if this bill can save even one life it is worth it.

I believe the time to act on this matter is now. There is no point in consultation on this matter. People are demanding that we deal in a tough straightforward manner with society's most dangerous offenders. I urge all hon. members to look carefully at the purpose of private members business and if they believe this bill is necessary then vote for it, regardless of the party whips.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to address this important matter for the safety of all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Colleagues, I think we will call it the end of the day. The member for Churchill would have 30 seconds or something to speak, if that is acceptable to the member for Churchill.

It being 3.20 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 17, 1994, pursuant to Standing Orders 22 and 24.

(The House adjourned at 3.20 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 17, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS ACT

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent, Lib.) moved that Bill C–220, an act to amend the Hazardous Products Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great hope that I rise today to lead off Private Members' Business on Bill C–220, an act to amend the Hazardous Products Act.

I first introduced this bill in June 1993 and reintroduced it on March 7, 1994. The bill is in direct response to a tragic accident in my riding which claimed the life of the 6–year old son of constituents of mine, Robert and Maria Weese of Wallaceburg. I am pleased to say that they will be in the gallery this morning with their children, son Craig, daughters Paula and Kelly.

On June 15, 1992 their son Mark was killed by a poorly designed, poorly maintained portable soccer net. The bill's sole intention is to prevent further tragedies, because the incident in my riding was only one of many. Bill C–220 would oblige users of soccer goals, handball goals and field hockey goals to fix them to the ground so that they do not easily tip over, causing injury or death.

I acknowledge that the bill as specifically written needs additional measures to make it more effective. Today in private members' hour I believe that by raising awareness of this issue and this concern, the rationale and intent of the bill will be established and proven.

I have met with staff and officials from the office of the hon. Minister of Health and I want to thank the minister for her guidance and assistance in this matter. We will all work together to increase the safety of our children. I look forward to pursuing this issue with the minister in the months ahead.

As well, I want to take this opportunity to commend Robert and Maria Weese for their important and heartfelt efforts. They have sent over a thousand letters to soccer associations all across Canada and internationally outlining the dangers of portable nets. The Weeses have compiled some disturbing examples about accidents involving portable equipment.

Since 1979 there have been 15 deaths and five serious injuries in the U.S., but unfortunately there are no Canadian figures, as no one group compiles them, not school boards, not recreation associations.

• (1105)

We have a hodge–podge, a patchwork of information across Canada. One of our main goals must be to increase the amount of information available to users of portable nets.

Bill C–220 is based on recommendations of the coroner's jury inquest in October 1992 after a 14–year old boy was killed by a portable net. This needless death occurred fully four months before Mark Weese's. Why were the recommendations of the inquest not followed?

I was just informed that there was another regrettable death in New Brunswick last month and on October 3 a 12–year old boy died in Detroit, Michigan as a result of a portable soccer goal falling on his chest. Three years ago there was an incident in Newfoundland.

I would like to read into the record the eight recommendations of the Wallaceburg inquest. Before I do I want to suggest that these statements are totally logical and apply common sense. They should have already been in practice before tragedy called attention to this issue.

One, portable goals for indoor use should be made of light-weight materials and either counterweighted with sandbags or anchored with a flexible anchoring system which allows the goal to move in a lateral direction but not tip over.

Two, portable goals for outdoor use should have an anchoring device to allow for stability during the game and which will allow the goal to be stored.

Three, the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs should amend the Hazardous Products Act to include the equipment and to acquire a standards program from the Canadian Standards Association in order to ensure that manufacturers' products meet minimum safety standards.

Four, suppliers should ensure that all of this equipment meets CSA standards before shipping to purchaser.

Five, consumer and corporate affairs should be notified by coroners' offices, hospitals and police departments immediately of death or catastrophic injuries resulting from accidents involving sports equipment, and they in turn should use their computer system which can have the capacity to highlight incidents and advise the ministry of education, boards of education, the ministry of tourism and recreation, municipalities, associations, suppliers and distributors.

Six, permanent manufacturers' labels should be clearly displayed indicating manufacturer, address and year of manufacture.

Seven, any cautionary advice regarding equipment use and handling should be clearly displayed separately and in a contrasting colour. It should also appear prominently on all product documentation.

Eight, qualified independent safety inspections should be conducted on an annual basis and following repairs or modifications inspection records should be kept on file by the user.

Those are the eight recommendations from October 1992 and yet they are still to be fully implemented. I want to draw attention to this fact by bringing this bill to the House for discussion.

Injury accidents are now the number one killer of children nationwide. In the U.S. they take about 7,200 lives a year. Another 50,000 children suffer permanent injury. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warned in September 1992 that movable soccer goals can tip over and kill children who climb on them or pull up on the cross bar. In some cases an unanchored goal gets blown down by a gust of wind.

There was a meeting last week of the safety commission in Washington, D.C. It was attended by Canadian representatives who are working with our American colleagues to increase the level of information available and create policies to revamp needless tragedies in the future.

• (1110)

Currently the U.S. safety commission has published a handbook for public playground safety. In chapter 5, subsection 1.1 it notes that secure anchoring is the key factor to stable installation. When properly installed, equipment should withstand the maximum anticipated forces generated by active youth which might cause it to overturn, tip, slide or move in any way.

The Canadian Standards Association has issued guidelines for preventing playground accidents to ensure that equipment is safe. The CSA emphasizes that the base of equipment should be anchored firmly below the ground.

It suggests that parents ask their local municipality or school board how often it inspects equipment. The CSA recommends a daily visual inspection, a more detailed monthly inspection and a comprehensive inspection handling.

Distribution of safety information is the key to all of this but it must get to everyone. There was a fatal net accident in Toronto in 1992. A month later, the net manufacturer, Sports Equipment of Toronto Limited, a national supplier of institutional sporting goods and gymnasium equipment, issued a notice stating that soccers goals, handball goals and field hockey goals be anchored securely to the floor or playing field when in use and stored in such a manner that they will not fall over when not in use.

I commend the company for the urgent notice but it was only sent to school boards in Ontario. It did not extend its warning to municipalities, parks or recreation departments.

In the U.S. officials are coming up with a variety of methods to increase the safety of nets.

According to an article in the Detroit *News* of April 18, 1993 the Fairfax county, Virginia public school system has become a national leader in implementing the two safeguards that experts consider essential: anchors and warning labels.

Every portable soccer goal in the district has warning labels, black, red and bright yellow. The labels warn that climbing on goals or failing to anchor goals can cause serious injury or death. The Virginia School Board even purchased a corkscrew type anchor about 12 inches long. It is easy to put in and hard to take out.

The institute for the study of youth at the University of Michigan says that no games should be played on fields where goals have not been anchored. The institute wants a local bylaw passed to make the home team coach responsible for anchoring both soccer goals before the start of the scheduled match. If this is not complied with, the match is forfeited.

It is worthwhile to point out that some manufacturers are forming a coalition for safe soccer goals and have begun making models that collapse when not in use. I hope that in Canada we are going in the same direction.

Again, I commend the Weeses for their commitment and dedication and their dogged pursuit of safety during what must be trying times. They have formed a volunteer group in Wallaceburg called PARCS, Parents Assuming Responsibility for Children's Safety. As well, the town of Wallaceburg has undertaken a comprehensive review of park equipment. I applaud it for that but it is not universal. On a recent trip around southern Ontario the Weeses found potentially dangerous and unsafe equipment in Woodstock, St. Thomas and Goderich.

They have written letters to the communities and want the posts fixed. This grassroots, local, neighbour to neighbour effort is to be encouraged, praised and honoured. We need the power of government to lend a helping hand. We must manufacture safer nets and then inform all users of the standards for safety. We

cannot leave it up to the goodwill and good thoughts but to concrete action on the part of regulatory bodies and standards associations.

• (1115)

I welcome the comments of my colleagues on this bill, but more important is the issue symbolized by Bill C–220. If we can prevent one death or tragedy through our discussion this morning then it is all to the good.

Second, it is the purpose of Private Members' Business to allow any member from any party to raise awareness on an issue. It is important to our ridings and to the country at large. In the short time we have this morning I believe we will succeed on both counts.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of my constituents regarding Bill C–220 because it is due to their initiative that this member of Parliament gets the privilege to discuss the bill in the first place.

On a personal note, two years ago I bought a gym set for our grandchildren. The little people are one step ahead of us all the time. It was two swings, a sway bar and a slide. The youngest is three and the other two are four. They found by swinging in unison, they could bring the tripods that held this playstand off the ground. I was in a state of shock.

We have to watch the little people. I think they are more intelligent than we are. They were able to bring the stand two feet off the ground on either side as they were swinging. I made them stop. I was able to get bars that would latch on to the stands, which were 24 inches in depth. I drove them into the ground to support the stand.

The company that built these stands should have included stakes to make them more safe. If 10 or 12–year old children had been on that swing they would have flipped it over quite easily. These little ones at the ages of three and four were certainly working their way up to flipping it over when I made them stop.

We are not aware of the dangers unless we are there to see what can happen even in our own yards. We should support this bill. It lets people know exactly what is happening throughout the country. Children at schools and playgrounds are being killed when they can easily be saved for very few pennies.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the time to speak on the bill this morning. I await hearing other speakers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak, on behalf of the Official Opposition, to Bill C–220, an Act to amend the Hazardous Products Act.

It is always useful to read the explanatory note: "The purpose of this bill is to make the *Hazardous Products Act* applicable to soccer goals, handball goals and field hockey goals as 'restricted products'".

At this stage I would like to commend the hon. member for Kent on his perseverance, since the hon. member introduced this bill during the previous Parliament and had to go through the whole process again when the new Parliament convened. I also want to commend him on his sensitivity, in the light of the tragic experience in his riding of Robert and Maria Weese, who lost their son Mark at the age of six.

• (1120)

Personally, I am very sensitive to such matters because I have a son the same age, and I can imagine the intense grief suffered by these parents after such a tragic event.

The bill would make it compulsory to equip soccer, handball and field hockey goals with an anchoring device that would prevent the goals from tipping over and falling on children playing nearby. I should explain that in most cases, these accidents did not happen during games but when children were playing with the goals on playgrounds and the goals tipped over, or when the goals were tipped over by a gust of wind and fell on a child, causing either serious injury or death.

Finally, it is also the intent of this bill, in accordance with the coroner's recommendation we will look at later on, that nets and goals shall be portable and can be put away after games in order to prevent this kind of accident.

The Mark Weese case is not unique. In fact, it is unfortunate there are so few statistics in Canada on the subject, and it seems neither hospitals nor schools have any obligation to provide information on such cases to any authorities whatsoever. Fortunately, this is not the case in the United States, where the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission monitors this kind of thing. From 1979 to 1992, according to the Commission, many accidents occurred, five causing major injuries, in other words, very serious—you can imagine what that means—and fifteen causing the deaths of individuals, I cannot really say children, ranging in age from three to twenty–two. So that is an indication of the importance of this proposal.

The bill was directly inspired by the coroner's report that was released at the time and to which the hon. member for Kent referred earlier. What struck me particularly was recommendation No. 2, which reads as follows in English:

[*English*]

Portable goals for outdoor use should have an anchoring device to allow for stability during the game and which allows the goal to be stored away.

[*Translation*]

We therefore support this amendment to the Hazardous Products Act. If the amendment saves only one life, it will have served its purpose.

[*English*]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be able to support my colleague. Together with my colleague from the Bloc, I commend him for his tenacity in bringing to our attention again something that is very important.

The Weese family took seriously an accident that happened to them and the suffering they went through. They made us all aware of a problem to which I personally was not paying very much attention. When I read the details of the story I was unaware that these goal posts were causing this much trouble, that people actually were being killed. I have now become aware of the problem. That is the negative part.

Here is a family who suffered. A child died and some of us were still unaware of the cause. They took it upon themselves to write thousands of letters to people to make them aware, to make school boards aware, to make parks and recreation departments aware so that out of an accident something good came. I want to thank this family for that.

I want to thank my colleague for drawing this tragedy into the public arena and into the highest court of the land, the Parliament of Canada.

• (1125)

It is easy for us to blame manufacturers for not putting the right signs on equipment and not supplying enough information. It is important that they be charged with that responsibility. School boards and parks and recreation departments should be made aware of this fault so they can anchor the goal posts and make them more safe.

However, I want to emphasize another aspect of this as well. It is the responsibility that we as parents and adults have in our respective communities.

I was impressed to hear the member say that he and the Weese family had travelled around southern Ontario only to discover that there are still places where the safety features are not being observed. They are exercising a responsibility that goes well beyond that of parents by going into the community and extending their care to other people's children. It is a highly commendable action on their part.

In particular, I want to recognize the establishment of the the PARCS, Parents Assuming Responsibility for Children's Safety. It is through their efforts that the hon. member brings this bill to the House to amend the Hazardous Products Act. Through their efforts school boards are now aware of a problem that they were not aware of before. Through their efforts I have become more sensitive to this problem.

My two boys are now grown men. They do not have children but when they do I want them to be able to feel comfortable that their children are safe as far as playground equipment is concerned.

Also I want us to recognize that regardless of whether the goal posts are fixed or movable, or movable ones that are anchored, there is still in the heat and activity of play the tendency to forget that one could be hurt rather badly on these goal posts. We have a responsibility to recognize that our children when they play can be in some danger.

There is no better way to ensure that our children are safe than for us as parents to accept responsibility for our children. In the larger community we as adults should recognize that in a way we are parents to all children and to accept the responsibility that has been demonstrated by the Weeses to make others aware of the danger. We need to alert the Minister of Industry to bring forward legislation to amend the corporate act so that the purpose of the bill can be realized.

I thank the hon. member for bringing this to the House. I am going to support the effort, the spirit and the intent of the bill. I hope that all of us will become more aware and accept responsibility to make our playgrounds safer both on school grounds as well as parks and other recreational facilities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There are no further speakers. I do not want to surprise the member for Kent. I want all colleagues in the House to understand that under the right of reply, if the member for Kent chooses to have a closing remark on the business that no one else can speak. In fact, he will close the debate at this time.

Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Crawford: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank and congratulate members opposite who have spoken in support of the bill. It means a lot to me and it certainly means a lot to the Weese family, who were sitting above us, that people are becoming involved in the issue of the safety hazard of these goal posts.

The hon. member stated he was not aware of it. I was not aware of it either until this came about. I related the situation with my grandchildren who were trying to upset the swings and unfortunately they would have had I not brought an end to it and stabilized the equipment.

I live on the border of Michigan. In the United States soccer is becoming a great sport today. Because of baseball strikes and hockey strikes and one thing and another soccer has taken over. We have a gentleman in Wallaceburg who started soccer many years ago. This gentleman was to be in the Olympics for Italy.

Through his efforts Wallaceburg has some of the best soccer teams not only in Kent but in Ontario and Canada.

In the United States it has become great. They are involved in the safety of these nets. We are so close we can see what they are doing across the border from us. We as Canadians should have been leading the way but again we will be following our American neighbours in more safety.

Once again I thank the hon. members who spoke in support of this bill. We appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for all the work you have done in trying to make everyone aware of the safety of field goal netting whether it is soccer, field hockey, or any other sport. I certainly commend you and wish you the very best.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There being no further members rising for debate and the motion not being designated as a votable item the time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped from the Order Paper pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the House suspend until noon in order to resume government business at that time.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall I suspend the sitting of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House will suspend until twelve o'clock noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11.31 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other acts, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, of which I believe you are aware, to draw to your attention a matter which has prevented an amendment to Bill C–49 from appearing on today's Order Paper as it should have.

According to the rules of the House it was required that if an amendment to Bill C–49 was to have appeared on today's Order Paper, thus giving all members the appropriate advance knowledge of the amendment, the amendment was to have been delivered to the Journals branch no later than 2 p.m. on October 7, the last sitting day of the House.

On Thursday, October 13, my office was notified that the amendment I had submitted on time would not be appearing on the Order Paper for today due to the fact that it was not received by the Journals branch until Tuesday, October 11.

Realizing an error had been made, my office contacted the messenger service to seek verification of the time the amendment was picked up and delivered to the Journals branch. According to the messenger service—and I can table that as evidence if you require it, Mr. Speaker—our amendment was picked up by messenger at 10.26 a.m. on Friday, October 7, and was in fact delivered at 10.55 a.m.

I believe I complied as best I could with the conditions set out in the rules to ensure an amendment is provided to the Journals branch within the prescribed timeframe. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully request that given the unusual situation I have found myself in, you would consider accepting the amendment put forward as having met the requirements of the rules and that the House proceed with debating the amendment to Bill C–49 as if it had in fact appeared on today's Order Paper.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I thank the hon. member for Malpeque for his representation.

The hon. member raises a point of order in which he argues that he should not be penalized for an envelope leaving his office and not being received at the appropriate time at the other end, at the Journals branch.

The Speaker has verified that the information just given by the member for Malpeque is accurate. However it still places the Chair in a very delicate and unusual situation. Having verified those facts, as related once again by the member for Malpeque, I will allow the member for Malpeque to move his motion.

I would also take the opportunity to prevail on all hon. members to pay particular attention to the notice requirement for items to be placed on the notice paper. It is the responsibility of each individual member to ensure that items are not only sent but are actually received by the Journals branch by the deadline.

• (1205)

When members find themselves in the precarious situation of submitting items very close to the deadline, they may wish either to forewarn the Journals branch or table the items with table officers in the House.

Once again I thank the hon. member for Malpeque for his presentation.

Mr. Kerpan: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent in the House, at report stage of this bill, for me to

propose an amendment to clause 7 of Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I think there have been some discussions between the parties. In light of the fact that there was some problem with respect to notice and this bill, we are prepared to give consent to the hon. member to move an amendment at report stage. I understand there will be two amendments before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I say to the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre that unanimous consent has been given by the House. While we verify that the amendment is in order, I will begin with the amendment from the member for Malpeque and get back to his shortly thereafter.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C–49, in clause 7, be amended by replacing line 19, on page 2, with the following:

"before it are replaced by the following:

ANNUAL REPORT WITH ESTIMATES

6. The minister shall cause to be prepared a report showing the operation of the department for every fiscal year and shall include it with the Estimates for the Department for the second fiscal year following the fiscal year covered by the report, when the Estimates are laid before Parliament".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, could we get a written copy of the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Malpeque?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Yes, I understand. This document will be distributed as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Easter: Mr. Speaker, I have moved this amendment to Bill C–49 because I believe there is a need for direct accountability by the line department to the House of Commons and MPs by legislation. I do not believe that guidelines established under another act, in this case the Financial Administration Act, are enough. There must be direct responsibility from the line department itself.

There is involved here the principle of accountability and the principle that departments know they are directly, via legislation, responsible and accountable to MPs in the Chamber, not only in some roundabout way through the minister of a department, then to the minister of another department which may be Treasury Board, and then to the House. That is not a direct line of accountability.

• (1210)

When questioned by myself before the standing committee on agriculture Mr. Loken, special adviser to the assistant deputy minister, policy branch, had the following to say:

> The estimates are governed by specific Treasury Board guidelines, not legislation, that each department has to adhere to in deciding exactly what goes into the main estimates.

As I have indicated, I believe guidelines are not enough because guidelines can be changed easily. There has to be direct responsibility from the line department.

Another problem with the procedure is that without presenting an annual report the focus is on the estimates. Estimates are an intent to spend. I have seen it happen this year before the standing committee in terms of the estimates, part III. The report of the past spending of the department is there, but as members we tend to focus on where the future expenditures are to be. As a result there has not been enough discussion on the actual expenditures as compared to previous estimates.

As a former farm leader I have extensively used annual reports of departments and of agencies of departments. It is a good way for people in the community to find out what is going on, to see the structure of the department and basically to understand how things work. They were accessible.

People in the community relate to annual reports more so than estimates. As a result of that experience they ask for and receive annual reports and therefore can get into discussions on recommended changes in terms of policy surrounding the department based on the annual report.

There were one or two arguments put to the committee when it was dealing with the issue. The recommendation by the department to remove annual reports was based on the premise that they cost money and were irrelevant. If annual reports are irrelevant it is because we in the Chamber do not make them relevant. I believe we should make them so.

The other point put forward was that the information was already contained in the estimates, part III. I agree with that point to an extent. The department has argued that if they are in part III the department will be saved money by not requiring annual reports.

My amendment will not cost the department or the treasury of Canada any more money. My amendment ensures by legislation that the department through the minister is directly responsible to the House. The estimates now established in guidelines will be tabled before members of the House so that we can assume our responsibilities as good members of Parliament and ensure the departments we are in charge of administering in a roundabout way are accountable and responsible directly through us to the people of the country.

The purpose of my amendment to this clause is to ensure the line department is directly responsible to members of the House as a result. It should not cost any more money. It can be accomplished through the estimates in that way but it includes in this way the principle of direct accountability to the House.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): I remember clearly, Mr. Speaker, that, in committee, my colleague the hon. member for Lotbinière, here, behind me, had indeed suggested an amendment to Bill C–49 that went exactly along the lines of the one put forth by my hon. colleague from Malpeque. I can tell you that, if the government wants to show any degree of transparency, it must table an annual report in due course instead of hiding behind the pretext that it is going to increase costs by a few dollars. Producers are entitled to know where the money allocated to the Department of Agriculture is going.

As my colleague from Lotbinière indicated at the time, any company, however small, has to file an annual report with its shareholders. Non–profit organizations are bound by their charters to convene all their members and submit an annual report. In my municipality, not only does the Caisse populaire table an annual report, but it also seeks the widest participation possible from its members, organizing a great buffet and even drawing a cash door prize that keeps growing and growing to promote attendance.

I never understood why the Department of Agriculture keeps refusing so obstinately to officially table its annual report. This way, the entire Canadian agricultural community could see and check where the focus of the department is, where exactly the major part of its budget is going. Will one region be favoured at the expense of another? Will Quebec get—because in Quebec, agriculture is very diversified—its fair share in each of the areas that have been mentioned?

Will farming activities be fairly and equitably represented within the budget? Will most of the department's research and development funds be spent exclusively on studies on wheat, barley or corn with hardly any going to the dairy industry or maple syrup?

For all these reasons, I think that the department should listen, that the government should listen carefully to my hon. colleague from Malpeque and adopt this amendment to Bill C–49. I am convinced that studying this annual report will enable farm organization officials to identify future trends and could prove a most interesting forecasting tool for their members.

Therefore, my hon. colleague, who chairs the agriculture joint committee with me, can count on the support of the Bloc Quebecois on his amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my full support to the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Malpeque. When I first saw Bill C–49, that clause was certainly one of my big concerns.

Since we Reformers have come to Ottawa, we have talked a lot about accountability. Any move away from accountability would in my opinion be a mistake.

If you look at the costs of annual reports, certainly there is some increased cost. However any time you have the opportunity to hold any department, minister or any government for that matter accountable, as members of the House we should take that opportunity. We have discussed this among ourselves at the committee level. It is an amendment that we are pleased to support at this time.

• (1220)

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on the amendment of the member for Malpeque.

First, to be very clear, I do not feel that the amendment is necessary. We certainly accept and understand the concerns of the member. I understand the concerns of members opposite. There is no question that in part III of the main estimates all of this is done.

The Financial Administration Act requires that Parliament authorize all payments out of the consolidated revenue fund. If Parliament is not satisfied with the information that is provided to support the spending estimates of departments, it can refuse to appropriate funds on request. This gives Parliament effective control over public spending and information used to justify that spending.

As we know the standing committee has a major impact on the information provided in part III of the main estimates which for all departments has replaced annual reports.

We must remember that the soonest annual reports come out after the completion of a fiscal year is eight to ten months. The legislation requires them and it is eight to ten months after the fact. By that time the estimates are also in progress. The estimates include everything that has always been in an annual report. I think the challenge for the committees, whether it be agriculture or other standing committees, is to do a better job and better understand the main estimates when they are discussed. After reading part III of the main estimates, we have a chance to talk about what has happened, what the estimates are for this year and what is the direction for years to come.

The member for Frontenac said that organizations in the province of Quebec have an annual report. I do not question that they have an annual report. However, I question whether they

have main estimates and the progression of a document like that available to us here.

The question is whether it is necessary to retain a reference to the reporting requirement and when it would not be feasible. It would not be feasible to legislate under an annual report. If what is in an annual report is legislated, every time somebody wanted to change the types of things that were in an annual report there would have to be changes in legislation. That is certainly not feasible and not in the interests of time when we already have all of this available.

I think we have an opportunity here to do an even better job than has been done in the past. We can do it and save money and avoid duplication.

I recommend that we leave the bill as it is and suggest that the amendment of my hon. colleague is not necessary.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on the difference of opinion between the parliamentary secretary and the hon. member for Malpeque. In this case I clearly support the hon. member for Malpeque. He is looking for more accountability from the government. I do not believe that anybody in the House should be opposed to that.

In terms of what the parliamentary secretary said with regard to part III of the estimates providing all the information that is necessary to make the government accountable, I disagree fully with that. I challenge any member on the other side of the House to sit with me and answer my questions about part III of the estimates, especially when it comes to connecting part III of the estimates with part II. There is a big gap there. You cannot make the connection with the information that is given.

• (1225)

I challenge any of those members to answer the questions I put to them with regard to connecting part II and part III of the estimates. I believe that the parliamentary secretary and the party opposite should allow this amendment to go ahead. It will improve accountability. The argument of the parliamentary secretary that these reports are not available for eight to ten months, or have not been in the past, does not carry any weight with me.

If they have not been done quickly enough in the past let us change the rules. Let us make the report available at the same time as the estimates, very quickly. I would hope the report would be much more complete than reports have been in the past. I would hope it would include enough information to make that connection between part II and part III of the estimates so that we in the House and people across the country can truly understand how the department is spending the money. Now it is certainly unclear no matter how much study you do in this area.

I strongly support the hon. member for Malpeque in his amendment. I hope the government will not refuse the accountability we need in this House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to give my opinion on the Standing Committee on Agriculture, in view of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Malpeque.

Just a moment ago, it was pointed out that organizations, too, prepare estimates, and that they also must give an annual accounting. I would point out that the vast machinery of government includes committees, such as the Standing Committee on Agriculture, and that it is very important that this committee submit a report to members of Parliament once a year so that farm producers can see where the money has been spent.

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary is afraid of transparency. I say give us all the facts so that we may examine them and understand them. I agree that an annual report should be tabled here in Parliament, because this is where decisions originate, and as Members of Parliament we have the right to an annual report.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair that the hon. member for Malpeque is putting this amendment before the House. He has sought to draw attention to a very significant problem that he perceives in the legislation.

I want to say at the outset that the notion of accountability to Parliament is one that is central to everyone's thinking in this House and rightly so. It is a very important concept and a very important principle that ought to be upheld on all occasions.

I want to draw on the following experience if the member opposite will not take it in an insulting way. I do not intend it that way. Since my election in 1988 there has been a change in the reporting requirements for various departments to Parliament.

These changes were implemented by the last government. As the hon. member knows, I opposed most of its policies. In the case of the changes with respect to the annual reports I was supportive. The reason was because in my view they were a waste of the taxpayers' dollars.

Parliament was receiving in part III of the estimates not just spending plans but detailed reports on the way the department was spending the money that it had to account for during the past year.

I cannot speak for the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food because I do not pretend to have read part III of the estimates for the department of agriculture. Most of the depart-

ments deliberately beefed up or improved their part IIIs. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food tells me that agriculture led the way. Great. I am unfamiliar with those particular estimates. Most of them and the ones that I dealt with beefed up their part IIIs to make them better so there was full accounting given in part III of the estimates. Therefore the necessity for an annual report simply disappeared.

Annual reports, interesting as they may be and impressive as they may look with lots of glossy pictures of the minister handing out money or congratulating some group, as many of them used to do, had their place but frankly they were expensive. It cost a great deal to produce and to print them. The previous government eliminated them by order in council for those departments that did not have a statutory requirement to produce an annual report to Parliament.

• (1230)

In the case of the agriculture department, the requirement was in the statute. We are seeking in the amendments today, not the amendment moved by the hon. member but in the amendments to the act, to delete the requirement that the department provide an annual report to Parliament. Most other departments have eliminated that requirement. All we are doing is bringing agriculture in line with the other departments by this bill.

Given that, it is reasonable to propose to Parliament that we are providing the information in part III so why reprint it in a different format and pay people to redraft it and reprint at public expense for no good reason. The information is in part III. Parliament gets the information when the estimates are tabled annually and we have to approve those estimates in committee and in the House.

Therefore members get an opportunity to review the draft. They can see the part IIIs. There is a draft supply bill where they can move amendments and so on. I know hon. members may argue that perhaps our control over supply is not what it could be, but that is a separate argument for another day. The fact is the material is being provided to Parliament in the part IIIs. If there are specific inadequacies in those part IIIs the information can be elicited in committee. The agriculture committee has the power to call witnesses before it from the department at will, including the minister, and demand additional information.

The intent of the amendment to uphold the integrity of the House and its primacy in terms of reporting requirements for departments is a good one. Frankly however I think it is unnecessary for the reasons given by the parliamentary secretary in his very able argument and because of what I believe to have been the experience members who have been here a little longer have had. That is we have not lost the accountability process or diminished it in any way by relying on part IIIs instead of on annual reports.

I invite members to consider that as we come to a vote on this matter. I would ask when the question is put that it be negatived on division. I believe you will find there is agreement that that be so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to support the hon. member's motion calling for the annual report on agriculture to be submitted to Parliament. I think that this practice is totally appropriate and should be maintained.

Of course, part III of the Estimates on agriculture may contain data which is repeated in the annual report, but the information in the annual report is more detailed and more accessible to the people concerned by agricultural issues. It is an additional tool available to those who wish to know more about economic agricultural issues.

So I think it is quite appropriate to continue publishing the annual report, especially for this department with rather significant expenditures. This desire to stop issuing the annual report on agriculture reminds me of how reluctant this Liberal government is to show openness. An example of this can be found in the Department of Public Works where it is very difficult to access information. Of course, the minister will tell us that the information exists, that it is published somewhere, but it is very difficult to access it.

I also fear that this desire to stop publishing the Department of Agriculture's annual report is somewhat consistent with this government's lack of openness. I think that all the actions taken by the government to make information more accessible to the general public and the stakeholders must not be seen as a waste of money.

In conclusion, I think that the government should continue publishing its annual report on the Department of Agriculture.

[*English*]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate with some interest, particularly the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader's rather lengthy argument against the need for more accountability in this House.

• (1235)

He mentioned there were a number of new members in the House and perhaps their lack of experience was the reason they might support more accountability. I assure you that for those of us who are new to the House, we have found the review of the estimates to be a very frustrating process. Of course, very little

occurs out of the review of the estimates. Anyway, if changes do occur in committee it is all reverted when it comes back to the House and the government has its way.

Another concern is that while the estimates are being reviewed by committee that issue is not open for debate in the Chamber itself. However, a report could actually be tabled much earlier and could give us more time to prepare for the estimates. If a report is tabled it certainly is open for debate and may hold the government more accountable for the actions of that department.

I hope that in light of the communication members of the Liberal Party sent to Canadians through their red book that they wanted to open this place up, make it more accountable and rebuild the trust with Canadians that they will support any measure which will make us the elected representatives of the people more accountable to them. I support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Malpeque.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak in support of this amendment.

The amendment by the hon. member for Malpeque speaks to something Canadians find increasingly frustrating in dealing with governments. It is this idea of a lack of accountability or the lack of the proper procedure. All members have a huge volume of estimate literature in their offices which, except perhaps for the people who wrote the documents, is hard to understand.

The motion is straightforward. It is a very sound idea which has a good deal of common sense. It just asks that a report be filed from the department to address the very concerns people have about the estimates and the fact that they are so difficult to understand.

At the Reform Party convention this past weekend we passed a motion that we would like the government also to follow up on this whole idea of a standardized accounting practice as recommended by the Auditor General. That would make this whole effort more understandable in its entirety. As a first step, this amendment is plausible, very realistic. It should receive support from all sides of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like a recorded vote on this motion to amend Bill C–49.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

• (1240)

We will now proceed to the amendment by the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre. The amendment has been ruled in order. I would ask the member to read his amendment.

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to place an amendment before the House regarding Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other acts. I move:

Motion No. 2

That clause 6 be amended by striking out line 17 on page 2 and substituting the following:

"any inspection powers, duties or functions".

This amendment is necessary for a very simple but important reason. The bill must clearly indicate in layman's terms what the inspection powers of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food really are. Clause 6 now reads:

The minister may designate any person as an inspector for the purpose of providing the inspection services that the minister considers necessary for the enforcement of any act in respect of which the minister has any powers, duties or functions.

The problem I have with this particular wording is that there is a potential conflict between the intent and the interpretation of the clause. As it stands it could be interpreted to give the minister the power to appoint inspectors for the enforcement of any act for which he is responsible. The wording is not precise or exacting enough to limit the appointment of inspectors by the minister to those acts which already have inspection clauses in them. I know this is the intent of the clause and this has been explained to us by the minister's officials.

However, the open ended and loose wording gives rise to another possible interpretation which follows. I believe there are some 35 acts under the minister's jurisdiction right now. Some have asked me if this clause gives the power to the minister to appoint inspectors at his whim and fancy for all of those acts. If so it is hard to visualize any support for this clause. We do not need or want the minister to have such powers. We already have officials in our society who are responsible to

enforce regulations, laws, standards and to provide inspection services.

Therefore the intent and the interpretation of the clause could and should be harmonized, in my view, for the satisfaction of both legal minds and lay people. I suggest that my amendment would accomplish this.

All I am asking is that we put the word inspection into the clause one more time. My amendment to clause 6 has been carefully stated in the House. This amended wording makes sense because it clarifies what the intent of the clause is and eliminates any possibility, in my mind at least, of potential expansion of the minister's powers to appoint inspectors to any act under his jurisdiction. Such appointments would be needless, redundant and dangerous.

I therefore ask the House for its support of this amendment.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on the hon. member's amendment to clause 6 of Bill C–49.

The minister already has the power to designate inspectors under other legislation the minister administers. This change, taken in conjunction with clause 18 in Bill C–49, merely allows the minister to designate inspectors under the Food and Drugs Act. The Minister of Health can also appoint inspectors as well as the Minister of Industry with whom the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food shares the responsibility for the administration of the Food and Drugs Act.

The authority to inspect comes from individual acts, not from the minister. That is what we need to point out here. The amendment gets very restrictive and does not state what it is possible to do under the act. The minister can appoint an inspector. The minister cannot be as specific and restrictive as this amendment states. The authority to inspect comes in the individual acts that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food administers, such as the Food and Drugs Act, the Meat Inspection Act, the Canadian Agriculture Products Act. The inspection powers that are given to the minister must be done in general terms in order to ensure that it applies to the inspection provisions of such acts as the Food and Drugs Act.

• (1245)

I must remind the members that if it is made this restrictive it can be costly, it can be absolutely too restrictive. An inspector's duties are outlined in other acts and we must remember that inspectors have many more duties than inspect because they might have to make recommendations and determinations on what further action goes on from there.

We must be very careful that we do not tie the activities of inspectors or the activities of the minister. The bill allows the minister appointments through other acts which give the inspectors their jurisdictions and their activities from there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, clause 6 of Bill C–49 has only six lines. If you allow me, I shall read them:

> 6. The minister may designate any person as an inspector for the purpose of providing the inspection services that the minister considers necessary for the enforcement of any act in respect of which the minister has any powers, duties or functions.

What my Reform Party colleague is asking the Joint Committee on Agriculture and, in fact, what he is suggesting is pretty much the same, except that instead of any powers, duties or functions, it specifies inspection powers, duties or functions. The Bloc Quebecois cannot oppose that because it specifies the role of inspectors and their powers and duties, as well as the amount of leeway they will have in the performance of their duties. In closing, the only thing I would wish is to avoid duplication, like sending two inspectors to check more or less the same thing, as we can see now in the Department of Agriculture or other similar departments.

So I can assure my colleague in the Reform Party that for the good of agriculture, the Bloc Quebecois will support the Reform Party's amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the amendment to the bill by my hon. colleague, the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre. It only makes common sense that we clarify what is the role of the inspectors in relation to their being appointed and given a task by the minister of agriculture. That only makes sense.

My argument was reinforced by the hon. parliamentary secretary for the minister of agriculture who indicated that in other pieces of legislation, other acts, these powers are already specified.

Why should they not be specified in this act as well? It only makes sense. It is logical. It harmonizes with existing legislation that is already in place. The disconcerting part of it is that if we pass such a broadly worded clause in this act it may apply to future acts in which the minister has no business appointing any inspectors to deal and meddle around in the affairs of producers.

I am really concerned about the open endedness of this act. I am also concerned that the department of agriculture is already rather large, perhaps one bureaucrat to every three to five producers who are out there working. It looks to me like perhaps this is a make work project for more inspectors where they are perhaps not needed, crossing from one act to another.

It only makes sense. I would appeal to the government to respect the wisdom that comes from this side of the House and let us not make a fuss, let us simply adopt a good common sense amendment to the bill.

• (1250)

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a very brief comment in support of my colleague's amendment to this piece of legislation and I would really like to express a concern that I have with regard to the government's resistance to accountability and its resistance to clarification in this act.

I am really upset that it is not willing to accept better accountability and in the case of this amendment clarification which is clearly justified and which the parliamentary secretary has said is there in other acts. I hope this amendment will be accepted by those on both sides of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you as well as the hon. member. I have to say that I appreciate it when things are clear and precise, and I think that the amendment tabled by the Reform Party will help us have a better idea of what is involved and, consequently, help us review and manage more efficiently. Therefore, I think this is a very good amendment and I will support it.

[*English*]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, again it is a pleasure to rise on debate and for a change it seems we have a real debate in the House. We have reasoned proposals, in this case from both sides of the House. We get to debate back and forth with a give and take that I had hoped would be more common in the House of Commons. It has been a good exercise and I hope the government is listening attentively.

We should realize the intent of this amendment is to clarify and to specify the powers that the minister would have. It is not an effort to take away or make the minister ineffective. It is only an effort to clarify the powers that he would have.

I would like to point out the necessity of this. We think back even just a few weeks ago of a case where a producer had his records seized. Someone came right into his home, seized his records and used what in essence was another department or another agency as an excuse to enter someone's home, confiscate their records on the chance there might be something in there and really indirectly get at a producer who is trying to get some work done, get some sales done.

Whenever we have inspection services or other intrusive government policies, some of which we all admit are necessary, they need to be very specific because if they are not they can be used in a roundabout way to affect producers in a negative fashion.

I would hope that the government and the members on the government side would realize that this amendment is not an effort to take away all the powers of the minister. It is merely an effort to specify those powers so that producers, people within the department of agriculture covered by these 35 acts that were spoken of earlier will all know what those powers are. I would support this motion. I think it is an excellent one and I have enjoyed the debate. I hope the government side has been listening closely.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

An hon. member: On division.

• (1255)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. The Chair wants to be perfectly clear that the motion is agreed to on division.

Mr. Boudria: Defeated on division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Defeated on division. The hon. government whip is very alert after this one week of recess.

(Motion No. 2 negatived.)

Is the House ready to proceed to the deferred division?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In an effort of co–operation I wonder if the House would agree to deem the first motion to have been negatived on division as well, notwithstanding the request of earlier this day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I will ask the opposite side of the House to give its own indication as to whether it accepts the proposal of the hon. government whip or wants the deferred division to be taken at a later time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I think we can defer the division until tomorrow. I propose that the division be deferred until tomorrow; however, there is no going back to the decision made a little earlier during the day.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The vote will be deferred until tomorrow. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): That is to the amendment by the member for Malpeque. The motion will be deferred until tomorrow.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, if we are not proceeding to the bells at this moment, I have to request a specific time for tomorrow, which I will now do; the vote to be at the ordinary time of adjournment of government orders tomorrow, in other words approximately 5.30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY ACT

The House resumed from September 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C–46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; of the amendment; and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): When Bill C–46 was last before the House, the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine had 10 minutes remaining in the questions and comments period.

Should anyone wish to direct comments or ask questions to the hon. parliamentary secretary, he is in the House. If not we will resume debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss the amendment to the amendment tabled by the hon. member for Edmonton Northwest and say that I oppose it. This new amendment nullifies the amendment proposed by the Bloc Quebecois member for Trois–Rivières to oppose second reading of this bill in order to emphasize the provinces' exclusive jurisdiction regarding regional development.

As we have said many times, duplication and overlapping within the federal administration as well as between the two levels of government result in useless and costly spending for Canadian and Quebec taxpayers. We seriously doubt that this bill will reduce this waste since the main principles underlying this legislation aim at maintaining the status quo between the respective mandates of the various departments, while regrouping them.

If we go through the exercise of creating a new department, then why not ensure unity and harmony among the various measures taken by this new department, so as to make them more efficient and cost effective. We are under the impression that this exercise is only done for cosmetic reasons and that there is no will to make true changes.

During the election campaign, the Liberal government bragged about implementing a single–window concept to improve its services and to reduce waste in the public service. The government had a unique opportunity to restructure its various departments, make savings in the process, and keep the largest possible number of civil servants to provide a better service to its clientele. Now, this government will have to demonstrate that such a structure does indeed result in savings.

For example, in this context, an information centre for businesses has been set up in Montreal. This centre will of course improve customer services, but was there not already a provincial structure which could have agreed to give the business community in Quebec relevant information without any duplication? We are once again creating a parallel structure and we doubt whether this will generate any savings within the federal government machinery.

• (1300)

If we want to rationalize government expenditures, we must review our structures within the context of all existing tools provided for by the provinces and target only areas of federal jurisdiction. In my opinion, the Auditor General of Canada would be the very person to make suggestions since, year after year, he has been highlighting changes that could be made in some of the departments in order that public funds be spent more efficiently.

I believe we are entitled to require that any further restructuring of the federal machinery proposed by the Liberal government here in this House results in savings for Canadians and Quebecers.

As Bill C–46 also extends the powers of the Minister to regional development areas, I would like to take this opportunity to touch on a point of crucial importance in my view. As Bloc Quebecois critic for regional development, Western Quebec, I object to Bill C–46 as it reads now because it contains no provision that would put an end to duplication and overlapping in regional development and allow Quebec and Ontario to take full and exclusive responsibility for their own regional economic development.

First, why is Ontario and Quebec development not governed by a specific bill such as the one on the Department of Western Economic Diversification or the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency?

If the Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec were to be established pursuant to specific legislation, it would be easier to see the powers, duties and functions of the minister in charge and the related objectives.

Regional development agencies were a way for the federal government to compensate for the effects of uneven economic growth in various areas of the country, while it looked at improving the most competitive sectors or strengthening the most efficient, in particular those focused on export markets. In many cases the program was solely a band–aid solution for areas with non–performing economies. In short, the regional development program was designed to limit damage in remote areas

where investment was scarce or to try to generate new growth dynamics.

Part II of the bill contains nice and sound objectives that the minister should achieve, as we can see on page 4:

> (*a*) promote economic development in areas of Ontario and Quebec where low incomes and slow economic growth are prevalent or where opportunities for productive employment are inadequate;
>
> (*b*) emphasize long-term economic development and sustainable employment and income creation; and
>
> (*c*) focus on small and medium-sized enterprises and the development and enhancement of entrepreneurial talent.

I think that it would be an achievement if, over the next ten years, the Federal Office of Regional Development which, under this bill, is to come under the authority of the Minister of Industry were to reach and maintain these objectives in our regions. The truth is they were never really achieved efficiently and the effectiveness of the program has been declining in the last few years. For example, regions like mine are short of investment money, the main tool to influence the development in a given area. It is important to make available enough money to provide investors and business people with the necessary levers.

With reduced budgets—which will be further reduced with the new reform—and a decision-making structure that does not permit the targetting of priorities defined by the regions, how can the FORD(Q) be taken seriously?

Second, why is the minister not taking the opportunity to include in the bill the will to harmonize his regional development programs with those of the provinces? In Quebec, policies aimed at shifting decision-making powers to regional development councils, which were initiated under the Liberal government and pursued by the Quebec Premier, Mr. Parizeau, who recently announced the appointment of regional delegates whith a mandate to receive the regions' specific requests, are examples of how research, and awareness of grassroot concerns can lead to greater efficiency and better use of the money still available.

• (1305)

People in the regions know full well that the federal and provincial governments have no money to waste. Therefore, the desire on the part of the minister to harmonize his programs with those of the provinces would be for him a step toward making every development dollar count and, eventually, to realize that numbers show that the best way would be to transfer these sums to the provinces, thus eliminating duplication and overlapping.

Depending on where they live, Quebecers have a different vision of what regional development should be.

Whenever decision-makers and entrepreneurs are able to channel their efforts in the same direction, they achieve great success. The Beauce area is often given as an example of this. This area has benefited from the presence of risk-taking entrepreneurs and from a lot of investments. Not all regions have access to the same amount of capital to allow developers to stimulate the economy. The situation in my riding illustrates perfectly how financial needs can vary.

The main economic activities in the riding of Abitibi are forestry and mining. In the forestry area, while saw-mills, paper mills and finished products industries are keeping up with the new technology and are able to finance it, reforestation and tree-growing companies are having a hard time and would deserve to be helped.

All these businesses are interconnected and must co-ordinate their activities if they are to develop harmoniously. There are the big companies which, tomorrow, will need the timber which the forestry industry has had to grow and develop at an increasingly quicker pace as the industry unfortunately has to cope with an extremely meager timber stock. Forest management, needless to say, was not always a priority in the past.

I think this shows that regional development is not easy if priorities are not in line with the region's economy.

Another example of regional development, which concerns my own riding and probably many ridings in Northern Ontario and this applies to my previous example as well—is developing the mining industry.

Mining is, in fact, restricted to certain regions in Quebec and Ontario, so that regional development in this sector follows the same pattern. It is said, for instance, that mining and forestry are specific to the northern regions of Quebec and Ontario. These industries give a very good return on investment, but the problem is that exploration requires vast amounts of capital.

My point is that regional development in my riding could focus on the mining industry, for instance, but to be successful, there would have to be a consensus among the parties concerned, to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available.

Finally, to prove my point that action must be focussed and that the provinces should be responsible for regional development, I would like to read what former Quebec Premier Jean Lesage had to say here in Ottawa at the federal-provincial conference from July 19 to 22, 1965. That was quite a few years ago.

Mr. Lesage said that to be effective, regional development policies had to meet three conditions: be adapted to the specific needs of the regions; be implemented by the government in the best position to do so; and reflect the general economic and social policy of the government of the province where the regions are located. Adapting such policies to Quebec's regional needs would seem difficult to achieve at the federal level.

This was 1965, and things may not have changed much since then.

Mr. Lesage also said that the Government of Quebec was in the best position—I may recall this was said by a Liberal Premier—to implement a truly effective regional policy.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. member, who once again dismisses the achievements of the Government of Canada with respect to regional economic development. No amounts were given, no reference made to what has been done in his sector.

When I hear the mining industry mentioned, I ask myself how many millions Noranda, to take an example, has received from the federal government in regional development incentives.

• (1310)

Forestry also comes to mind, companies like Tembeck, Stone Consolidated, Abitibi Price. We could also mention the famous 33 per cent investment tax credit given to companies who invest in the regions. You invest $10 million and the government of Canada gives you a 33 per cent tax break. This is taxpayers' money being used to encourage regional economic development that the opposition unfortunately refuses to recognize.

I can give you an example. I have just come from Îles–de–la–Madeleine, where there is a company called Les entreprises Léo A. Leblanc in which the Federal Office of Regional Development has invested $79,600. This is a grant, not a loan. It must be pointed out, however, that thanks to the intervention of the Canadian government, a new job–creation project has come to fruition, that will see this company's activities focus on the export market. Now, the company is even taking small vessels from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia for repair in Îles–de–la–Madeleine. In fact, the company owner told me that, because of the investment by the government of Canada in this project, he has been able to expand.

I could mention all sorts of projects. There is, of course, the off–set program for fishermen and factory workers, whereby the government of Canada is going to invest close to $5 million in new fishing technologies, including aquiculture.

There is also the last report, the Eastern Quebec Forestry Development Program. Forgive me, I realize that I am not supposed to show documents as part of a debate. Nevertheless, the government aided forestry workers in 1983 and has continued to do so to this day, although the program is currently under review. But I dare the opposition to find one of the 6,000 affected workers to speak out against the federal investment program for reforestation and providing support to forestry professionals in either construction start or silviculture. I would say that the government of Canada has taken its responsibilities.

In fact, more and more of these forestry workers are asking that the federal government remain involved. Apparently, this would be the only program suited to forestry workers. No one has come out and said that the government of Canada should back out of its responsibilities. The federal government is here. We are there for these 6,000 workers.

There is also the Federal Business Development Bank. On the subject of Quebec institutions, did you know that we have the Caisse populaire Desjardins in the Gaspé Peninsula, with a $500 million reserve made up of the savings of the Gaspé people, but very little of this money is actually invested back in the community. So, it is thanks to loan guarantees given by the government of Canada that financial institutions like this one re–invest in the community.

I think that, instead of telling stories of overlapping, the hon. member should review the matter thoroughly, looking at every investment we have made these past few years. Take my word for it, Mr. Speaker, we have the federal investments to thank, because this government listens to the community and decided to invest not only in these particular industries but also in the future of the regions.

This government's objective—and my reason for representing the riding of Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine here, as the only government member east of Trois–Rivières—is to maintain a federal presence because this presence is welcome and indeed desirable in terms of regional economic development.

Mr. Deshaies: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for making a few points I may have omitted, but I would like to point out that my remarks apply to the new Bill C–46, through which the Department of Industry will take over, so to speak, the Federal Office of Regional Development. I said in my little speech that I would have liked the bill to contain clauses underscoring the advantages of letting each province, Ontario and Quebec in particular in this case, choose where and how to invest federal government funds.

• (1315)

It is true that in the past, the work done by the Federal Office of Regional Development was highly regarded in various regions including mine, but when the hon. member indicates that the forestry people were very happy with the federal government's role in reforestation efforts, I would like to say that my region benefited very little from this project.

We hear that, with the upcoming cutbacks, the Federal Office will not inject any more money into private industries. The new policies do not provide any money for the tourism industry for one thing. I wonder how the amounts will be set to help a region like mine when it needs money precisely for forestry, while forest resources are already scarce. If we do not have enough money for tourist facilities—and we are told this is not a

government priority— how can we help my region—and not the Lac–Saint–Jean region where they may not need as much money for tourism because they already have good facilities? How can we be address specific needs when the government sets priorities for us?

The federal government's goal is to help the regions but this approach, instead of showing good will, simply hampers development. I do not know whether I should say something else on this subject for the hon. member's benefit, but I think that if this bill had let the provinces and especially the regions choose how to achieve their own development, I think we would have been much more likely to support this bill. However, given the bill's current wording, because it does not say anything about the need to adapt to specific regional needs, as Mr. Lesage used to say, I think that we cannot support it.

[*English*]

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when I hear the member from the official opposition describe his riding, it sounds very similar to mine in British Columbia.

In lieu of the previous speaker's comments regarding regional programs being run by the provinces and his stated view that that was the way to go, can the hon. member please explain why the Bloc amendment is specific to Quebec as opposed to being applicable to all of the provinces in Canada?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deshaies: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer this question as well as I can. Instead of limiting my colleague's amendment to Quebec, it could be limited to Quebec and Ontario, since in Bill C–46, the Federal Office of Regional Development applies only to Ontario and Quebec.

Also in your question, you said that your riding was like mine.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. I just want to remind you to address your comments and statements to the Chair and not directly to each other.

Mr. Deshaies: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I would like to point out to the Chair that the hon. member asked me why the Bloc Quebecois's amendment was limited to Quebec when it could have applied to Ontario as well and even to all the provinces of Canada.

Why? Because Bill C–46 is applied by the Federal Office of Regional Development only in Quebec and Ontario. Also, I would like to say to the hon. member, who lives in a region like mine, that they may be better served if they have a different development agency covered by a different law. The development projects in his riding may be better run; in my riding, the Federal Office of Regional Development has some good initiatives, of course, but through Bill C–46, we want the Department of Industry to decentralize and blend its ideas with those of the provincial agency, especially for regional initiatives, to make better use of the money invested.

• (1320)

[*English*]

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to contribute to second reading debate on Bill C–46, an act to establish the Department of Industry.

The bill will establish in law the new Department of Industry that was created in June 1993 by the former administration. While always a powerful ministry historically run by a powerful minister, this new Department of Industry is an amalgamation of the former Department of Industry, Science and Technology Canada, the former Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the telecommunication side of the Department of Communications and Investment Canada.

The Reform Party has two major objections, beginning with clause 13(1), part I, of the bill. This clause gives the minister full rein over shaping industries to suit special needs of certain industrial or commercial establishments, organizations or persons who are members of a particular category of persons defined by order of the governor in council. I will develop our concerns regarding this issue a little later.

Our second area of concern surrounds part II of the legislation, regional economic development in Ontario and Quebec. The bill places responsibility for Quebec and Ontario under the Minister of Industry. This should be interesting. Would I like to be at the cabinet table listening to deliberations?

In any event before I focus more directly on these two major concerns with the legislation I would like to put this exercise of departmental chair shuffling into an historical framework. I think this is a worthwhile exercise in view of this latest attempt via Bill C–46 to bring some continuity and focus to the disparate nature of this department, in particular its responsibilities, focus and scope of activity.

The industry responsibilities within the Canadian government really date back, for the sake of our examination, to the late C.D. Howe and the department of trade and commerce and its main operating division of the department of defence production. Those were the days of the dollar a year people, the C.D. Howe recruitments who kept Canada's materiel infrastructure running during World War II. C.D. was a powerful minister who ran a clearly powerful department with tentacles of influence, not only during World War II but up until the 1960s in many other departments.

The department of trade and commerce not only held sway in Ottawa but also controlled the regional development side. By the 1960s the industrial and commercial dynamics were changing in Canada and the beginning of constant change in the industry portfolio was taking hold.

In the early 1960s the government created the Department of Industry. The then deputy minister, Simon Reisman, began recruiting advocates for industry from the business community. Some of these business people were competent, some were not as we hear. Terrible infighting ensued between these new young business types in the existing career civil service within the department. The department meandered around looking for stability, purpose and reason for approximately eight years.

In 1968 because of this constant bickering over what the focus should be, either an advocate for business or a policy maker, the then administration created the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The operative word and function in this new arrangement was obviously the inclusion of trade in this new dynamic. Now we have the career commerce people, the business advocates from industry and the traders. This is quite an arrangement of personalities, agendas and egos.

• (1325)

In most of the disagreements that ensued over what the department was supposed to do, the industry advocates usually won. However, another merger was on the horizon. That was the advent of DREE. In the early seventies the department of regional economic expansion became a hotbed of politics, largesse, monument building and subsequent turf wars.

This new department focused on regional development first in the Atlantic provinces, soon after in Quebec and slowly through Ontario and as far west as Saskatchewan. That is where the DREE gravy train stopped. Alberta and B.C. were considered too rich to participate in these economic expansion schemes. The politicians representing those two provinces had no clout in the Commons or at the cabinet table.

Two interesting twists within DREE were two programs, ARDA and special ARDA. The former ARDA, agricultural and rural development agency, dealt with regional development opportunities and special ARDA was responsible for native economic development opportunities and employment initiatives.

To many, DREE was more than a series of questionable funding projects, from Michelin Corp. in Nova Scotia to Bricklin Inc. cars and Mitel switching equipment, all funded by DREE. Again turf wars ensued but the money flowed like water to the project of the month.

After the DREE period we had another merger. This new department known as DRIE, the department of regional industrial expansion, again had lots of money to throw around mostly through a program known as the industrial research development program. At the same time the trade component was moved to external affairs to complicate it more. It was a time of good old style patronage with a tinge of legitimate cutting edge technological development.

Some time in the mid to late 1980s, with the science envelope evoking worldwide opportunities, the department was renamed industry, science and technology. At this time the agriculture, fish and food component was transferred to Agriculture Canada.

The department was becoming fragmented, faced with constant change and constantly eroding capabilities. Forces were scattered and the usual turf wars continued. In the wisdom of the former administration, another change was made and the government created the department of industry. That is why we are here today continuing the revolving door instability and constant quest for change in the hope of getting it right.

We have come full circle and returned to the early paragraphs of my address.

I would like to focus now on our objections to Bill C–46. Let me look first at the always troublesome regional development side. Bill C–46 clearly indicates that the minister will look after Ontario and Quebec. Currently no one is sure who looks after Ontario, but make no mistake about it. The Minister of Finance, not industry, looks after Quebec at this time.

We have no problem with the Minister of Industry assuming responsibility for Quebec and Ontario, but what about the rest of Canada? This bill continues the balkanization of the rest of the country. The squeaking wheel continues to get the grease. I wonder which of the three ministers responsible for regional development really holds the grease: the Minister of Human Resources Development for the Western Diversification Office, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services for ACOA, the Allan MacEachen of the 1990s, or the Minister of Industry now responsible for Quebec and Ontario.

• (1330)

What a mess: a department for Ontario and Quebec, a department for the west in WDO, and a corporation acting like a department at ACOA. It may not be a department for the minister of public works at ACOA but I am told that the minister of public works will expunge the name Allan MacEachen from the lexicon of the east coast largesse dictionary. He is on a roll and this mishmash arrangement is sure to cause more regional strife.

The position of the Reform Party on regional development is that it should be eliminated so that all areas of Canada are treated equally. We want to get rid of a system where conflicts rise between ministers who are supposed to choose in the

interests of the country nationally but choose regionally due to their regional development responsibilities.

The legislation ensures that bias and regionalism continues. In part IV of the bill powers are granted under subclause 13(1) to the Minister of Industry, which could be construed to mean that the minister and the department can engage in central planning of the economy, far beyond the more sensible approach of letting industry choose the equilibrium and letting experts run their own affairs. State run involvement, as subclause 13(1) seems to indicate, is anathema to good business management and we oppose it.

The Reform Party values initiatives and enterprise. We do not see the government role as being responsible for fostering and protecting an environment in which initiative and enterprise can be exercised by individuals and groups.

In most reorganizations and rationalizations in the private sector, which is the real world, business makes these changes to downsize, to save money and to improve profit margins. In the case of government and Bill C–46 we have amalgamated four departments. One could realistically expect staff reductions. From a total of 6,000 employees we will see a reduction of 230 staff members, probably through attrition. What level of public servant are we talking about?

Another dynamic of rationalization, as I have said, is cost saving. Out of a $3 billion budget it is estimated that department spending will be reduced by $26 million or less than 1 per cent. The bill lacks any coherent vision of industrial strategy. It fosters regional economic development initiatives against a backdrop of vague national strategies.

The bill continues the saga of reorganization for the sake of reorganization in a constant quest to get it right. It confirms that the Minister of Industry and the government share a Tory vision of industrial strategy. After all, it is a Tory initiative.

The bill continues the interventionist role of government, the flawed notion that government sets the course and business steers it. Free market principles and fairness for all should be the hallmark of our industrial strategy.

I hear the infighting has already started at the new department. It has even spilled over to the Department of National Resources, whose employees are looking for something to do and are sticking their noses into the new department's business. It is business as usual at the C. D. Howe building. Too bad C. D. Howe is not around.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice that the Reform Party member could find nothing positive in this piece of legislation. He did not comment on the fact that it was a major effort in streamlining a department of government.

The Reform Party is always talking about making sure we eliminate duplication and making sure we eliminate waste. The reorganization of the department of industry goes a long way toward meeting those objectives.

• (1335)

There is absolutely no infighting going on. In fact most people in the department of industry are very excited about the ongoing reorganization. We are especially excited that through the department of industry we will be giving the Federal Business Development Bank added support over the next while, which is something most Reform members support. We have also given the tourism section of the department an added boost.

The member is not being balanced in his remarks when he claims that the reorganization is not meeting any of the objectives. However I am sure in time the member will see that we are on the right path.

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, my view of the bill is obviously very different from that of the member who just spoke. This is a cosmetic, housekeeping bill, and there is nothing substantial in it.

I explained the minor savings associated with the bill. The only thing I can say about the excitement level in these departments is that it is obvious I am talking to different personnel than the member opposite.

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his earlier comments the hon. member spoke about the lack of an industrial strategy in the bill. I am curious. Does this mean the member believes we should have an industrial strategy for Canada?

The hon. member talked about C. D. Howe and the war period and about how C. D. Howe kept the industrial structures in Canada working. Does he not recognize it was C. D. Howe in co–operation with the private sector, that is the state in co–operation with the private sector, that created the modern Canadian industrial structure which lasted to the 1960s. In fact the state played an important part in that period?

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, as I explained in regard to an industrial strategy, the lead cannot be taken by government at this point because government has proven itself to be incompetent in terms of dealing with spending priorities and with fiscal responsibility.

In terms of relating that point to the C. D. Howe era, we had a balanced budget then. Essentially we had a balanced budget up to 1972. I know there was a period after World War II when we were in a state of tremendous growth and we paid down a lot of debt, but those circumstances are completely alien to where we are now.

The government is carrying on unsustainable programs, institutions and projects at this time, and this is one of them. It is probably more discretionary to make radical change to this one than to many others which affect transfers to the individuals and so on.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest once again to the contradictory remarks of the hon. member.

In the first instance they are telling us that any federal government intervention in rural areas, which is where I am from, is contradictory to what the Government of Canada should be doing in helping rural areas. However I find it curious that they are trying to bring in a centralized model where all regions of Canada would be treated in the same way. In other words, we should say that the little town of Bonaventure and the little town of Old–Harry on the Madeleine Islands are the same as Bay Street, that they have the same economy as Toronto.

• (1340)

They do not seem to recognize the other side. The opposition benches like to pride themselves as representing rural Canada and rural interests, but they want to take rural Canadians and put them in the same boat as urban Canadians. Many members opposite actually represent areas with only one industry: a mining town, a pulp and paper town or a government town. Whereas in other urban areas of Canada such as Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal there are various choices, various industries, a concentration of populations, a concentration of schools and a concentration of services.

We do not have that in the regions. That is why in order to encourage regional economic development the Government of Canada has to make it easier for corporations and companies, which it always likes to defend, to invest more in our areas. It should make sure that there is equitable expenditure across Canada. It should also recognize that rural areas also have taxpayers; they have interests that are important to them. Members opposite should go back to their constituents and ask them if they think the Government of Canada should remove itself from regional economic development. I am sure they are not going to last past the next election.

I go back to my constituency as a rural Quebecer, a rural Canadian, with examples of where the Government of Canada intervened. Thanks to that intervention we managed to create jobs. We managed to create income. We managed to develop the local economy for the benefit of all Canadians and for the benefit of regional areas such as those represented by the Reform Party.

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed I am opposed to regional economic programs, as is our party. I live in and represent a rural riding. The government does not have the resources to keep DFO offices functioning for an important west coast resource in very remote areas where we need that presence.

The government is taking essential services like light stations and threatening them. For you to be talking about us not supporting rural areas is blatant misrepresentation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I know this is the place of vigorous debate and we even encourage it. However I remind all members to direct their interventions through the Chair and not directly to one another.

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I would like to make a couple of other references to the way these priorities have been placed in jeopardy.

We have an infrastructure program that has been gerrymandered. We have an urban focus. We are building boccie courts in Toronto and swimming pools. At the same time some of our essential rural services are being defunded. This is unacceptable.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in my place today to enter the debate on Bill C–46 respecting the establishment of the Department of Industry.

I notice part of the bill deals with the abolition of Investment Canada. I would like to address that point to some extent. Investment Canada in the new establishment will be basically a directorate within the Department of Industry. Investment Canada goes back to the original FIRA or the Foreign Investment Review Agency.

• (1345)

Unfortunately over our history Canadians have taken the fast track to economic prosperity. By this I mean we have borrowed capital from outside our borders. In fact, we have even allowed industry to come into our country and take over various sections of our economy. We have done that rather than develop our economy in our own sense. In other words, we have developed the aspect of letting others do it.

The problems which existed with FIRA and go back to the 1970s are really no different today. I question those who are in attendance today. The cars we drive, the televisions we watch and the household appliances we use are either purchased outside of our borders, manufactured outside of our borders or they are made by companies within our borders but which are not headquartered here.

This higher standard of living we have tried to attract has come with a price for all Canadians. There is a greater and greater dependency on foreign capital, much like a drug user who cannot kick the habit. With respect to our governments, 25 per cent of the financing of our federal debt is outside of our borders and 40 per cent of the financing of provincial government debts is outside of our borders.

This has created a dependency relationship. We are beholden to the people who own and control this money. We have a tendency to service the markets of our creditors. In fact we service the market of our major creditor, the United States, with raw materials and raw resources.

Canada has a trade surplus which is very attractive when one looks at it initially. In reality Canada has a trade surplus with only one country in the world and a trade deficit with almost all other nations. Canada has a trade surplus with the United States and trade deficits, especially with southeast Asia for those television sets and appliances we use every day.

This concept of letting others do it has caused a great retardation of our research and development. Why do I say that? Well why should we have laboratories in Canada? Why should we do research in Canada when there are laboratories south of the border in Seattle and North Carolina? In other words, there seems to be no real desire in Canada to do genuine research and development.

I do not have to tell anyone that statistics on the Canadian economy indicate our research and development is one of the lowest in the world. This has had a tremendous impact on the creation of high paying, high skilled jobs in Canada. The partial result of some of this is that some of our best brains have had to go south in order to utilize their talents. Do we want to continue with this kind of process where our smarter people have to leave?

I do not have to tell you that research and development has a tremendous importance on the new economy. The economy is changing before our very eyes. The world and global economies are changing before our very eyes. Another impact of foreign investment and foreign ownership and control in Canada has been job training.

Canada has one of the poorest records on in house training in the world. I question why this should be. Why is this unique to Canada? I suspect we can trace it back to that original problem, foreign ownership and foreign control. Why train high echelon management type jobs when we already have a set up to do that south of the border? This has worked against the best interests of Canadian workers.

The ultimate price of letting others do it has been that decisions are not made within our borders, decisions that affect our economy on a day to day basis, decisions that affect industry and industry formation. It continues to this day. Directions and suggestions of local managers are routinely overridden by corporate headquarters often located to the south but in other countries as well. This stifles innovation in our economy. It stifles the ability of people to progress in this society. It does not matter whether you are in Quebec or any other part of the country, the story is still the same.

• (1350)

This brings us to where we are today. Today the economy is changing. Like the devastation that wrenched Japan in the second world war, or the industrial revolution that swept across Britain, things have changed. We have wiped the slate clear. A new economy is before us. We have changed the way we do business.

The integrated multinational is no longer the productive engine of the economy. Smokestacks in industrial areas in the United States and other countries are slowly going dormant. A whole section of the northern United States is now referred to as the rust belt. These industries are no longer viable. These are industries which for whatever reason are not part of the new technology. States like New York face outward migration; people are actually leaving some of these huge engines of production.

Now is the chance for Canada to regain its ability to make its own decisions. This is an opportunity to actually make a change to the new economy without forfeiting our standard of living. In other words, we have to start being smarter. We have to start doing our own research and development. We are all equals now in the world. Canada has an opportune chance to be part of a new and evolving economy.

The concepts in previous years of why Canada could not be an effective industrial power—which, of course, it is to some extent, but not nearly as much as it could be—has been that we have a huge land mass and a small population base. I do not have to tell you that with the technology before us this is no longer important. All of Canada can be connected in one room through the information highway. In other words, it is possible to service our domestic markets and create industries that will be effective in competing with others throughout the world. We need to grab on to that technology.

We need to service our own markets effectively and also attack those which exist around the world. To do this we need a new partnership with government, business and labour. These three sectors must rethink their traditional roles. Government must be the one which steers. By that I mean it must be an adjudicator of the marketplace. It ensures that competition continues. It keeps taxes low and fosters this new competition. It gives incentives to new training and job creation. It also must assist us in attacking those new and evolving markets, like southeast Asia.

We need a national education standard. This is also part of the federal government's obligation. Business has been too slow in this country to adapt to the new technology. Some of our business practices are outmoded and parochial.

We need to do more business networking. We need to create strategic alliances within our business sector so they will go out and attack those new markets. They must be unified to spike the market share. Labour must end its adversarial attitude toward business and government. It must see itself as a true partner. It must realize that new jobs and the creation of new jobs will rely

on those who do not feel alienated from the process, to those who will make a contribution to the process of industrialization. In other words, we need a new and genuine partnership of the three engines of the economy: government, business and labour.

These are the challenges; to seize the opportunities before us to control our destiny and to march into the 21st century certain of our future.

• (1355)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's speech and particularly in response to some of the comments which have been made by the Liberals, I wonder if they are aware that this morning their Minister of Finance made some public statements about the fact that they have a new economic philosophy.

Their new economic philosophy seems to relate a little more to reality than the things we have been hearing in the House since we came here. It somewhat relates to some of the comments which have been coming from this corner of the House.

Perhaps the member might like to comment on the fact that in quoting from the Organization for Economic Co–operation and Development, the finance minister this morning said that the OECD agrees. Let me quote from their recent job study: "Subsidies tend to operate in exactly the opposite way from what is needed. They slow rather than stimulate adjustments. They discourage rather than encourage innovation and they tend to become permanent".

Would the member care to comment on this new economic direction his finance minister has finally discovered?

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, I do not recall discussing subsidies in my dissertation. I talked about creating a new industrial climate in Canada. I did not talk about subsidizing industries that go out and compete in the international marketplace. It was just the reverse. I talked about government's role to steer, that it had to create an environment in which businesses would flourish. I did not talk about subsidies but I agree that in some instances subsidies do not work.

In some ways, our government is realizing some of those and has realized that in the past. That is a new orientation for our governmental system. I was not talking about any of these things as a matter of fact. I was talking very simply that we must create a new independent wave of how we are going to deal with business in the future and how we are going to build a new Canadian economy.

S. O. 31

The Speaker: My colleagues, it being almost 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the caucus task force on ethanol supported a resolution urging the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the use of MMT as an octane enhancer in Canadian gasolines.

MMT was banned in the United States in 1978 due to the widely recognized potential for negative health effects. Canada has continued to use MMT since it replaced lead as an anti–knock agent in 1977.

The Association of International Automobile Manufacturers of Canada has stated its opposition to the use of MMT on the grounds that the chemical degrades the effectiveness of vehicle emission control devices.

Ethanol represents an ideal alternative octane enhancer which is 100 per cent renewable. We strongly urge the minister to take swift action on eliminating the use of MMT and replace it with renewable, domestically produced fuel additives such as ethanol.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HAITI

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the democratically elected President Jean–Bertrand Aristide has finally returned home. October 15, 1994 will remain a historic day for Haiti and for us all and a great day for democracy. Haitians are finally proud of their country again. During the three long years of dictatorship, we shared the despair of the Haitian people and of all our fellow citizens of Haitian origin, but today, we are tremendously glad to celebrate with them the hope that a fresh start brings.

In calling for national reconciliation, President Aristide is throwing open the door to economic development, social justice and lasting peace. Quebecers and Canadians want to continue giving their unfailing support to the Haitian people and their struggle to restore democracy.

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, over the past number of days I have received letters from my

constituents demanding that this government not tax dental benefits. Geraldine Auger, Dr. Arthur Filyk, Christina Fuller, Ken Gaudin and Brian Mullally are but a few of my constituents who have expressed concern that this government will tax health care to gain control of Canada's horrible fiscal problems.

I am asking this government not to make such band-aid decisions as taxing Canada's working class even more to reduce Canada's deficit and debt. We are taxed upon our birth. We are taxed upon our death. Now we are threatening with taxes on health care in between.

Canadians are taxed to the limit. The solution is to cut government spending, not to increase taxes. Make real systemic changes that will not result in a bigger tax grab on the middle class Canadian worker.

* * *

CANADIAN ROWING CHAMPIONS

Mr. Ron Fewchuk (Selkirk—Red River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with real pleasure and pride that I rise to congratulate Colleen Miller, a resident of Matlock, Manitoba and a constituent from the wonderful riding of Selkirk—Red River. Colleen and her partner Wendy Wiebe won their gold medal in the world rowing championships, lightweight double skulls event in Indianapolis, Indiana on September 17, 1994.

I would like to point out that Colleen and Wendy also won a gold medal at last year's event in Czechoslovakia and another gold medal performance in the Commonwealth regatta in London, Ontario just a few weeks ago. One newspaper put it so well: "On top of the world again".

Once more I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Colleen Miller and Wendy Wiebe. Canadians across this great country of ours congratulate them and are very proud of them.

* * *

JENNA BOWRING

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the weekend the Reform Party hinted that Liberal women candidates for the last federal election were picked just because they were women. The fact is these women won their nominations due to their intelligence, vigour and their selfless commitment to Canadians.

This morning I had the privilege of attending the International Development Week 1995 calendar festival award presentation hosted by the Canadian Teachers Federation to honour Ms. Jenna Bowring, nine years of age and a grade four student at Random Island Integrated School, daughter of Cynthia and David Bowring of Brittania, Newfoundland.

Jenna's art work has been chosen out of 850 submissions from across Canada to provide the cover of Canada's International Development Week 1995 calendar. This young lady was chosen as a winner for her competence, her talent, energy and her enthusiasm.

I am sure that all members of this House will join me in congratulating this remarkable young Newfoundlander—who is in the gallery with her parents today—in winning this prestigious national award.

* * *

GREAT LAKES

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a historic event occurred in the town of Collingwood in my riding of Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe on August 27. On that day Canada and Ontario received a report which showed that the Collingwood harbour area of concern had met its restoration goals. That means that Collingwood harbour is on its way to becoming the first of 43 Great Lakes areas of concern in Canada and the United States to be delisted.

Its water, shorelines and wetlands have been restored and rehabilitated for the benefit of the people, the fish and the wildlife. This represents an important first step toward meeting the targets of the Canada-Ontario agreement respecting the Great Lakes basin ecosystem.

The Government of Canada has made a strong commitment to the environment. It also recognizes that the success depends on effective working partnerships. Collingwood, through its public advisory committee, its remedial action plan team and the community at large—

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE LATE GÉRALD GODIN

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our friend Gérald Godin has died. He leaves behind his companion, his circle of close friends and everyone who loved him as he loved them, in a simple, straightforward way.

As a politician, Gérald led the way in showing tolerance and openness to citizens from other lands. Guided by a nationalism that is open to the world, he embodied the deep-rooted values of Quebecers, for whom freedom of thought is priceless.

His legacy to all is his compassion, his courage in the face of illness and his determination in the face of adversity. We will remember Gérald Godin as a man of conviction, a man of courage and a man of freedom. Farewell, Gérald.

• (1405)

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was outraged after reading an article that appeared in the Ottawa *Citizen* written by a victim of violence.

While we stand in this House asking the Minister of Justice day after day when he plans to get tough with criminals in this country, a convicted offender is freely wandering the streets of Ottawa just blocks from here stalking the man upon whom he launched not one but two unprovoked, vicious attacks.

While Bill Glaister still suffers from pain and humiliation and fears for his safety, his assailant is free to attack again. Why? Because an Ottawa judge thought a stern lecture and five weeks in jail was a sufficient sentence for one count of assault, three counts of theft, one charge of fleeing a court commitment and one charge of misleading a police officer with false identity.

This criminal did not even serve his lenient sentence of five weeks. Our bleeding heart justice system turned him loose in three and a half weeks. That same system has left Mr. Glaister living in fear of this man and it will be responsible for the next victim who falls prey to this criminal.

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MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I address this House today in response to the statements by the hon. member for Beaver River asserting that some women are not legitimate members of this Parliament.

I was duly elected in the beautiful riding of Cumberland—Colchester with a solid majority of nearly 3,000 votes more than the next closest candidate. I thank my electorate for placing its confidence in me and this Liberal government.

I have reason to believe that every person of female gender was duly elected to this Parliament on the same day last October by the same process under the same rules of the Government of Canada's elections act.

Could it be the Reform women members were elected by some other process or could it be they are doubting the integrity of the electorate?

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to draw to the attention of the House that at the recent annual meeting of the prestigious Economic Development Association of Canada, two groups from my riding of Algoma were given national awards recognizing their tremendous efforts in the economic development and diversification of our part of northern Ontario.

I am especially pleased that the North Channel Marine Tourism Council won an award for its promotional video, "Shores to Discover". It displays the wonders of the magnificent north channel of Lake Huron which is ranked with the Greek islands as a premier recreational boating area. This video will go a long way to help communities in the north shore and Manitoulin area to tap into northern Ontario's growing tourism market.

I am also proud to say that the city of Elliot Lake took home top honours in the positive program category as a result of its very successful retirement living program which was started after the major downsizing of the city's uranium mining industry a few years ago. The city is to be congratulated on its efforts and ingenuity in attracting over 3,000 new senior citizens to the city which has created economic spin–offs—

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MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to allegations made at the Reform Party convention that Liberal women MPs were not selected fairly and are somehow illegitimate, I would like to set the record straight for Edmonton East.

In Edmonton East there were five candidates who sought the Liberal nomination, four of whom were women. The nomination process was fairly established and strongly contested with active participation by more than 1,000 Liberal members, women and men, in Edmonton East.

Residents of Edmonton East, no one else, chose the Liberal candidate and the residents of Edmonton East chose the Liberal plan as the best one for them.

If the Reform Party is honest it will acknowledge the real reason why there are more women Liberal MPs. It is because Liberal policies are attractive to women because they respond to the reality of Canadian women. They will create more opportunities for women to participate fully in the life of our country. That is why the residents of Edmonton East chose—

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

PROVINCIAL TAXATION

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government recently threatened to stop making provincial payroll taxes deductible, a move which would cost Quebec companies $200 million.

With a mixture of satisfaction and concern, we learned this weekend that this measure has been postponed by one year. The Bloc Quebecois is pleased that the federal government has yielded to its arguments and to those of Quebec's finance minister, Jean Campeau.

However, it is only a postponement, because a sword of Damocles still hangs over Quebec companies. Nothing says that the federal government will not try next year to reduce its deficit at the expense of Quebec companies by eliminating this perfectly justified deduction.

* * *

[*English*]

REFORM PARTY

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I might say that we were all elected to the House of Commons. Some of us were elected to be candidates for the House of Commons.

On Thursday, 1,450 Reform delegates from every province and territory in Canada converged on the nation's capital for our assembly. In just two short days Reform delegates discussed, debated and passed 27 resolutions that would eliminate the deficit, make the streets safe for our children, salvage our shaky social safety net and put more money in the hands of taxpayers. That is quite an accomplishment.

The delegates told us again and again that Canadians were tired of the everything is under control attitude of the present government. Canadians want real change, real options, real discussions, real hope and real reform.

While the Liberals were obviously watching our assembly the debt has risen to $534,611,591—

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FLEETWOOD CANADA LIMITED

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today and salute another example of excellence by workers in my riding of Victoria—Haliburton in Ontario.

Fleetwood Canada Limited, which manufactures travel trailers in my home town of Lindsay, has won for the third year in a row the customer satisfaction championship of Fleetwood Incorporated.

It now employs about 285 people and was judged by an independent survey of product owners to have produced the best travel trailers of the 10 Fleetwood plants in North America. It has also won the production team of the year award within Fleetwood. This award which is based on quality, efficiency, safety, warranty and overhead cost control is another testament to its ability.

I commend the workers at Fleetwood Canada Limited in Lindsay for their diligent work and perseverance over the years which have brought the plant such acclaimed recognition.

MISSISSAUGA WEST

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today close to the one–year anniversary of the last federal election to thank the hundreds of grassroot volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure I could represent Mississauga West here in Ottawa.

I particularly want to express my deep gratitude to a small core of people. Through their hard work and dedication over a nine–month period I was able to win an incredible nomination battle against five other Liberals and the largest democratic nomination in the history of Canadian politics.

I want to sincerely thank George Carlson, Elias Hazineh, Denise LaParairie, Maggie Mavromatis, Arlette Neufeld, Louis Robitaille, my husband David, my two daughters, my mother Helen Janozeski and my late father Edward Janozeski. These are the real heroes behind my nomination victory.

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AVRO ARROW

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that the Royal Canadian Mint recently issued a set of coins commemorating milestone aircraft in Canadian aviation history.

To my surprise missing from this series is the Avro Arrow. As we all know, the Arrow was an aircraft decades ahead of its time and its cancellation resulted in a setback to the Canadian aviation industry from which it has yet to recover.

Most of the talented Canadians who worked on its development were forced to move to the United States where a great many were snapped up by NASA to work on the Apollo space program.

In 1958 the Arrow achieved speeds nearly twice that of sound and altitudes approaching 60,000 feet. Despite this the government of the day cancelled the project and ordered all tooling, plans and aircraft destroyed.

By allowing the exclusion of the Arrow from the series this government has effectively reinforced the shameful decision of a previous Conservative administration.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

ECONOMIC POLICY

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the discussion paper released this morning by the Minister of Finance has proved once again that the Liberals have very little to show for all the promises they made. The govern-

ment is full of good intentions but has failed to provide any solutions that will reduce government spending and create jobs.

My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Would the minister agree that what we need is not a diagnosis but a cure, as far as reducing the deficit is concerned? How can he expect to be taken seriously when his paper contains no measures to reduce the level of federal operating expenditures or eliminate the many instances of duplication that exist? What is he waiting for?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should have been here this morning. Obviously, those who interpreted what was said this morning did not do a good job. We introduced a framework of new economic policies in order to increase significantly the productivity of our country, which, it must be said, has been dropping for quite some time.

If we want to create jobs, we can do that only if we are able to increase productivity in this country. And as far as action is concerned, if the hon. member would look at the last budget, we introduced some very important fiscal measures. In fact, it was after this budget was brought down that Canada started creating jobs. I am proud to say today that last week, it was announced that since January, 327,000 jobs were created in this country. That is practically a record.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, words, words, words, but never any action or decisions from this government!

Does this mean that since the Liberal government refuses to do anything now about government spending, wasteful duplication and tax inequities, it is going to go back to its old habit of spending its way out of this mess and depending on the impact of economic recovery to reduce the deficit? Is it the same old Liberal dogma?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition may think 327,000 jobs are just words, but that is not the case for the people who got these jobs as a result of our measures and who are no longer listed as unemployed. It is important to create jobs, and we have done it since we came to power: 327,000.

Meanwhile, if you want to know what we have done, I suggest you listen to the IMF which said that this year, next year and the year after, Canada will have the best levels of growth and job creation of any G–7 country. We are proud of what we have done.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will try to be a little more matter–of–fact, to make the minister less inclined to indulge in political rhetoric. The minister knows perfectly well that if we are to raise employment levels to what they were in 1990, before the recession, we will have to create 800,000 jobs in Canada. When he talks about 327,000 jobs, he knows perfectly well he is well below that level.

We read the paper that was released this morning. It includes a paragraph that implies that social security reform will stimulate job creation.

How can the Minister of Finance expect social security reform to produce the spending cuts that will help him create jobs, since this reform merely turns the unemployed into scapegoats by putting them on the welfare rolls, so that fairness and any hope for the future no longer exist?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must correct the Leader of the Opposition. When we look at job creation, we have now outstripped the level of job creation we had before the recession. We did it. Second, when we take a careful look at the diagnosis, when we consider what the Minister of Human Resources Development is doing, we are in fact implementing the OECD's analysis. Is that wrong? Are France, Germany and the OECD countries wrong or is the Leader of the Opposition the only one who is right? I do not think so, Mr. Speaker.

• (1420)

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance.

In a statement made this morning on the state of the economy and government finance, the minister discussed at length the need to make additional budget cuts in order to meet his 1996–97 objective regarding the deficit.

Does the Minister of Finance still deny that, in order to achieve his objective, he will make additional cuts of $7.5 billion in social assistance and post–secondary education, on top of the $7.4 billion cuts already made in his last budget in the UI program and transfers to provinces?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Leader of the Opposition, who asked this question on June 20: Does the Minister of Finance intend to table a supplementary budget in the fall to reduce government spending by at least $3 billion?

Mr. Speaker, I find it very hard to understand why the Leader of the Opposition wants us to make cuts, while his finance critic refuses to accept the fact that we have to improve government finance.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we agree with making cuts, but these must be targeted at operating expenditures, inefficiencies and overlapping, not at the unemployed and the poor in our society.

How can the public trust the minister and his government when in just one year, they have failed to protect the unemployed and welfare recipients, they have not abolished the GST and they are now talking about increasing taxes, in spite of all the promises made? What kind of trust does the minister think he will instill among Quebecers and Canadians?

An hon. member: None.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not the only one who gets excited.

[*English*]

It is incredible to watch members of the opposition at work. They say we must cut, yet every time we talk about an area they say: "You can't cut that". They have never made one suggestion as to an area where we should cut. They have never brought forward anything constructive. They sit there and they make huge rhetorical speeches about the future of the world. Never once are they prepared to get down to work and make this country work. That is the problem with the opposition.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today the finance minister repeated in graphic terms what Reformers have been saying for years. He said we are in hock up to our eyeballs and that the debt and the deficit are unsustainable.

Just this weekend it was reported that the Deputy Prime Minister, the Solicitor General, the Minister of Human Resources Development and the Minister of Public Works are still reluctant to attack the deficit while the Ministers of Finance, Transport and International Trade want to attack the deficit more vigorously. The cabinet is divided.

Will the finance minister tell the House whose position represents the position of the government, that of the Deputy Prime Minister and her free–spending friends or the finance minister and his deficit reduction?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is music to my ears to hear the leader of the third party stating that reports in the media are automatically true. I am glad to see the vote of confidence that he and his party have given to the media.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, deficit reduction is intimately related to social reform. The hardheads in the cabinet are looking for $7 billion to $10 billion of savings through social reform. The softheads in the cabinet think the best they can get is $1 billion to $3 billion.

Will the finance minister show some leadership right now by stating how much money he wants to save through these social reform programs?

• (1425)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing for certain. The Prime Minister laid down a target of 3 per cent of GDP to be achieved by this government and this cabinet in the 1996–97 fiscal year. We intend to deliver. Every single member of cabinet is committed to delivering on our red book promise.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, top heads got the chance to answer the question.

The finance minister also knows that given the current economic situation, any suspicion at all of federal tax increases will further damage private sector expansion and job creation.

Will the finance minister show some leadership today by giving an unequivocal guarantee right now that tax increases are not the option for solving the deficit problem?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the absolute hypocrisy of the Reform Party that on the one hand tells Canadians that it wants to take $15 billion out of the pockets of senior citizens as well as health care, education and other programs and on the other hand wants to tie the hands of the Minister of Finance in advance of a budget that is going to have a number of difficult choices.

The Minister of Finance and this side of the House want a full public discussion on all aspects of a federal budget and we want the debate to begin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Last Friday, in Toronto, during the Federal–Provincial Conference of Finance Ministers, he proposed a national sales tax of 12 per cent on goods and services, to replace the GST that his party had promised to abolish. That proposal was rejected by Ontario, Quebec, B.C. and Alberta.

Given the opposition of several provinces to such a national sales tax of 12 per cent, does the Minister of Finance not recognize that his proposal is doomed?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say that our discussions on Friday in Toronto were quite fruitful. Several provinces supported our proposal. I could add that two other proposals are

on the table, one from Ontario and one from Manitoba. Quebec has been very constructive.

Indeed, far from rejecting our proposal offhand, Quebec said there were some problems, but that something could perhaps be worked out based on our proposal. Everything went very well. It might be that the headquarters in Quebec City are more constructive than the branch plant here.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind the Minister of Finance that the position taken by the Government of Quebec is the same as the position of the Bloc Quebecois in the Finance Committee report.

Could the Minister of Finance tell us what other scenario he intends to propose to the provinces in order to fulfil his commitment to abolish the GST before January 1996?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our commitment during the campaign, which was stated in the red book and that the hon. member should read again, is very clear. We said that the GST would have to be replaced with a taxation system which would be fairer for consumers, harmonized with the provinces and set up in the shortest possible timeframe. However it is far more important to do it well than to do it before a set deadline.

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister's lilac book today committed the government to the previously announced and easily achievable deficit target of 3 per cent of GDP in two years. However he did not provide a time frame for the total elimination of the deficit by saying simply: "Our ultimate goal is the elimination of the budget deficit".

This is not enough. The world financial community is anxious. Will the minister commit the government to a definite time frame for the complete elimination of the deficit?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if lilac is the right colour; perhaps the opposition critic is looking at it through rose coloured glasses. That actually came from the Deputy Prime Minister, not bad.

The position I took in committee this morning is entirely consistent and in fact finds its birthplace within the red book. In the red book we said unequivocally that we were going to reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of GDP by 1996–97 and that our ultimate goal was to balance the books, to eliminate the deficit. That is the position we took in the red book. That is the position I took this morning in the purple book.

Our goal is to set milestones so that Canadians can judge what the government is doing. We are not going to set targets out there. We are going to hit our 3 per cent target. Canadians better understand that and the Leader of the Opposition better understand that as well.

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the people of Canada have heard these vague promises about some time in the future they will balance the budget, just rely on them, for too long.

Financial experts agree the deficit cannot be eliminated without reform and cuts to the social program. The lilac book does not make that point and the financial community is anxious, especially if Deputy Prime Minister is answering the question.

Will the minister stop tiptoeing through the lilacs and promise major cuts in social program spending?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is precisely because the previous government kept setting targets too far down the way of no great significance and then kept missing them that we as a government decided that we would set up very clear milestones—that is what Canadians asked us to do in the consultations last year—within a relatively short time period so that we would keep everybody's focus on that and then we would hit our targets.

It is very important for the credibility of government that we do not set out a multitude of targets but that the government focuses on one issue and that it does what it says, and that is what we are going to do.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jean–Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

The Liberal government was quick to cancel the EH–101 helicopter contract and has maintained on numerous occasions that it would wait for the next white book to announce its intention to buy on–board helicopters for the navy fleet. On August 12, the minister even said that no decision would be taken regarding the purchase of any equipment for the Canadian Forces as long as the defence policy review was still under way.

How can the minister explain his about–turn and the fact that he has announced his intention to buy on–board helicopters when the defence policy review is still under way?

[*English*]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we rolled out the new tactical helicopter on Friday at Mirabel there was a press conference where obviously my comments were somewhat misconstrued. We have not changed our position.

We cancelled the HE–101 not because of the fact that it was not a good helicopter but that it was too expensive and too rich for our needs. We now have a defence review under way and the government is absolutely adamant that there will be no decision taken. Cabinet will not be seized of the issue until the defence review takes place. The hon. member is a member of that defence committee. No decision will take place until we know the priorities the defence review will set down.

• (1435)

In dealing with our helicopter needs, we have a search and rescue capability and an airborne ship capability that have to be fulfilled. We are looking to the guidance of the parliamentary committee and consultations that I am having before we go to cabinet with a specific recommendation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, just as with the finance minister, journalists must have misinterpreted what the minister said.

Knowing that the cancellation of the EH–101 deal heavily penalized Quebec, can the defence minister promise right now that Quebec will benefit from the same level of spin–offs as with the previous contract?

[*English*]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said on a number of occasions that we will have to replace the Sea Kings and the Labradors, which have a lifecycle up to the year 2000, but we would like to look at what kind of replacements will be required as soon as the defence review is out of the way.

As with all major government procurement, we try to have the industrial benefits accrue to all regions of the country. I am sure this will apply in any future defence contracts that are let.

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SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development when we could expect to see legislation. Now we read that the minister has reassured Atlantic premiers that proposed changes to unemployment insurance would not be implemented for five to seven years.

Why did the minister not clearly tell Canadians that with his no action plan changes would take five to seven years?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member is still reasonably new to the House, but he should understand that the timetable we have set would be for legislation in the spring of 1995 or perhaps in the fall, depending on how consultations with the provinces go. We would have new legislation in 1995.

That would mean, therefore, that any new implementation of the unemployment insurance system would take until January 1, 1996 to take effect. If there was a frequency test, as proposed in the green paper, it would take three years for that test to work its way through the system. That is what I was referring to.

I understand it may not be understood by the hon. member because he has not been through how government works before, and thank goodness he never will.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think the minister should have put his proposals in a yellow book. If he is talking about targets, everybody knows that if he does not have anything to aim at he is not going to miss.

Canadians have been waiting for six months for this no action plan and now everybody knows what it is full of: limited options, no price tags, no time lines, and no hope.

Are there any other major surprises coming on social program reform, or should Canadians just throw the discussion paper away and keep an eye on the newspapers to hear about his plans?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member was very busy this weekend trying to protect some remnant of sanity in his own party against the members of his convention. If he had been spending time in his own constituency and out talking to Canadians, as I have been doing for the last 10 days, he would realize there is widespread interest in every part of the country in terms of having a major debate, discussion and dialogue.

Canadians are being heard. They are being listened to. They want to put their own signatures to the program. It constantly amazes me why the Reform Party is so authoritarian and anti–democratic that it does not want to have a public discussion on social policy.

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL FORUM ON HEALTH

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The National Forum on Health will open on Thursday in Ottawa. The federal government and the provinces are still deadlocked as, according to a spokesperson for the Minister of Health, not one of the provinces has accepted her invitation to participate in the Forum under the terms set by the government, that is to say only in an advisory capacity.

• (1440)

Does the Minister of Health not recognize that, without the provinces, which where invited by Ottawa only out of courtesy, her National Forum on Health will be nothing more than a masquerade to justify interfering further in an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): As you know, Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the health forum on Thursday is to advise and help the federal government to examine long–term issues regarding the health of all Canadians. This being said, I have always worked very well with my provincial counterparts and I intend to continue to do so.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the minister and I hope to get a clear answer this time. Does the Minister of Health not realize that, if the provinces refuse to participate in her forum, it is because they will not be able to participate fully and because they have uncovered the true intentions of the federal government, namely to cut provincial transfer payments for health care?

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been working very closely with my colleagues at the provincial level, so much so that a large number of the many knowledgeable Canadians who are members of the forum have had their names put forward by the ministers of health from the provinces.

I look forward to working with the forum members but I will continue to work with the decision making body, the conference of federal–provincial ministers of health.

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SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Older workers in my riding who were formerly employed by Koehring–Waterous Timberjack are now in desperate need of support under the program for older workers adjustment.

Since the closing of their plant in the fall of 1992, most of these older workers have been unable to find alternate employment and many face losing their homes in order to make ends meet.

Could the minister comment on why we are experiencing these frustrating delays on the approval of this federal–provincial program and tell us what he could do to mitigate the problems?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the program for older workers is a joint program, federal and provincial. It depends on joint administration and decisions on designations.

Last March I wrote a letter to all the provinces indicating a willingness to sign a new agreement. Unfortunately the province of Ontario came back with a counter offer for a new benefit arrangement. Therefore it has yet to sign the new program for older workers adjustment. We cannot go ahead with designations until the Government of Ontario approves.

I understand it is soon to go to its cabinet and as soon as it approves the new agreement on older workers we can go ahead with designations. I urge the hon. member and others to put whatever kindly persuasion on the Ontario government they can to go ahead with these designations.

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THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister was quoted as saying: "A Prime Minister of Canada has a Constitution he must respect and there is no mechanism in the Constitution permitting the separation of any part of Canadian territory".

We know that separatism would require substantial constitutional amendment. Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs commit to the House, on behalf of the government, that it is the position of the Government of Canada that any change to the constitutional status of a province would have to be done legally and would require, under the amending formula, the consent of all provinces?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a hypothetical question on which the Prime Minister commented in general. I certainly do not intend to go any further than that.

• (1445)

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on June 17 the minister declined to respond for similar hypothetical reasons saying that the Quebec Liberals would win the provincial election.

My supplementary question concerns an article written recently by the member for Vancouver Quadra. The hon. member said that the federal government today retains its full constitutional options to allow or not to allow a referendum vote, to control the content and wording of any referendum question, to control the actual timing of any vote and to launch its own pre–emptive nationwide referendum legally superseding any Quebec vote.

This is not a hypothetical situation. I ask the minister to indicate whether or not this reflects the constitutional position of the Government of Canada.

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could answer that we also intend to win the referendum. In the question of the provincial election we came much closer than was predicted for the Liberal Party to win. In this case there is no doubt the referendum will be won, so it is still a hypothetical question.

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[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Although the Minister of Human Resources Development has just launched a wide–ranging consultation on the possible reform of social programs, a reform which, among other things, would emphasize community resources to help unemployed youth, he has just ended the subsidy for Carrefour–Jeunesse Emploi de l'Outaouais, which has effectively helped young unemployed people in that region for ten years.

My question is this: How can the minister reconcile his decision to end financial assistance for Carrefour–Jeunesse Emploi with his discussion paper, which intends to put more emphasis on community organizations? How can he reconcile the contradiction between deeds and words?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out before, one of the basic elements of decentralizing federal programming is to allow decision making to take place at the local level and to allow that level to set priorities and determine where the best allocation would go.

If the hon. member would look at this case in point she would recognize that the recommendation as to where the funding should go for that particular program in that area was made in the local community.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): By the local CEC.

[*Translation*]

For his part, how can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs go along with those who ended the subsidy for Carrefour–Jeunesse Emploi, when at the same time he paid $130,000 to set up an employment centre in Hull, but for immigrants this time?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat for the hon. member that she should look carefully at what investments on human resources the federal government is making in the Outaouais area. This year alone we are putting about $17 million into that region. Of that, $3.5 million directly relates to youth employment and training services.

By the decision that was made in that area for the particular program we will be able to handle several hundred additional people through the new centre. That is the reason for the reorganization that was recommended in that area.

As to trying to make a case that we should spend on one group and not the other, the government tries to provide services for a wide variety of Canadians and not make the kind of choices of setting one group against the other which the hon. member is obviously trying to do.

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DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, October 4 at four o'clock in the afternoon 16–year old Pamela Cameron was walking on one of the busiest streets in Surrey, B.C. She never made it to her destination. She was murdered and her body was left in a brush covered lot. The man charged in her murder is a convicted sex offender. The court called this man a walking time bomb. When he was released Corrections Canada advised that he was a high risk offender.

Will the Solicitor General advise the House what steps the government will take to protect innocent children from sexual predators?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I join with the hon. member in regretting very much this tragedy and extend sympathies to the family of the young

girl in question. At the time of the murder the individual the hon. member mentioned was neither on parole nor on conditional release. There was no law in place that permitted any control over the individual.

• (1450)

I want to add that we are working with a federal–provincial task force on measures to deal with issues of post–sentence detention. We look forward to receiving a report very soon so that we can move ahead in dealing with these kinds of situations.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are debating my private member's bill in the House now and it deals with this issue.

The Liberal red book states that as a government it would introduce measures to protect women and children. This government failed to protect Pamela Cameron. It failed to protect Sarah Kelly in The Pas and it failed to protect Mindy Tran in Kelowna.

Will the minister advise the House when the government will live up to the red book promises and its commitment to protect this country's children?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice with my support is working actively to develop measures. When they come forward I hope the hon. member and her party will give them full support. In this way we will make real progress very soon.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Last May I asked the minister to inquire into the problem of human rights violations in Albania. Since that time there have been serious developments including the imprisonment and sentencing of five ethnic Greek members of the Omonia organization.

[*Translation*]

Could the minister tell us what Canada has done to ensure respect for human rights in Albania?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada believes that the CSCE is the best organization to try to lead the parties concerned to an agreement.

Of course, both Greece and Albania, which are members of the CSCE, should use the CSCE's good offices to try to get out of the difficult situation there. Canada encourages these two countries to use the CSCE's mediation.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On September 27, in a totally inaccurate statement to the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies in Sapporo, an employee of the Canadian embassy in Japan, Patricia Bader–Johnson, denigrated Hydro–Québec by saying that the Quebec Crown corporation was fuelling racial tensions between Natives and other Quebecers. Without checking things out, this employee attributed to Hydro–Québec a dubious advertisement that originated in fact from an oil heating company.

Is the Minister of Foreign Affairs aware of this and does he admit that it is totally unacceptable for one of his employees abroad to denigrate in this way a Quebec Crown corporation such as Hydro–Québec?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency very often call on Hydro–Quebec's expertise and skills for overseas projects.

The remarks made by an employee do not represent the Canadian government's position. I think that the hon. member should not make a big deal out of one person's comments, when the Government of Canada often works in close co–operation with Hydro–Québec on very important projects that create jobs in Quebec and enable Hydro–Québec to play an international role.

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think that the minister has not answered the question and I ask him: Does he not think that it is necessary to set the record straight with the Japanese and can he tell us exactly what he intends to do?

• (1455)

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that he makes too much of one person's remarks which, I am sure, did not change Japan's very high opinion of an institution as important as Hydro–Québec.

* * *

[*English*]

DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have been in this House for a year. In that entire year the Solicitor General has rambled on with his rhetoric about his task force, his studies, his reviews, all those wonderful things he is going to do to make this country safe and those hon. members laugh. They should laugh in the faces of the victims and see if they think it is funny. It is time to take some action.

While the minister rambles, hundreds and hundreds of victims have felt the sting of these guys who have been released when they ought to have been left in jail. Would the minister be willing to show the intestinal fortitude and political will to announce a moratorium that no more dangerous violent offenders will be released until this is settled?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member's concerns about these kinds of situations. I share his concerns but I have to apply the law adopted by this Parliament. This Parliament has not given me the authority to suspend the law on my own volition. We want to move forward on changes in the law. In view of the hon. member's rhetoric I look forward to having his support of our measures when we bring them forward.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I for one would be more than pleased to support something that would save the lives of future victims.

Are fellows by the names of Thom, Sparklingeyes, Jerabek, Toner or Foulston familiar to the minister? Will the minister be responsible for any offences these violent offenders who are now being sought by the RCMP—

The Speaker: Order. Perhaps the member could rephrase his question.

I see that the members in the gallery are speaking again.

Would the hon. member like to rephrase his memory, rephrase his question.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, my memory is hopeless.

Five dangerous violent offenders are strolling the streets, having escaped custody. These people were on parole or day passes. They have been named by the RCMP to be highly dangerous and are on the most wanted list.

Is the Solicitor General prepared to accept responsibility for what these five people do within the next few days before they are caught?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the police authorities are actively seeking these people to bring them back into custody. I hope the hon. member and all Canadians will support the police in these efforts.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The minister of human resources stated in Montreal last week that his proposals are part of a larger package the Minister of Finance is due to release to the finance committee. Yet today with the release of the paper "The New Framework for Economic Policy" we still have no specific costing on the proposals outlined in the social security review paper.

Will the minister come clean with Canadians and say exactly how much the Minister of Finance sees cutting from social programs?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning we set out a basic framework as to how we feel the Canadian economy can deal with what is its single greatest problem which is the failure to create jobs in sufficient numbers to substantially reduce the unemployment rate.

• (1500)

We basically said that the focus must be on productivity and we set out the key elements of how we would generate that productivity. We also stated in there that as far as we are concerned—I am now repeating the words of the Minister of Human Resources Development—the best social policy is a good job.

I must say that complementing certainly that framework are the tremendous efforts by the minister to basically make it possible for Canadians to develop the skills and the talents they need to face up to a very different world. It is very clear that the government has its act together and Canadians are going to benefit from it.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of a parliamentary delegation from the Republic of South Africa led by Mr. Govan Mbeki, Deputy President of the Senate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period the member for Calgary West asked two questions of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. One was on the constitutional position of the government on the legality of cessation. The other was on the question of whether the Government of Canada had the competence to allow or disallow a referendum on secession. Neither was hypothetical.

The minister declined to answer these questions on the grounds that they were hypothetical. We believe neither was.

The Speaker: I would point out that in question period questions may be asked but should not be of a hypothetical nature. Members will note at that time the Chair did not intervene and did not rule on whether it was a hypothetical question.

We all accept in this House that ministers have the right to answer a question or not to answer a question and take whatever form when they do answer a question to do so. In this case, if a question is posed it is up to a minister or a member of the government to answer as he or she sees fit.

If I judge a question to be hypothetical, as your Speaker I will intervene. I cannot control the response and for the most part I cannot control the question.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 20 petitions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WORLD FOOD DAY

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Agriculture and Agri–Food, Fisheries and Oceans), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the activities organized to commemorate World Food Day, today, in Canada and around the world.

• (1505)

The World Food Day reminds us that we have not yet found a sustainable solution to the problem of hunger in the world. Today, the Canadian Association for the World Food Day is organizing various activities and, in particular, workshops in all provinces and both territories, and the theme this year is: Water, source of life.

Canada, richly endowed in this regard, has contributed through its expertise in agriculture and irrigation to the improvement of water supplies for families in rural areas around the world.

[*English*]

On October 16, 1945 the food and agriculture organization of the United Nations, the FAO, was founded in Quebec City. I think it is only fitting that the House be reminded of the historic role of a great Canadian, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, chairman and one of the principal architects of the founding conference of the FAO.

[*Translation*]

Next year, Canada, Quebec and Quebec City, will be hosting events to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the FAO.

[*English*]

In the last 50 years we have experienced dramatic increases in agricultural production. At the same time the world is faced with daunting population growth. If we are to succeed into the next millennium our efforts will have to be based on truly sustainable agriculture. This will be one of the challenges that ministers of agriculture of the 170 member countries of the FAO, their officials, industry representatives and non–government organizations from Canada and abroad will address when they meet in Quebec City next year.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Quebecois, I have the pleasure of joining our voice to that of the hon. member for Beauséjour, the Secretary of State for Agriculture and Agri–Food, Fisheries and Oceans. Water is the source of life. Everyday, on our blue planet, a third of the population goes hungry and every day, four out of ten people go thirsty or do not have access to proper drinking water.

It is said that human beings can go without food for around 40 days as long they can drink. But without food or water, they die within four days. We cannot live without water and if we compare the Earth to a grapefruit, a pinhead would represent our water supply, 98 per cent of which is made up of salt water, which leaves us with only two per cent considered freshwater. We are not taking very good care of this two per cent found in lakes, rivers, streams, clouds, glaciers, and underground springs.

No later than yesterday I saw someone putting out a cigarette butt by throwing it in a toilet bowl and flushing it out. What a shameful waste of water! Here in Quebec and Canada, groundwater, the water table, is getting deeper and deeper and is often of questionable quality. One must keep in mind that one litre of

gasoline, diesel fuel or oil is enough to pollute one million litres of groundwater.

• (1510)

I am very happy to see that Quebec City will be host to the 170 FAO member countries for a convention, next October.

I would also like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of the work carried out by the many organizations involved in finding lasting solutions to world hunger. Despite our collective wealth, hunger is a problem we know at home in Montreal and other major Canadian cities.

I want to congratulate the World Food Day Association of Canada which, through its numerous activities, helps raise the awareness of Canadians and Quebecers regarding world hunger.

I would also like to encourage farmers to share their experience by participating in joint projects with other countries. The Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec has set up projects of this kind, showing a sense of solidarity which I believe augurs very well.

Finally, 18 months or two years ago, I was shocked by a piece of news coming out of the home province of the secretary of state, which is the potato capital of the country. As he will no doubt remember, there was an overabundance of potatoes and to keep prices up, both governments had found an ingenious trick. I must specify that it was the previous government. Anyway, they decided to buy the potatoes and bury them in a dump. I wonder if the member recalls this incident. It did not happen on the other side of our planet, but in New Brunswick, 18 months or two years ago.

I cannot forget the photosynthesis formula I was taught in grade school; you too will remember that we were told that on Earth there are three life–giving elements: water, air and earth. I will remind you that without water for three to four days, it is the end of this world for us.

Therefore, it with pleasure that the Bloc Quebecois joins the hon. member for Beauséjour in saluting the World Food Day Association of Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, October 16 marks the 14th celebration of World Food Day. Governments got together and said they were in favour of food. This is ridiculous. What do governments have to do with food? Farmers produce food, other business people process and market food.

In Canada every day is food day. In this country for the most part at least, with a few notable exceptions, markets operate as they should. Prices tell farmers what customers want. Prices tell farmers what should be grown. Prices tell stores what to sell and customers what to buy.

I am not saying things are perfect here in Canada. There is still far too much government involvement in our industry, there is no doubt about that. Governments have too much say in marketing boards. There are too many interprovincial trade barriers and too many bureaucratic hoops for farmers to jump through in order to make a decent living.

Here where people are free food is abundant. Throughout the world there is a large discrepancy between what is being produced and what is needed. Unfair trade practices, for example the export enhancement program in the United States and the common agriculture policies in the European Union, prevent free markets from operating as they should.

• (1515)

Why are the countries of the former Soviet Union suffering from hunger? It is because they are still suffering from the effects of a centrally planned economy.

When governments stay out of the way, people co–operate to produce plenty. When governments get involved things go wrong; supply is short, prices are too high and markets are skewed. Would you let the post office feed you? World Food Day is not a recognition of what governments have done. It recognizes what governments have failed to do. Government involvement in agriculture should be reduced to a minimum. This is essential to the growth of the future of the agriculture industry in Canada and indeed around the world.

If governments would get out of the way we would be well on the way toward minimizing world hunger.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe that you will find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion:

> That the House, pursuant to Standing Order 119.1(1), authorize the Subcommittee on national security of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to televise the meeting of Tuesday, October 18, 1994, in accordance with the guidelines pertaining to televising Committee proceedings.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

POSTAL SUBSIDY

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present a petition duly certified by the clerk of petitions containing 60 signatures from residents of the town of Assiniboia and district in my constituency.

Whereas the library book postal subsidy is necessary for the continued operation of interlending services among libraries and plays a vital role in the distribution of cultural and technical information and whereas cancellation of the subsidy or changes in the amount of subsidy would result in severely hampering the public's access to information housed in libraries, wherefore the undersigned your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to continue the library book postal subsidy and to ensure that there will be no further erosion in the resulting library book postal rate.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and honour to rise in the House to present a petition signed by 105 constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands and surrounding area which has been duly certified by the clerk of petitions.

The petitioners humbly pray and call on Parliament to ensure that the Victoria Commonwealth Games shooting facilities will be completely removed from Heal's rifle range by October 31, 1994.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition from constituents in Horsefly, Williams Lake and 150 Mile House, British Columbia.

My constituents call on the government to refrain from passing any legislation that results in additional gun control laws. My constituents also request that under existing laws Parliament act to increase penalties for the illegal possession of a firearm or for criminal use of any firearm.

• (1520)

This petition is presented with my concurrence.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present two petitions.

The petitioners call on Parliament to reject any proposals which might add to the existing regulatory restrictions for firearms. These restrictions clearly punish law–abiding gun owners and do not address the real problem in Canada which is a crime problem.

The petitioners go on to urge government to provide strict sentencing guidelines and mandatory sentences for anyone convicted of a crime while in possession of a weapon or a firearm. Their message is get tough on criminals, not on law–abiding citizens.

I agree with these proposals.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 36 I wish to present two petitions on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe Centre. The first is on the issue of euthanasia. These petitioners request that the current laws regarding active euthanasia be enforced.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): The second petition requests that the Government of Canada not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners fear that such an inclusion could lead to homosexuals receiving the same benefits and societal privileges as married people.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise to present two petitions, the first one asking that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): The second petition asks that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am honoured to present a petition on behalf of 1,252 Albertans, many of whom are my constituents.

These petitioners request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which would in any way indicate the societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality. These petitioners also ask that Parliament not amend the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

Not only am I pleased to present this petition but I endorse the petition as well.

YOUTH

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): This petition is about young people. My constituents see our young Canadians as our greatest asset. They point out that youth today has many challenges, for example the breakdown of the traditional family which has caused certain problems. They see increasing violence in our society. These petitioners want the government to continue to ensure that training, retraining and jobs are a priority for all Canadians and certainly our young men and women.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Question No. 79 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 79—**Mr. Morrison:**

With regard to the Department of Industry, has federal funding been provided to Para–Ordnance located in Scarborough, Ontario, If so, how much, for what purpose and for how long?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): A search of the department's corporate database has indicated that there is no record of financial assistance having been provided to "Para–Ordnance Mfg Inc." located in Scarborough, Ontario under programs administered by Industry Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I suggest that all other remaining questions stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b), because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment; and of the amendment to the amendment.

● (1525)

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to support Bill C–46. I want to talk about some positive aspects of the government's policy direction because economic indicators in Canada are indeed positive.

It is not a complete coincidence that the Canadian government has introduced new restructuring such as the Department of Industry. At the same time, to be frank and forthright, there are still unsatisfactory economic conditions which need to be addressed. It is my hope that logical steps, including the new Industry Canada format, will lead to sustainable economic recovery in Canada.

The approach of fiscal responsibility with sensible spending reductions while maintaining integral support for business and industry is a reasonable policy for today's economic climate. The reorganization and creation of the new Department of Industry is probably most often associated with business operations in cities such as high tech and sophisticated science based companies. However, I would like to comment on the new Industry Canada from a different perspective, that of a rural setting. Canada's rural regions also depend on industrial development.

My riding of Kenora—Rainy River is in northern Ontario where most people automatically think of resource industries like mining and forestry. While that is true, we do depend on the resource sector to provide us with an economic foundation but the realities of a new market order dictate that economies across Canada diversify.

Industry Canada is tailored to accommodate diversity in all regions of the country. In northern Ontario diversification has been ongoing for many years, out of necessity I might add. Changing market conditions and economic downturns in the major resource sectors have forced regional economies to develop new markets and new strategies.

Diversified industrial sectors play a vital role in northern Ontario's economy. The focus of tourism has expanded to include non–traditional and non–consumptive vacation packages which complement the more common products of fishing

and hunting lodges. This new brand of ecotourism is not replacing the traditional tourism market but rather diversifying a strong sector.

In the past our resource sector consisted of pulp and paper mills and gold mines only. These mills and mines are still the backbone of the northern Ontario economy but now we realize there must be a concerted effort to diversify.

Companies are now concentrating on secondary industry by manufacturing wood and mineral products instead of exporting raw materials. The production of wood furniture and mineral products such as granite headstones is indicative of a diversified economy taking shape in northern Ontario.

Secondary manufacturing such as printing products and packaging and, yes, leading edge technology in a vast array of fields from computers to agriculture and telecommunications is the new wave of economics in northern Ontario and rural regions across the country. This is why Industry Canada profoundly affects rural Canada as well as urban Canada. This is why northern Ontario is keenly interested in the structures within a new department of Industry Canada.

Although I have just cited fairly large resource sectors, there is another area important to my riding and the rest of the country which Industry Canada must service efficiently to promote economic growth and that is a topic that I have raised many times in the House, the area of small and medium sized businesses.

The initiatives and new mandate of Industry Canada are essential tools for small business growth. In order to become more efficient and gain access to large markets, small business across the country must be provided with a network of services and information so that skills can be acquired to start new innovative operations as well as expanding traditional businesses.

Federal developments important to the success of the small business sector include the Canadian Technology Network, Canada Investment Fund, engineers and scientists programs and the much talked about information highway.

• (1530)

Networking and sharing of market information are absolutely crucial to building competitive companies in the global marketplace. Organizations such as economic development offices, centres of excellence, and the new local training boards must develop networks so that business can access the tools they need to remain competitive. Industry Canada is actively promoting such a network with its new initiatives.

New changes to the Small Businesses Loans Act, the Federal Business Development Bank and the formation of a new relationship between financial institutions and small business are also areas important to business and industrial progress. I took part in a task force hearing in Ontario with my colleagues examining a new code of conduct for banks and small business. Granted, changes will not take place overnight. It is this type of initiative that small business will need to survive in the new marketplace.

Gaining reasonable access to capital dollars has been a distinct problem for small and medium sized businesses attempting to expand or establish new ventures. We need these companies to create new jobs and fire the economic engine.

Industry Canada is one of the federal departments working to enhance financial conditions for Canadian companies. Industry Canada will also work toward other objectives to strengthen our potential for economic growth. Eliminating duplication of business services and regulations between federal and provincial governments is an important step in making it easier for our industrial sectors to flourish.

Industry Canada is vigorously pursuing new and practical partnerships with different levels of government. Combine this action with programs that are developed in co–operation with the private sector and we hope to have a new industrial structure in Canada that promotes growth and prosperity. I acknowledge that the private business community will lead Canada's economic recovery, but we in government on this side of the House strongly feel there is a constructive role to play for departments like the Department of Industry.

Specifically I do not blame the industrial sector in northern Ontario if it feels the previous government left it out in the cold during tough economic times. Unfortunately it was the attitude of the federal government to feed struggling companies to the dogs. Liberals, I might add, do not think that is the way we should go. We do not want to throw good money after bad money, but far too often companies needing only a small amount of support to get over the hump were ignored and died a very quiet death.

In the past I have suffered alongside business people in my riding who were unable to access appropriate government services and funding programs. Business proposals with excellent promise were often ignored because of patronage attitudes, a lack of vision within the federal government and plain old bungling. I hope we can eliminate that in the future.

Programs and services being developed by Industry Canada are designed to identify struggling companies with a potential worth saving. That is the Liberal way of building a strong economy.

In conclusion, I return to the resource sector in northern Ontario and the rest of Canada. Primary resource industries not only provide revenues, jobs and valuable exports, but they also spark secondary industry. This economic process is vital to my riding and all of northern Ontario.

Secondary industries, or clusters as they are known in the current terminology of new age economics, spin off from a strong resource sector and form all sorts of companies providing jobs and stability. It is of the utmost urgency that Industry Canada follow through with the promising initiatives created by this new federal department. The new and revitalized role of Industry Canada truly has the potential to forge a solid economic framework in the country. The new mandate of federal departments like Industry Canada is to nurture co–operative partnerships on which we can build an effective national economy.

I am confident that regions such as northern Ontario will now at least have a fighting chance to take advantage of a healthy business environment, due in large part to the development of practical effective federal programs.

• (1535)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, my constituency happens to be virtually a mirror reflection of the hon. member's constituency. I understand the whole business of resource base and the business of having to diversify.

I was very encouraged this morning when the finance minister said: "Equally we believe that regional economic assistance should focus on genuine opportunities that have the potential to be self–sustaining. We intend to concentrate, for example, more on tourism and on the creation of a positive environment for small and medium sized businesses, the multinationals of tomorrow. At the individual level, as our social security reform proposals make clear, we also believe there is a need to change unemployment insurance, building on reforms begun in last February's budget".

Using exactly the same context in the very next paragraph that follows he said: "The current system is outdated social policy. While it has worked well for a lot of people, for too many others the UI system does little or nothing for their self–esteem or success. But the current UI system is outdated economic policy too. It encourages chronic use and repeat use of the program by businesses and individuals. It is a barrier that prevents people from adapting to changes that are unavoidable and opportunities that are present. Therefore we intend to take measures that will bring UI back closer to what the term says, insurance".

I would like to ask the hon. member two questions. First, during the course of the last election I am sure the hon. member will have run into a Reform candidate somewhere along the line. I would rather suspect that Reform candidate said exactly what the Minister of Finance said this morning, that unemployment insurance should be returned to its original purpose, insurance.

I would be curious. What did the hon. member say in those particular situations? I would suspect that his constituents might be interested to see if what he is saying today, reflecting on what the minister who is a leader in his party is saying, is actually parallel to what he was saying during the course of the campaign.

Was he like other Liberal members attacking Reform Party people who were saying unemployment insurance should be returned to its original purpose, insurance, or was he agreeing with the minister? Is there a consistency in his position?

Mr. Nault: Madam Speaker, yes, I did run into Reform candidates in the last election, which I found to be quite interesting. The member should know two things. I very much followed the platform of the Reform Party, simply because if I was going to run against somebody I should know what my opposition was saying.

Reform Party members did not say that they were just in favour of bringing UI back to its original intent of insurance. They were saying they wanted the government to get out of UI completely, to privatize UI and put it in the hands of the employers and the employees or, more important, in the hands of the business sector and let it run the whole show.

The member has to be a little more frank and open when he says that what the minister said today in his paper is identical to what the Reform Party said. There is a very significant difference between what was said in the paper today and what the Reform Party said during the last election campaign.

During the campaign I said—and we have said it continually in the House and I will say it again—that the UI system as it is presently working is ineffective for people in regions like mine because it puts them on a treadmill. Because of the problem created by the regulations as they now exist, businesses use UI as a means of augmenting their business and their existing revenues within the company structure.

I am a railroader. I have three railway terminals in my riding. At the height of the transportation of grains and other commodities at a certain time of the year there are hundreds more employees working in the railway industry than in winter months. As soon as they get enough weeks the railway lays them off. The industry is compensated by having individuals who are technically sound come back into the business when business picks up. Who pays for that?

• (1540)

An hon. member: They get a subsidy.

Mr. Nault: Obviously, it is a subsidy. I have questioned that for a number of years and it is only one example. Those are things the minister and the government are trying to change so that people will be able to improve their lot without being on a treadmill.

In conclusion, this morning the minister referred to diversifying northern Ontario and having regional development programs that do two things. They access dollars for the

diversification of regions like mine. We continue to say that. We still say that and the minister has said that.

We have also said that we want to focus on a business relationship more than subsidies, wherein we will give loans and encourage businesses to succeed by having a fair regional development program. That is very consistent with what we all have said in the past.

By taking the criticisms of the finance minister out of context the member is suggesting that somehow we have changed. In fact we have not; we are still saying what we said all along.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): We are now in a period when all speakers can speak for 10 minutes and there are no questions or answers.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am not sure if I am hearing a drum roll over there or something more serious is happening; it is a bit disconcerting.

Mr. Abbott: A drum roll for your speech.

Mr. Penson: Yes, that is what it is.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C–46. The bill clearly demonstrates the government's vision of how business should be carried out in Canada, with a ball and chain tied to one leg.

As far as business is concerned the bill is taking industry in exactly the wrong direction. Business is not crying out for regional development grants. In most cases, when such money is withdrawn the enterprise that was initially helped by government money fails.

Business is not crying out for more programs and more bureaucrats to administer them. In fact the opposite is the case. It should be government's role to provide an environment where business can operate freely and do what it does best: creating competitive goods, creating services on one hand and sustainable employment on the other.

Instead Bill C–46 gives the minister wide–ranging powers to create an environment in which government is the central tool of economic development and where government establishes policies and programs for specific groups and industries. Surely we must learn from the lesson of the former east bloc countries: government intervention does not work.

If taxpayers had all the details of how their hard earned money was spent in the past in the so–called national interest, they would be outside picketing right now. The cabinet should have no right to alter significantly any industry or company in favour of another. Companies and industries must be able to enter and exit the market on the basis of their financial viability. All industries and organizations must face a level playing field and evenhanded policies that facilitate and improve on trade and commerce within Canada.

Governments must learn to let industry stand on its own and die on its own. In the west we have seen the national energy policy and we have seen Petro–Canada. We know the results of government interference and excess of ministerial direction.

It is time to rein in an overbearing government and let Canadian businesses push the country forward. Instead the government insists on having its nose in the workings of the Canadian economy through micromanagement of industry. It is an unacceptable intrusion in all sectors of the economy. The government must devise national policies and stay out of influencing Canadian industry, organizations, regions and provinces in a piecemeal manner.

The Hibernias, Novotels and Lloydminster upgraders of the country should be things of the past. Unfortunately they continue to place a heavy burden on Canadian taxpayers and distort allocation of Canadian human and physical resources. Successive governments, including this one, have still not learned that these projects do not work.

The bill gives a blank cheque to the Minister of Industry to fund projects at will. Canadians remember the individual projects awarded to Shawinigan and Baie Comeau. That was done by the past government, but we seem to be following the same road here. They remember the millions of dollars funnelled into projects of no economic benefit, starting with changes to the mandate of the Department of Industry and responsible to the minister. Reform believes these kinds of projects should be eliminated.

• (1545)

No less out of date is part II of this bill which relates to regional economic development. At one time regional economic development was perceived as a means of reducing regional disparities. Regional economic policy has been in existence for a long time and is widely condemned by economists as a means of creating economic dependence, not economic development. Since its inception regional development policy has been about pork barrelling and perpetuating dying industries. In their heart of hearts I am sure everyone in this Chamber knows or at least suspects this.

The government should admit that regional development starts and ends in the regions themselves. The purpose of the government in the Department of Industry should be to develop national policies and facilitate trade and commerce within Canada, not to provide goods or services that the private sector should and could provide for itself and not to try to manage Canadian industry.

Let me mention some of the things businesses are asking of the government. I take these items directly from the task force

paper released in September 1994 and prepared for the Business Council on National Issues.

Industry wants balanced government budgets with low levels of public indebtedness. Industry wants competitive levels of taxation that encourage savings and investment, things that other countries such as China has. Industry wants international economic policies that promote aggressive trade development and diversification. Industry wants a federation characterized by free trade internally and smaller and more efficient governments working more closely together.

The Department of Industry cannot give businesses balanced budgets, competitive taxation levels and internal free trade by distributing grants or delivering programs. I cannot help but wonder if the government is at odds with itself in the design of this bill.

Today, in this very Chamber we heard the member for Kootenay East refer to the Minister of Finance and his press release, explicitly stating and I quote: "That the private sector is the core of the economy and that government's role requires a fundamental redesign". I quote the Minister of Finance as well: "If Canada is to become more productive, government must become more productive too. We must shift from trying to fix every problem ourselves. And if government activities still do not serve a significant public purpose they should not be continued. I say let us go to it and eliminate grant giving and regional development programs altogether". The Minister of Finance has more to say on the subject: "Restoring the fiscal health is essential. If we do not do that job we will fail at everything else". He is absolutely right.

Here is an opportunity to create enormous savings. One department is being created out of four: the department of industry, science and technology; the broadcasting side of the department of communications; Investment Canada; and the department of consumer and corporate affairs. These changes were put in place under the previous short–lived government before it became apparent how Canada's fiscal situation really was.

Could not more have been done to bring fiscal sanity to bear here? Out of 6,000 positions within these four departments only 230 are being eliminated. That is less than 4 per cent. Out of a budget of $3 billion only $26 million is being eliminated. That is less than 1 per cent. I suggest that the proponents of this bill get hold of the press release of the Minister of Finance and study it.

The government does require a fundamental redesign, as the finance minister puts it. In the area of industry a whole new model is required. The federal government's goal in the industry department should be to establish and maintain a culture that rewards entrepreneurship, innovation and research, and which ensures a level, competitive and honest marketplace.

• (1550)

Hand in hand with this approach should be government policies that encourage free markets, enhance competition and treat all individuals and groups equally. Such policies will see too that business can trade fairly within Canada and that tax rates allow business to be competitive.

These are the kinds of changes industry requires for the 21st century. I hope the government is listening and will make the required changes so Canadian industry can compete and be healthy in the future.

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to discuss Bill C–46, a reorganization of the industry department. It is an important piece of legislation. A large number of activities which are going to affect the business community are being brought together into one department: small business support; tourism; economic development; telecommunications; trade and commerce; science; and consumer affairs.

The thrust of the legislation in what it is trying to accomplish is very positive. We are trying to make the department more efficient. We are going to give the small business sector and the business community in general one stop, the Department of Industry, in which to interface with government rather than having to go through a paper chase every time.

It is going to be a more efficient process. We are going to have a number of consolidations. The member opposite mentioned some of the savings that are beginning. Those will be accelerated as time goes on. We are going to have a more productive department. We are going to have centralized planning and direction for our government's industry policy. This consolidated department will give us the opportunity to do that.

There are three specific areas I would like to talk about: small business support; tourism; and regional economic development.

Small business support by the Department of Industry is absolutely critical to the Canadian economy. It is the fastest growing component of our economy. In the first three years of this decade during one of the worst recessions we have ever experienced, 73,000 new small businesses were created. Eight of ten new jobs in the country come from the small business sector. It employs 4.2 million Canadians and accounts for 37 per cent of the country's employment. This new Department of Industry is undertaking a number of important initiatives to help this sector grow, to help it expand, to help it employ more Canadians.

One of the most important initiatives which I have had some direct input on and one which my colleague for Kenora—Rainy River mentioned was access to capital. It is absolutely essential that the small business sector be able to access both debt and equity capital if it is going to have an opportunity to expand or an opportunity to establish new businesses. The department has already moved in this area. A private sector committee estab-

lished last winter has been studying this issue. It is about to make a report with some very specific recommendations on how an environment can be created within which small business can access capital.

The department is working with the chartered banks, with this committee and others on a code of conduct. It will establish the relationship that will exist between the small business sector and the banking community to help ensure there is better access to capital.

There is an ongoing review of the Federal Business Development Bank to make it more effective and more responsive to the needs of the small business sector. An all party committee of this House, the industry committee, will table within a couple of days its report with some very thorough and sound recommendations on how this process can be taken even further.

I had an opportunity earlier this year to chair an access to capital task force. It toured the province of Ontario and discussed with the small business sector some of the things that can be done to help them access capital.

Beyond that the department is doing other things. It is helping formulate business networks to help individual small businesses combine their strengths so they can compete globally. They are working on establishing a Canada investment fund to help innovative firms access venture capital, to operate not as a replacement for capital from the private sector but as a stimulus for entry into those markets.

• (1555)

There should be better access to government programming through business service centres. This is an important initiative. Small business people do not have the time to go through reams and reams of paper trying to access information. They need it to be given concisely and in one location. This is an important initiative that is being undertaken co–operatively with the provinces.

There is a private sector committee working under the auspices of the industry department looking at the business environment, including the regulatory and paper burden that small businesses have to operate under today. We have to relieve the small business people from spending more time on paperwork than doing their jobs and more time on trying to adhere to regulations than trying to earn profits and employing people.

The second area is tourism, a critical industry in Canada and a critical industry in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. Representing 10 per cent of the Canadian labour force, 1.2 million jobs depend on this sector. In Canada 60,000 businesses are directly employed in the tourism industry. It generates $12.9 billion in tax revenue which can be used for the betterment of all Canadians. Locally in my riding 52 per cent of all employed individuals are directly affected by the tourism industry. For each million dollars that we are able to increase tourism in my riding we can create 39 person–years of employment.

Industry Canada through Tourism Canada is working hard on making that a bigger and better industry in this country. It is helping to formulate partnerships with the private sector so that we can market ourselves internationally as a country and attract more visitors to Canada. They are concentrating on the development of new products such as a winter experience product including snowmobiling and cross–country skiing, areas of vital concern in my riding where people are able to earn their livings.

This is not going to be the end. It is the beginning. As the Minister of Finance said today in his statement, the area of tourism is one the government will concentrate on in the months ahead. As well, the Prime Minister appointed his special advisor to recommend further action. Tourism will be looked at by this government. It will be pursued and will become an even more important industrial tool in Canada.

The last area I would like to touch on very briefly is the area of economic development. Something that is often forgotten in all of the plans is that in northern Ontario we are a resource based economy which has experienced great financial difficulties over the years.

The economic development agency FEDNOR operates in northern Ontario. I agree with the Minister of Finance and several other comments in the House that we cannot subsidize a losing proposition and expect it is going to have any meaningful impact. However, economic development agencies can invest in the future winners. It can help lever investment from the private sector. In fact FEDNOR has committed $53 million directly but by doing so it has been able to lever $186 million in additional funds. That is what economic development agencies are all about. That is what they do.

FEDNOR has participated in 843 projects since its inception and it has helped create or maintain over 3,600 jobs. FEDNOR is an important initiative for northern Ontario. It is one under the auspices of the Minister of Industry and I am pleased to see it will continue under the reorganized department.

In summary, this bill is committed to creating a department which will create an environment in which business can prosper. The reorganization of the department will help this happen. It will make it more efficient, more effective and more productive. I would like to congratulate the minister, his assistants and the people of his department on a job well done in formulating this piece of legislation.

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C–46, the Department of Industry Act.

Our nation faces many challenges. Canada can no longer rely solely on its natural resources. The demands of the future cannot be met by supplies of the past. We must develop in ourselves and in our industries the skills needed to challenge the conventional ways of competing at home and abroad.

• (1600)

The competition we face abroad requires us to create new skills among our workforce and a new vision in our industry. A country that solves its own problems and competes successfully with others stays strong and independent. We must begin competing as a team against our international competitors.

This bill will allow the formation of a framework with which we can begin to build Canada's industrial strategy.

The newly created Department of Industry will work with all sectors of the economy to facilitate partnerships between government, business, research centres and labour. An industrial strategy will enable us to better compete in the global marketplace.

We must also foster a climate to encourage Canadians to develop an entrepreneurial spirit that harnesses their skills and creativity. As we know, small and medium sized businesses are the engine of our economy and that is why they must be an integral part of a national industrial strategy.

The small and medium sized businesses of today with the right climate can become tomorrow's multinationals. In order for us to achieve economic growth we must use our limited resources more effectively to encourage entrepreneurs to create the wealth by becoming innovative and helping to expand our export economy.

Canada's exports account for about 40 per cent of the total output of the private sector. One in five Canadian jobs is directly dependent on exports. One billion dollars of exports translates into 15,000 new jobs. That is why the government is aggressively pursuing international trade opportunities.

The creation of this department will help set the framework of achieving the government's objectives, the creation of jobs and economic growth by encouraging businesses, labour and institutions to work together in setting goals and striving to achieve them.

This will enable us to achieve a stronger economy and a better standard of living for all Canadians. Canada already is home to companies that are at the leading edge in their field such as telecommunications, biotechnology, environment and health care, et cetera.

What we must do is facilitate the greater success of these industries in an ever competitive international climate by ensuring that the environment here at home is conducive to the continued achievement of excellence.

Through business networks our government has initiated the sharing of information among diverse sectors of the economy, enabling them to compete internationally, such as the business corporation network which enables Canadian firms to access thousands of partnering opportunities in 36 countries.

Another example is the advisory council made up of diverse business interests working together on the development of the information superhighway, not only for internal use but also for the export market.

We must also improve the efficiency of our industries by allowing them to compete more effectively within our borders. Canada is hampered by many internal trade barriers. The cost of these barriers to Canadians is as high as $6 billion annually.

The Minister of Industry, working in co–operation with his provincial counterparts, has already begun and continues to reduce these barriers to assist the free mobility of goods and services.

Without the innovations of basic research industry will stagnate. Countries such as Japan, Germany and the U.S. spend a far greater proportion of their GDP on research and development than does Canada. To compete internationally we must use our limited resources by working smarter in partnership with existing institutions in the private sector to find new technologies that can be applied and marketed both internally and abroad.

With this bill we will fulfil our responsibility as co–ordinators of the vital relationship between research and industry and promote the fullest use of science and technology from the conception of an idea to its fruition in the international marketplace.

In order for the government to continue to strengthen its support of basic research and its industrial applications we must be able to obtain royalties from research that succeed in being used in the industrial applications in order that these moneys can be reinvested in future research.

• (1605)

Small and medium sized enterprises must be in a position to obtain and capitalize on the innovations of Canadians as they develop these new technologies. Our government will continue to streamline programs to assist the small and medium sized enterprises to foster these new technologies.

In order for these small and medium sized enterprises to succeed access to capital is vital. Along with the reduction of red tape and the burden of the GST our government has already begun the process of streamlining programs and eliminating

some of these obstacles that impede the growth of small and medium sized enterprises.

We must encourage competition among financial institutions to ensure that we give our SMEs as much access to capital as possible. Along with these initiatives our government has increased funding to and the role of the FBDB which will play a more active role in aiding our small and medium sizes enterprises.

As a member of the industry committee I studied the issue most critical to the SMEs which is their inability to access capital. We will putting forward our recommendations tomorrow. Along with those recommendations that will be tabled tomorrow I will be making an additional recommendation to my caucus and colleagues which is to encourage the chartered banks to achieve a target of lending to small and medium sized enterprises of 33 per cent of the total corporate loans, a ratio of one to two; that is, for every two dollars lent to large businesses one dollar should be lent to small and medium sized enterprises.

If the banks comply with this recommendation the capital available to the small and medium sized enterprises will increase from $30 billion to $45 billion, an increase of 50 per cent. Two banks are already achieving this target on their own.

The industry act will help our business become more innovative, efficient and be armed with enough capital to compete internationally. We must take advantage also of our well established international reputation to take Canadian business to the world and also to bring the world to Canada.

Our tourist industry already accounts for more than 500,000 full time jobs and more than 60,000 enterprises. Last year visitors to Canada contributed $9 billion in foreign exchange to our economy and Canadians added a further $18 billion while travelling within the country.

A national tourism strategy will be undertaken with the public and private sectors to restructure and improve Canada's tourism. A comprehensive marketing program both domestically and abroad will help reduce the $8.2 billion travel account deficit as well as improve industry competitiveness.

My constituents of Trinity—Spadina are looking forward to this revitalization of tourism. We must market Canada to the people of the world with pride and invite them here so that they can share with us the beauty our country has to offer. I believe this bill will enhance the streamlining required to make Canada's industries competitive in the global marketplace.

The framework is set to establish a comprehensive industrial strategy which will allow our governments to be the catalysts in achieving our common goals. By helping to co–ordinate these partnerships we will stimulate economic growth and at the same time reduce the deficit and increase the standard of living for all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke—Pearson International Airport.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I wish to address my remarks with regard to Bill C–46 starting with the explanation of why the Reform Party had a subamendment which my colleague presented to the House to include that not only should Quebec be recognized but that rather all the provinces should be recognized. We put this into the framework of the Reform's vision for the department.

I would like to now recognize some of the remarks that have been made by my colleagues opposite. If all of those things that they are talking about, the industrial development that is going to take place, the research and development, the integration of research with industrial development, take place it will take place not because of this bill but in spite of the bill.

We believe the department needs, like all governments, a set of guiding principles and policies, a mission if you will. I would like to state that once again. We believe the role of the Department of Industry is to establish and maintain a culture which rewards entrepreneurship, innovation and research, and ensures a level, competitive and honest marketplace.

• (1610)

To achieve that means to decentralize, not to centralize control. We need to emphasize the reduction of the ability to interfere in the marketplace, and this bill does exactly the opposite. What this bill does is allow the minister and the cabinet in particular to interfere in the marketplace. There must be an emphasis on improving the ability of the marketplace to self–regulate, as was so clearly demonstrated by my colleague. Serious intervention by the government and by the minister in particular should be in emergency cases only.

The national interest must be clearly defined by the people of Canada through Parliament, and in extraordinary circumstances by a national referendum, and not be left in the hands of the cabinet as this bill does.

Regional development is in particular the focus of our amendment. Many fundamental problems that exist in the marketplace today arise not because of the fact that the marketplace was allowed to operate but because there was intervention in the marketplace. Many scholars and former senior mandarins of this and related departments have noted that a national industrial strategy and regional development strategies are mutually incompatible. They fight against one another. We heard my

colleague mention that with regard to subsidies and grants in particular.

The federal government should treat all regions of Canada equally and provide a level field so that people can compete on an equal footing. Fair treatment would eliminate the need for a minister to decide between the national interest on the one hand and the regional interest on the other.

Regional political patronage and, just as important, the temptation to engage in it would be removed to a great extent if the instrument of regional development were done away with. Better efficiency within the department should be realized.

The history of the department coupled with this proposed reorganization shows that this minister has chosen not to exercise leadership, but rather to accept as a fait accompli what was there with the previous government which was a Progressive Conservative government. This government in this bill is perpetuating the confusion and lack of solid direction that existed before.

I want to draw particular attention to some of the things that have happened with regional development. They are an excuse very often for the pork barrelling patronage that goes on. They have represented slush funds in the history of Canada.

Let us talk in particular about Shawinigan for a moment. Shawinigan turned into a canoe specialist area, with the federal government's infrastructure contribution to the canoe hall of fame this year. The canoe hall of fame may be portrayed as regional development but it is certainly not an infrastructure program as Canadians understand it.

When Canadians voted this government in last fall they expected two things from the red book: integrity in government and sound fiscal management. I contend that the record thus far has shown they did not get either.

Projects across this country similar to the Shawinigan one may be noted and we need to look at some of the ways that money has been spent. It does not matter whether the projects are under the infrastructure program or the regional development agencies, it is a pork barrel at its worst.

Let me give a few examples. The list is long but I will refrain from going through the whole list.

Twenty thousand dollars was given to a Quebec fashion industry gala at Montreal's Olympic Stadium; $500,000 for the Upper Humber Golf Club in Deer Lake, Newfoundland; $89,434 for an Acadian wax museum in Caraquet, New Brunswick; $150,000 to develop a program to educate teachers in Cape Breton about economic development; over $500,000 for boccie courts in Toronto; $5 million to help Peter Pocklington improve Northlands Coliseum and Ducey Park in Edmonton; $25,000 to study the possibility of hosting the International Pan–Celtic Festival; and $224,000 for Rita McNeil's tea room and gift shop. It is all too sad that these types of projects are the norm and not the exception. There are some noted good projects as well, but these are the kinds of examples that should not exist at all.

• (1615)

A new parity is needed, one where the free market is allowed to operate freely with competition and let the best one win, not the government deciding who wins and who loses.

I conclude with these words. We should establish a marketplace, an industry department that establishes and maintains a culture and rewards entrepreneurship, innovation and research and ensures a level, competitive and honest marketplace. Hand in hand with this approach are government policies encouraging free markets, enhancing competition and treating all individuals and groups equally. They are the kinds of policies that will make Canada strong and prosperous in the 21st century. These are the kinds of policies we support.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Berger (Saint–Henri—Westmount, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to participate in the debate on this bill to establish the new Department of Industry.

As you know, the department is given wide powers including not only functions previously assigned to the former Department of Industry, Science and Technology, but also certain functions of the Department of Communications and the former Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The Department of Industry is responsible for the administration of government programs in support of the industry, including small businesses, tourism, science and technology. All government activities relating to science and technology come under the Department of Industry, including those carried out by agencies like the National Research Council, the Canadian Space Agency and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, just to name a few.

Telecommunications policy, consumer protection and corporate affairs in Canada come under the Department of Industry. This is a very wide mandate.

Naturally, this bill deals with government organization. And while organization is important, it is the policy set forth by the department that is the essential factor. The department objectives are stated in Section 5 of the bill:

> (*a*) strengthen the national economy and promote sustainable development;
>
> (*b*) promote the mobility of goods, services and factors of production, [—]and of trade and commerce in Canada;

(c) increase the international competitiveness of Canadian industry, goods and services[. . .]

And the list goes on. My point in quoting these examples is that this government's action is in fact based on Chapter 3 of the famous red book, the Liberal electoral platform. This chapter is entitled "An Innovative Economy". I would say that this document, the red book, was innovative in that it emphasizes the importance of the small– and medium–sized businesses in the modern economy.

Let me quote briefly from page 47 in Chapter 3 on an innovative economy, where we read that a "Liberal government will focus on small– and medium–sized businesses because they can and must be the determining factor in turning around what has so far been a jobless recovery". Small– and medium–sized businesses employ 36.7 percent—almost 37 percent—of the labour force and account for roughly 40 percent of our gross domestic product. They have recently—in the 1980s—been responsible for up to 85 percent of new job creation in Canada.

• (1620)

In its electoral platform, the government undertook to improve access to capital for small– and medium–sized businesses. The industry committee has spent the past six or seven months reviewing this issue and will be tabling its report tomorrow. The government also promised to establish a Canada–wide technology network. Plans to that effect have already been announced. Here is another example. The government promised to promote technology partnerships between universities, research institutions and businesses, with a view to focussing on commercial applications of research and development.

Since coming to power, the government has embarked upon widespread consultations on the expansion of science and technology. Such consultations are carried out under the direction of the Minister of Industry, Mr. Manley, and the Secretary of State to Science, Research and Development, Mr. Gerrard.

[*English*]

I do not think members would find it surprising for me to say that I believe the industry committee has a particularly important role to play in policy development. Being the chairman of the committee, I suppose it is only normal that I would say that. Committee work may not always appear to be glamorous but it is in committees that the nuts and bolts of government policy become reality.

Tomorrow we will table our report on small business financing. The report deals with financing but it also tries to provide a context. We try to address the significance of small– and medium sized businesses in today's economy.

I referred earlier to the off–sided statistic that small– and medium sized business accounted for 85 per cent of the jobs that were created in the 1980s. Small businesses are important to job creation and community cohesion but there is more to it than that.

Not all small businesses have the potential to become medium sized businesses or big businesses. We need policies that address the needs of small businesses with strong growth potential. We also need to concern ourselves with the interactions between small and large businesses.

We need to be conscious of the competitive environment in which all Canadian businesses operate. We address these questions in the report that we will be tabling tomorrow. I hope the report will contribute to the debate and lead to policies that respond to the needs of Canadian businesses, small, medium sized and large.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to Bill C–46, an Act to establish the Department of Industry. The year 2000 is drawing near. With technology, the global village has become a reality. All sectors of activity are interconnected. It has become impossible to work in isolation.

At the same time, the difficult economic times we are going through force us to streamline, to be creative, to do more with less. This is exactly what the government is doing. It is integrating two key sectors under one department. It recognizes the major links that exist between the various sectors, particularly between science, research and technology, communications and industry. It is streamlining the government administration, making it leaner, thus producing substantial savings.

• (1625)

This bill puts into action the recovery plan announced by the Prime Minister last month in Quebec City, to improve the business climate for entrepreneurs, help businesses gain access to new technologies, seek expanding markets and promote tourism.

The Department of Industry is ideally suited as the focal point for the efforts put forth by all the economic development stakeholders, and this is very important in the province of Quebec.

There is no doubt that Quebec entrepreneurs are dynamic, imaginative and competitive. The success of what we call "Quebec Inc." is envied and copied far beyond the "belle province". But there is no doubt either that the federal government has provided precious and beneficial support to many businesses in Quebec.

A study by professor Gérald Bernier, of the University of Montreal, shows that, between 1970 and 1989, the federal government paid $3.9 billion in grants and loans to Quebec businesses.

We will also recall that it is thanks to export credits that Bombardier was able to secure the contract to manufacture subway cars for the New York subway system. That is how Bombardier broke into the international market of transportation. A few years later, the aerospace division of Bombardier bought Canadair from the government of Canada. Of course, you know this company well, Madam Speaker, since it is based in your riding. Bombardier took advantage of extremely easy conditions for the purchase of Canadair. It was also awarded a contract worth over $1 billion to maintain F–18 fighter aircraft, which is how Bombardier penetrated the aerospace market.

Same thing for Bell Helicopter. The Canadian government invested $165 million to convince the Texas company to settle in Quebec. The list of striking examples could go on and on and take up hours of this debate. What is most striking is that the government helps Quebec businesses in high–tech sectors, in sectors with good, permanent, well–paid jobs.

It must also be realized that the industry with a capital "I" is not limited to what it used to mean in the past. It goes beyond heavy industry and manufacturing. It represents the sector of society which generates wealth and promotes well–being. It covers financial aspects such as investments, human aspects such as consumers, as well as economic aspects such as the small– and medium–sized businesses my colleague eloquently talked about earlier.

This single name, Department of Industry, includes all the key factors that will enable Canada to set an innovative economic policy for one purpose only: to promote employment–generating growth. That is our goal. Putting consumers and businesses under the same departmental roof is an innovative idea.

Government officials and business people increasingly realize that industrial growth is a result of the interaction between them. This interaction allows businesses to design better products, develop sound corporate strategies and face global competition. We reinforce this principle of interaction by ensuring that consumers can be heard whenever policies affecting Canadian markets are put in place. In an ever changing market, it is essential to listen to consumers right from the start of the production process. This avoids costly adjustments afterwards.

The same goes for science and technology, regional development, small– and medium–sized businesses, and Aboriginal economic development. All these voices will be heard when policies are developed, agreements negotiated and decisions made. Science and technology will then have the impact needed to create an innovative economy. The $6 billion injected into this sector will thus yield the highest returns possible.

In the age of the information highway, adding telecommunications to the Department of Industry's responsibilities shows the increasingly important role of this sector as an engine of the Canadian economy.

• (1630)

In addition, small– and medium–sized businesses will remain among our priorities because this sector is the best source of long–term jobs. Initiatives such as the recent agreement on internal trade are another important step toward more open markets.

By eliminating over 700 barriers to the free movement of people, goods, services and investments, we will be more efficient and competitive. This is a concrete example of federalism in action.

We can never say loudly enough or often enough how important it is for everyone to co–operate in ensuring our economic and industrial development. Each fight, each confrontation, even each moment of hesitation, is costing us dearly in terms of lost investments and jobs that are not created.

That is why I am happy that the Prime Minister of Canada has asked the leader of the Quebec government to reconsider his decision not to participate in our major trade mission to China in two weeks.

We all understand that the Premier of Quebec is very busy forming his government and preparing for the next parliamentary session. This is certainly a very important and demanding stage, but it should not exclude everything else. In fact, the leader of our government faced exactly the same conflict soon after we were elected last year. He even described this experience in a letter he sent to the Premier of Quebec last week. The Prime Minister wrote this: "I remember the difficult decision I made to participate in the first Asia–Pacific Summit in November 1993, only a few days after my government was sworn in".

As the old saying goes, when there is a will, there is a way. The Quebec premier could concentrate on the most important days of the trade mission if his schedule does not allow for any more time. The important thing is that Quebec be represented by its premier, putting it at the same level as the other provinces. We want to show our trading partners that we are serious, consistent and well organized. All that is important to help Canadian businesses establish themselves on the new Asian markets.

That is why, as the Prime Minister so logically explained, we have asked Mr. Parizeau to reconsider his decision and participate personally in the Canadian mission to China. Quebecers from all regions and of all political stripes will be grateful to him.

I know that my time is up.

[*English*]

Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to participate in this debate on the bill to reorganize the Department of Industry. The red book foreshadowed this bill. Like this bill its main focus was on small and medium sized businesses as a determining factor in turning around the Canadian economy. It acknowledged that the growth of these firms is essential to creating jobs for all Canadians.

Several initiatives have been announced as part of the small and medium enterprise agenda. A new fund has been established to help expand existing businesses through the Federal Business Development Bank. As well, the Canada Community Investment Fund has been announced to ensure equity financing for smaller firms.

Part of the role of this bill is to focus on the importance of tourism to the Canadian economy. It must be recognized that the money government puts into tourism we get back within 90 days. We get this money back not tenfold but many times that rate.

In 1992 as an example, tourism generated $28 billion in sales revenue for Canada. In the same period the federal government through Industry Canada had a tourism budget of $23.2 million. Every federal dollar spent on tourism contributed $1,201 in sales revenue in Canada in 1992.

Canada's tourism industry also had a significant impact on our current account, contributing $8 billion a year. Tourism employs more than half a million Canadians directly and generated jobs faster than the economy as a whole over the past decade. It is an industry to be recognized. As well, the analysis shows that tourism affords solid opportunities for income and employment generation in all regions of Canada. Current favourable economic conditions offer an excellent opportunity to exploit more fully Canada's international competitive advantage, its clean, safe, natural environment and support industry efforts to attract more international tourists, thus increasing revenue for Canada.

• (1635)

It is my belief that the tourism industry affords an opportunity to provide entry level work and job experience for young Canadians and for groups that traditionally have had more difficulty obtaining employment. Almost 40 per cent of the people working in tourism are under the age of 25, nearly double the proportion of young people in the general labour force.

The tourism industry is also an important provider of jobs to the unemployed. It is a stepping stone for back to work after unemployment, particularly for the young. Sixty per cent of the people who get work in tourism get that work after a period of not working and are under the age of 25.

This government recognizes the importance of this industry and we support it accordingly. The support is shown by the Prime Minister's initiative and appointment of the Hon. Judd Buchanan to work with the government and the private sector to make recommendations on how to increase Canadian tourism and revenues.

I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Buchanan to discuss tourism concerns in my area of the country and I look forward to Mr. Buchanan's recommendations which I understand are to be made public soon.

In my riding we have the basis for creating an excellent tourism industry. Essex county and the city of Windsor have a wide degree of tourism oriented businesses. We have such historical sites as the Park House, Fort Malden, the North American Black Museum and additional historical sites that are being developed such as the Gordon House and HMS *Detroit*. As well everyone has heard about the opening of the casino in Windsor. It was expected and is bringing hundreds of thousands of new visitors to the area so far and will continue to do so we hope every year.

As well the recent acquisition of Boblo Island by a local developer who is interested in working with the community to create a year round tourism facility with year round employment opportunities should provide excellent opportunities for the area. Most important our area is bordered on three sides by natural waterways affording numerous recreational opportunities including one of Canada's most beautiful national parks, Point Pelee.

What is needed to create a sustainable tourism industry in our area is a strategic plan. The reorganized Department of Industry will be well positioned to create such an over–reaching strategic plan. I look forward to the announcement of measures in this area.

It has been my privilege to have the opportunity to participate in this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Call in the members.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

And the division bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*), the Chief Government Whip and the Chief opposition whip have asked me to defer the division.

Consequently, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*)(ii) the division on the questions now before the House is deferred until tomorrow at 5:30 p.m., at which time the bells will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT

The House resumed from September 27, consideration of the motion that Bill C–48, an Act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I representative of the riding of Abitibi, in Quebec. As many members know, it is possibly the largest riding in Canada outside the Northwest Territories, with an area of 500,000 square kilometres. In my riding, natural resources are most important, be they forests, mines or hydroelectricity. It is my duty to support the amendment proposed on September 27 by my colleague from the Bloc Quebecois:

> That this House declines to give second reading to Bill C–48, An Act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related Acts, given that the principle of the Bill does not provide for empowering the minister to compensate Quebec financially if it chooses to exercise its exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources itself, pursuant to the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Constitution Act, 1982.

Senator Gérald Beaudoin, a strong defender of the federal system, would surely share this opinion since, in an essay he wrote on the sharing of powers and entitled *Partage des compétences: c'est comme un vêtement sur mesure*, he recognized the limits of the spending powers of the federal government and the right of a province to "opt out" with financial compensation whenever the federal authority creates a new jointly funded, national program, provided the dissident province creates a similar program consistent with the national interests.

This bill brings nothing new, it is solely the creation of a new department, as part of a government reorganisation started in 1993 by the former Conservative prime minister, Ms. Kim Campbell. If the sole purpose of this bill was to merge two departments into one, with a view to saving money, improving efficiency and correcting the shortcomings found in the two previous bills creating the former departments, it would be easy, on the face of it, to accept it and even to support it.

However, it is rather obvious that with Bill C–48, the federal government is assuming powers and rights which are going to infringe upon an exclusive area of authority belonging to the provinces. It is totally unacceptable. As we, from the Bloc Quebecois, have been saying over and over again, this intrusion of the federal government leads to wasteful duplication and overlapping between the two levels of government, at great expense to Canadian and Quebec taxpayers.

We doubt that this bill is aimed at reducing this waste since its founding principles maintain the status quo and, even though departments are merged, they retain their mandate. If you go to the trouble of creating a new department, why not make sure at the same time that its operations are efficient and harmonized with the priorities of the provinces which, I remind you, are the leaders in the field and have exclusive jurisdiction over their own natural resources. Nothing in this bill gives the provinces exclusive jurisdiction over their natural resources, and no alternatives are suggested.

• (1645)

In 1982, during the negotiations on patriating the Constitution, and also during the negotiations on the Meech Lake Accord and the Charlottetown Accord, Quebec asked for the right to opt out—with compensation—of federal programs where it knew it could do a better job. Many of the parties concerned agree with this concept, which is even more appropriate when we are talking about natural resources, an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

I am sure many federalists will agree, and as I already pointed out, in certain publications Senator Beaudoin has referred to this as a beneficial alternative, reducing duplication and overlap.

For the time being, the only real change the average Quebec or Canadian citizen can see is that, instead of two ministers, we will have only one. There is nothing wrong with that *per se*, but the structure has not changed. Operating expenditures remain the same. There are no cuts. However, it is time to streamline operations for maximum efficiency, since all taxpayers are paying for the federal government's poor management.

One way to streamline the federal administration and make it more efficient would have been to redefine the role of the federal government in relation to the provinces, clarify the concept of provincial jurisdiction and opportunities for the provinces to manage their federal programs.

The federal government does not abide by its own Constitution, and all the provinces have paid dearly and will continue to do so for Ottawa's interventionism and centralist approach. Hon. members will recall the Trudeau government's energy policy that caused oil companies to be nationalized at an exorbitant price, only to be sold off a few years later.

The Athabasca tar sands project is anything but a financial success. As for Hibernia, it is an even bigger money gobbler. We will have to invest another billion dollars or more to support a project that was never essential to Canada's energy self–sufficiency, and no one knows whether further technical or financial problems will add even more to a bill that is already astronomical.

Western Canadians and my colleagues here in the House may wish to tell me later on whether they received as much money to search for new oil wells in Western Canada. In any case, Quebec never received any subsidies for its hydro dams.

The total bill for Hibernia, which will be several billion dollars, could have been channelled into research on new energy sources like hydrogen, while supporting the economies of the Maritimes, since the excuse for Hibernia was to create jobs for Eastern Canada. The government could have supported job creation in the Maritimes and used this money to give Canada a technological edge in this field on international markets instead of trying to look for new oil in difficult conditions at the cost of human lives, on drilling platforms off–shore—new oil at well above the price on world markets.

In the light of this unjustified spending, with no regard for the priorities of the provinces, one wonders whether the federal government knows what it is doing when it decides how to spend money in the provinces, especially in areas over which the provinces have jurisdiction.

Canadians are sometimes surprised to see the Bloc Quebecois here in this House. Perhaps today they will start to understand our long–standing demands, especially concerning natural resources. We are justified in demanding our rights, the rights of our province. This is also legitimate for the other provinces.

When the Natural Resources Committee, of which I am a member, studied clear cutting, the conclusions it came to were again to centralize authority for the sake of better performance. In opposition, the Bloc Quebecois wanted to show that co–operation would have been more effective because the initiative for reform must not come from the federal government but from the provinces themselves, since as I have said many times, they alone have the mandate to manage their resources.

The committee report would surely have been the same, but at the same time it would respect the provinces' powers.

Section 92–A of the Constitution Act, 1867, clearly states that mines and forests are exclusively in provincial jurisdiction. Is it right that the provinces cannot make their own decisions?

Unfortunately, federal intervention is too often to be expected.

• (1650)

The federal government starts with good intentions and ends up using its co–ordination role to become the one in charge. The usual scenario goes something like this: the federal government wants to be there to help co–ordinate, which, in itself, is good in such a big country, but as it co–ordinates, it decides that it should also run things. While it is at it, why not set the direction for the program and while it is doing that, why not be in charge?

Each time it is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, the federal government comes along with its dollars and sets the mandate.

Spending the money of Canadians and Quebecers does not give the government the right to meddle in fields of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. A down–to–earth example in natural resources is the program to encourage mining exploration investment in Quebec. The Mining Association of Canada and the Canadian Prospectors Association think that this program is excellent. If this bill recognized the provinces' exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources and opting out with federal compensation to make Quebec's program more effective, this incentive program could really grow and create many well–paid jobs.

This co–operative attitude already existed in the 1980s and yielded excellent results. For example, the Aur Resources Mine opened near Val–d'Or with an investment of some $300 million, creating 150 direct jobs and at least twice as many indirectly.

To end my speech in this debate, I would like to quote again what Jean Lesage, the former Liberal Premier of Quebec, said in an address to the Empire and Canadian Club in Toronto in 1964. His words were eloquent: "Quebec seeks to obtain all the powers needed to assert itself economically, socially and politically. If the provinces do not pursue the same objective, Quebec will necessarily move towards a special status reflecting both the particular characteristics of its people and the more extensive role that they want to give their government".

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity afforded by this debate on Bill C–48 to say that this is another important step towards streamlining government.

As you know, natural resources play a major role in Canada's economy. In 1992, net trade in these products amounted to $40.5 billion. These impressive figures illustrate the impact of the natural resources sector on our economy as a whole. However,

we must also consider the direct impact of this industry on the lives of thousands of Canadians.

First of all, one in every thirteen members of Canada's workforce is employed in the energy sector, at all levels. What makes this a very special group is that workers and their families are often located in remote areas. I am thinking of the forests around Lac–Saint–Jean, the mines in Abitibi or Northern Ontario and Alberta's oil fields. Altogether, over 500 communities across the country depend on natural resource activity.

The fact that this industry operates in remote areas creates some very specific problems. I am thinking of towns built around a mine or a factory. If demand for the product declines and the factory has to close temporarily, the whole town suffers. And as we saw in Schefferville and elsewhere, in some cases the factory or the mine closes for good.

It then becomes necessary to either find a new focus for the town or relocate the community. Neither option is easy to implement and both are hard on the community.

• (1655)

It is therefore very important to ensure that the natural resources sector remains a vital element of the economy and the job market. This can only be done through new technology, as the industry and government are fully aware. We are fortunate that Canada is a world leader in the development of technology to improve the productivity and competitiveness of our mining, forestry and energy industries.

Only last week, a large European delegation, mostly from Germany, visited construction sites in New Brunswick. In Quebec, they went to Saint–Félicien, in the riding of the Leader of the Opposition. They also went to British Columbia. They came to look at our modern forest management methods, and I must say they were all very impressed.

This is another example of concrete, active federalism. Our friends opposite are always quick to claim jurisdiction for Quebec. However, when the Government of Canada brings investors or journalists to the province, they are reluctant to admit that they benefit from Canadian initiatives.

Our government agrees that natural resources are a matter of provincial jurisdiction. However, we have a duty and a mandate to ensure that the sector contributes its fair share to economic growth and job creation across the country.

Of course, we must do this in co–operation, in a partnership with the provinces, and we are doing so without any hesitation whatsoever. In fact, streamlining the department provides a national perspective on mining, energy and forestry issues and provides a leading edge and expertise in research and development to help the industry meet current and future challenges.

One of those challenges is Canada's progress towards sustainable development. For many years, the industry seriously damaged the environment, not because it was intent on being destructive but because people were not aware of the impact certain procedures had on our environment.

It is essential to reconcile our economic and environmental objectives at all resource management levels. We have made a lot of progress, but we still have a long way to go.

The modernization of the Department of Natural Resources goes precisely along these lines. We must commend the government for taking this initiative and including at the very beginning of Bill C–48, in clause 2, an excellent definition of sustainable development.

This shows how serious our commitment to sustainable development is. This is particularly important in the area of natural resources where we must promote rational development and the protection of the environment.

The new department wants to co–operate with the provinces, the industry, the environmental groups, the natives as well as other stakeholders so that the natural resources sector can continue to grow in the short and medium term.

The department will also act increasingly as an intermediary between the industry and environmental activists in order to reconcile their concerns.

The Department of Natural Resources also has an important role to play in the area of research and technology. In fact, its reputation in this field is excellent. Its scientific and technological know–how cover all aspects of the industry management. Very often, the department can act as a leader and does so. Nevertheless, particularly where the protection of the environment is concerned, we need the co–operation of all the stakeholders to achieve our goals.

• (1700)

I am thinking among other things of improving energy efficiency. It is widely recognized that improving energy efficiency is an essential element helping us, in the short term, to achieve the goal of sustainable development. Many businesses have discovered that energy efficiency pays off. Related technologies also contribute to economic development and job creation.

Each of us can contribute to Canada's energy efficiency, thus helping the government meet its greenhouse effect reduction goal. Innovative technologies developed in Canada can also be exported to the expanding global market. It is forecast that by the year 2000, the global pollution control market will reach $600 billion US.

Canada certainly intends to get its share of this global market, a large part of which has to do with resource development technologies.

[*English*]

This is an important bill. It is a technical bill because we are trying to reorganize the Department of Natural Resources to put all the resources of two departments into one so we can have more efficient administration of the policies. Almost a year ago this government was elected under the auspices of the red book, making sure we develop and improve the economy, create jobs and also reduce the deficit and be more efficient.

With the reorganization on November 4, 1993 the Prime Minister presented the new cabinet to all Canadians and the rest of the world. We proved we were going in that direction, that we intend to keep our promise. That is what we are doing. We are putting into law what we promised in the red book and what the Prime Minister announced on November 4, 1993.

At this stage with this global economy the protection of the environment is very important, not only in terms of protection but also in terms of developing the technique, the necessary technology to protect the environment. Canada has the know how and the tools to be a leader in the world in this field. We can create thousands of jobs if we put all our resources together. We are going in the right direction in organizing the Department of Natural Resources in this fashion.

[*Translation*]

Natural Resources Canada has a very important role to play in assuring us that exporting our resources helps us to prosper and to create jobs while applying the principles of sustainable development. It is the way of the future, the voice of reason, and that is why I am pleased today to support this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the words of the secretary of state and also to the previous debater from the Bloc Quebecois. I read Bill C–48 in great detail.

I am having difficulty understanding the concerns of the speaker from the official opposition about the federal government infringing on provincial jurisdictions. The secretary of state also represents a riding in that province. I am wondering whether he could clarify if the federal government is infringing on provincial jurisdiction or is the bill truly a bill which has as its goal sustainable development in which not only Canada will benefit but this entire planet will benefit?

Mr. Gagliano: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs. The bill is very clear and we have been saying all along that we recognize and know that natural resources is a provincial jurisdiction. What we should do with Bill C–48 is to reorganize the department. We had two departments and now we have one. We are being more efficient and we are putting our resources together to compete out there.

• (1705)

It is a global market in which we have to compete. I said in my speech that in recognizing the jurisdiction of the provinces, recognizing that we have to work together, and we are working together, we are trying very hard and working together as a province, it is the role of the federal government to make sure in every sector that we create jobs because that is what Canadians want.

Therefore we are not interfering with the jurisdiction problem. In every bill that we present to this House, it seems that we have a jurisdiction problem. We realize that this is a federation. There are provincial matters and there are federal matters. Also, there is a spirit of co–operation.

In this bill or in natural resources or in industry or in other departments, respecting the provincial jurisdiction, respecting the federal role of being a leader of economic development, there is praise for both the provincial government and the federal government.

Instead of fighting about who has jurisdiction, if we would work together and co–operate we would achieve both results of the goal of the provincial government and the goal of the federal government.

For all citizens who get elected to serve Canadians, our most important role is to make sure not only who does what but also to make sure that Canadians get the service they need, the jobs they want. That is where the objective should be. We should not try to fight each other and lose time and energy instead of creating jobs which is what people want. This bill creates jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the hon. secretary of state why, with this bill, the government did not take the opportunity to clearly spell out the fact that provinces have jurisdiction over natural resources and did not define major thrusts for optimum co–operation and development of natural resources to promote job creation.

Mr. Gagliano: Madam Speaker, Bill C–48 is an act which legally establishes the new Department of Natural Resources created when the new Liberal government was sworn in on November 4, 1993.

The purpose of this legislation is to create the legal framework for a department which already exists and is in operation. Just a half hour ago we had a debate on the bill to establish the

Department of Industry and now we are discussing the Department of Natural Resources. Two weeks ago, other bills were being debated, and I imagine that there soon will be other redeployments affecting departments. Indeed, we try to create a legal framework for the new departments which have been established.

As regards the government's action plan, I believe that the Minister of Natural Resources has already explained that plan on various occasions to the committee. Also, negotiations will take place with various provinces, including Quebec. All these initiatives are in progress and the hon. member should not expect an action plan in a piece of legislation such as this one, which establishes a department.

• (1710)

The purpose of this legislation is to establish a department, it is to define its role and to explain the new structure. I believe the hon. member said earlier that he agreed with the principle of having one minister and one department instead of two departments and two ministers as was the case before. So, this initiative will improve efficiency, but it will also ensure better discussions and better co–operation between the provinces and the federal government. We have always maintained that natural resources fall under provincial jurisdiction, but the federal government must ensure that these natural resources benefit all Canadians.

In short, this bill is about the structure of a new Department of Natural Resources. I am sure that the hon. member will find either in the budget or in other policy statements the federal government's action plan concerning the development of natural resources as well as sustainable development.

[*English*]

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the principles of Bill C–48, a bill to create the Department of Natural Resources.

The Reform Party has long supported the downsizing of the federal cabinet and the reduction of bureaucracy. This initiative makes good sense particularly in the areas of provincial jurisdiction such as natural resources.

Having said that, however, I am disappointed to see another Tory bill brought before the House by the new Liberal government that promised to govern differently. There are no promises in the red book to finish Kim Campbell's agenda. All this bill does is formalize what has long been happening and has long been the case. Instead of seizing this opportunity to substantially downsize government and duplication, getting this government off the backs of Canadians, it takes half measures as we have seen in almost every piece of legislation the government has introduced into this House.

While I believe there is an opportunity in the reorganization of this department to realize substantial economic savings, it appears from my analysis of this bill that it will effect very little economic savings or the downsizing of the bureaucracy.

My colleagues who have spoken previously have addressed a number of areas of concern we have with this new super ministry. I will concentrate on yet another area that we believe could have and should have been included in this initiative to effect an economic benefit in the streamlining of these departments.

The area I refer to is the completion of the privatization of Petro–Canada. The creation of Petro–Canada with billions of dollars of tax money was part of the greatest fraud ever perpetrated on the energy producing regions of this country. This fraud through government interference and regulation deprived the energy producing provinces of billions of dollars that should have accrued to them during the oil price shock of 1973–74 when OPEC cut off the oil to the west during the Yom Kippur war, causing a tripling of oil prices within weeks. The producing provinces were never allowed to benefit from this oil price surge because of the interference and regulation from the federal government.

Because of this false fear of its future energy security, the federal government created with tax dollars a national oil company. The mandate of this crown owned oil company was through an aggressive acquisition and exploration program to provide for Canada's oil self–sufficiency. In spite of the reckless spending of the tax dollar to acquire grossly overpriced foreign multinational oil company holdings such as Atlantic Richfield Pacific Petroleum, Petrofina, British Petroleum and Gulf Petroleum, creating one of the largest oil companies in Canada, this bureaucratic boondoggle was never able in any substantial way to fulfil the mandate.

I well recall the early days of Petro–Canada's intrusion into the energy field with bureaucrats flying around in private jets and helicopters awarding extravagant cost plus contracts like the money would never run out. All this was sold to the Canadian taxpayer as necessary to reduce our dependency, or was it the U.S. dependency, on mid–east oil reserves.

We were told in Canada that we had less than 20 years recoverable oil reserves and that a high gasoline tax burden was justifiable to guarantee our future energy needs and pay for this spending binge. Now, 20 years later, we know that it was so much Liberal hogwash, a simple money grab and a flagrant breach of the principles of Confederation by the federal government, a Liberal federal government. We have 20 years later proven oil reserves that will supply Canada's energy needs for the next several centuries, almost 400 years of recoverable reserves in the tar sands of northern Alberta alone.

• (1715)

The past Tory government, knowing the moral dishonesty of these policies, moved with much foot dragging and procrastination to end this fraud by cutting taxpayer subsidization and even moved to partial privatization, turning our state owned oil company into a simple commercial enterprise no different than any other large oil company operating in Canada. I ask the question, why would the Canadian taxpayers want to own just another oil company? Is this oil company returning some benefit to the taxpayers in return for their billions of dollars in the form of lower gasoline prices or providing cheap clean burning natural gas to the homes in Atlantic Canada? No, it is not.

The fact is MPs on both sides of this House have been made aware of the unethical tactics of our state owned oil company harassing small independent gasoline retailers in an effort to remove competition, hardly what we might expect from our own taxpayer owned oil company.

It is engaged in the same export frenzy as all the other multinationals. Is it engaged in an aggressive Canadian frontier exploration program? No more so than any other multinational. In fact, Petro–Canada is competing with other multinational companies in the far flung corners of the globe.

Again the Reform Party questions why the Canadian taxpayer would want to own a national oil company. Why would this government not sell off this national oil company while the industry is strong and recoup some of those billions of taxpayers' dollars that were used to create this Liberal boondoggle? Why not use this opportunity when we are supposed to be downsizing and streamlining government to do something really significant and use revenue from the sale of Petro–Canada to reduce Canada's debt burden?

Could it be that we are about to become the victims of yet another Liberal fraud. This government, instead of behaving like a fresh new government with new innovative ideas that would stop this fatal spiral of debt and deficit we find ourselves in, continues to bring in this stale, tired Tory initiative that destroyed the PC Party, or it reaches back and resurrects the obsolete Liberal ideas of the Trudeau era.

In conclusion, as I said at the outset, we support the amalgamation and reduction of government ministries but let us take some new and innovative steps. Let us get government out of private enterprise and let private enterprise do what it can do better. Let us get government spending under control and reduce the necessity of this desperate sell–off of Canada's natural resources to support an unsustainable level of government spending.

Let us create technology to track the movement of profits of multinational corporations that move around the world at the speed of light and often escape the taxman. At the same time let us not tax to the point where we destroy the incentive to reinvest those profits in Canada's resource industries as we did in the case of the national energy program, particularly in value added manufacturing so we might escape the dependency on the exports of raw natural resource products.

Simply put, let us not continue on the same policies that in the last 25 years have plunged us into the position as one of the most indebted nations in the world at the same time that many of our natural resources that this country was built upon are in serious decline.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member for Athabasca as he went through some of the problems we have had in the industry and particularly in the natural resources industry.

He raised a couple of interesting points on the indebtedness that has been caused by the government intrusion into what should have been a private market decision on oil reserves and on a national policy to get into the oil business. I see in the paper that a two cent a gallon tax on this industry is being considered again, this time at the pumps apparently to make one industry pay for an environmental program that is going to try and fix the problems.

• (1720)

Would the member comment on the fact that again one particular industry and one province is being targeted to pay for what in essence is a national problem. I would like his comments.

Mr. Chatters: Madam Speaker, in spite of the fact that this government continues to tell us that a carbon tax or a green tax is not a consideration, it continues to come up in the news almost daily. Therefore, it continues to be of concern to us who come from those resource producing regions. Not only do we come from the regions that produce the oil and gas, we are also from a region of Canada that is very sparsely populated and has great distances.

This tactic of taxing the resource to force people to use less of the resource or to reduce CO2 emissions is the same kind of fraud I talked about in my presentation. In fact, Canada only produces some 2 per cent of the world's CO2 emissions. If every vehicle in Canada was parked and ran no more we would reduce CO2 emissions in the world by less than 1 per cent.

I say it is a fraud. If we really want to do something about CO2 emissions, let us look at some of the other countries in the world, like China that produces 20 per cent of the CO2 emissions, where doing something about it would have some effect.

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not know how much time we have. I was interested in a couple of

the comments the hon. member for Athabasca made. One was the question of bringing in and passing a Tory bill.

I would like to remind him of the story of Senator Hayakawa of the United States who was asked if the government of the United States should keep the Panama Canal after its term expired. He said: "Of course we should. We stole it fair and square".

The other thing I would like to talk about is fraud. The hon. member mentioned that the tar sands contain enough oil potential for several hundred years. I think he mentioned 400 years. What is his information base for that? Is that 400 years of Canada remaining at 29 million population or is that 400 years of witnessing the exponential curve in population growth and subsequent energy demand around the world? Is that 400 years of a population decline in Canada? Four hundred years of what? When one makes a blanket statement like that, one has to follow through with some kind of qualification to make the thing legitimate.

Since predictions like that were made years ago, the population of the world every year has increased at the rate of about 95 million people. I do not know whether he wants to keep those other people from having any of that energy and if he would prefer that, but that is not the way it is going to be.

Mr. Chatters: Madam Speaker, the statistics I presented were provided to me by the Alberta Energy National Resource Conservation Board. In fact, the figures I quoted were based on Canada's current consumption of energy. Certainly they are statistically correct today, but 50 years from now who is to say what that might be.

• (1725)

It has more truth to it than the fraud that was perpetrated in the creation of Petro–Canada whereby we were running out of conventional crude oil and had to move immediately to spend $6 billion of taxpayers' dollars to create Petro–Canada. Today, 25 years later, our conventional crude oil production has not even begun to decline. Given the technology advancements, who is to say that 20 years from now we will not continue to produce the same level of conventional crude oil, not even taking into consideration the synthetic crude oil production?

I think my figures are quite valid and quite honest.

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a very few minutes ago I was given the honour of addressing this bill. I appreciated very much being a member of the natural resources committee and watching history being made.

One of the significant aspects of this bill is the tying of the forestry industry with the rest of the resource industry. In this day of information accessibility, the information highway, the move toward high tech and all those wonderful things that will present miracles to our children and grandchildren in the future, our country does and will in the future rely on its natural resources providing that we provide a sustainable base for the continuing preservation and enhancement of those natural resources.

The other reason why it is significant is that in the future, maybe 400 years in the future if my hon. friend is correct, I think with the acceleration in population on a global basis and the increasing demand for energy the future for renewable energy will be upon us in the twinkling of an eye. Therefore, because Canada produces probably more, if you will pardon the $25 word, biomass than perhaps any other country on the face of the earth, it is only natural that the forest industry and the production of cellulose and energy become inexorably tied under the wing of one ministry.

We are not very many years away from when we will be able to produce motor fuel from cellulose in a very competitive and environmentally sustainable way. I think the connection that has been made with the creation of this new ministry is very positive.

I should point out to my friends in the Bloc who from time to time worry about the jurisdiction that there is no change in jurisdiction in this bill. In other words, it is recognized that the provinces have jurisdiction over those industries.

Our nation has a requirement to provide a voice internationally, particularly at the present time, to overcome some of the negative feedback that we have been getting from places like Europe and so on which were prompted to worry about the forest practices in Canada.

I must go on record, having sat on the committee studying forestry practices in this country, as saying that we are perhaps a model for the whole world in the advancements that our industries have made. Our government must now through various mechanisms take those advances and take that standard that has been set and point out to our friends who buy our raw materials, our resources or processed materials around the world that we are indeed doing a good job. Perhaps in the future we will be able to share our technology and some of the things we have learned with people around the world. We must not forget there are countries on this earth today that have virtually denuded their lands of forest cover. Is it not Madagascar that is sliding into the Indian Ocean? Countries in the Caribbean were stripped bare for their logs before the turn of the century. Only now some of those countries are very concerned about rejuvenating their forests, understanding the value of that kind of forest cover.

• (1730)

Canada has taken the lead role and we will continue. Admittedly we have an economic challenge. The combining of the department of forestry with what was known as energy, mines

and resources has already effected a savings of some $16 million we are told. That is only the beginning and it will go on from there. It is efficiency at its best. It is the kind of efficiency all levels of governments have to introduce and effect in the very near future. It is a pleasure to be part of that and bear witness to that change.

I would also like to mention that my friends in the Reform Party are concerned about oil consumption. They seem to think that oil consumption is somehow at risk. The member for Athabasca made some comment about the 400 years and so on.

Let me draw a scenario regarding the consumption of energy. One of the main domestic sources of oil for the United States is now in decline. That is Prudhoe Bay, which has been supplying about 25 per cent of the domestic requirement of the United States. The rest of the oil patch in the United States has been in decline for many years.

The Americans have a few choices. One of the choices of course is to buy more Canadian natural gas, another non–renewable resource and take it in increased quantities. Another choice of course is to effect more conservation through one means or another. The cheapest barrel of oil is the barrel of oil you do not use. Another is to exploit as much renewable energy as is possible which the United States is presently doing with quite large efforts. Of course the other option is to buy more offshore oil.

If anyone imagines for one minute that Canada can somehow put a fence around itself and say that we have enough for all these years and we are going to save it and keep it for ourselves, I have news for them. The world is not like that.

China presently has the largest growing economy on earth. It is double digit growth. By and large they still are riding bicycles in China but with increased communication and witnessing lifestyles based on energy consumption in other parts of the world, it will not be long before that nation will require more and more oil. They will be off their bicycles and into automobiles before we know it. If petroleum is the only option, imagine the demand if China were to expect half of the consumption that North America presently consumes per capita. The bravado about the long term availability of petroleum is rather questionable to say the least.

• (1735)

Another thing that should be said is that in 1979 Sheik Yamani who was the Saudi Arabian oil minister went on Canadian television and said that oil was too precious a resource to simply combust. That was a prophetic statement if ever there was one. If we look at the amount of petroleum that is now used as a feedstock in the petrochemical industry for polymers and so on, we can easily see where that precious commodity may ultimately belong.

We are now bearing witness to the very beginnings of a move from non–renewable energy consumption, which has been kind of a blip in recent history as we did not have this before coal was discovered, and it will ultimately be used up. We do not know how much is in the barrel, whether it is two–thirds empty, one–third empty, or whatever. However we do know there are some compelling reasons why we should be making this move.

It is only fitting and rather prophetic that energy and these other forms of resources are now tied together. Hopefully the development of renewables can now go on with less hindrance than there has been in the past. Perhaps instead of two ministries not communicating with each other as well as they should have, now we will have one ministry that can communicate within itself.

I am very pleased to support this bill. It is a new era for Canada. As I said initially, it will be more efficient for the process of governing but it will also bring together some of those factors we have outlined and will set a new pathway for the future of energy and the other resources in this country.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's comments. I would like him to clarify a couple of things he mentioned.

One was the jurisdiction of natural resources being primarily a provincial concern. That is a constitutional matter I am much in favour of. I am trying to get at the direction in which the Liberal government is heading.

The other is another leaked report from this government that has found its way into the media. This time it is the consideration of a two cent a litre tax on gasoline to pay for the stabilization of greenhouse gases. The minister herself admits that is one of the proposals so this is not an obscure report. This report exists and it just happens that it was leaked to the media six months in advance.

Also, I was at the United Nations a little while ago and we were discussing proposals for UN reform. This report should be very interesting to the Liberals who can read. If members look halfway through the booklet on Canadian proposals for UN reform, it says that Canada proposes a tax on hydrocarbons to pay for the United Nations.

I am not sure how many members have read that report but I urge them to dig it up. They should especially have regard to the constitutionality of who should control the taxation on hydrocarbons, what should be the priorities of the federal government and what the plans are. This is not pie in the sky theory or scare tactics but it is in a little book, this time a blue one, supported by the Liberal Party proposing a hydrocarbon tax to support the UN this time. Last time it was another crisis.

• (1740)

I would like to have the member's thoughts on exactly whose jurisdiction this is and what he thinks of hydrocarbon taxes specifically to fund everything, in this case from the United Nations to greenhouse gases. Which jurisdiction should that fall under? Who should we send this warning flag to, the provinces or the oil companies?

Mr. Reed: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member. I should point out to him that in any function of government when questions are being asked as to how we tackle a situation and what areas we consider in a situation, all sorts of proposals are made. Whether they are adopted or rejected is yet another thing.

At this stage I certainly do not know that any consideration would be given to such a tax. However I think it is valid to debate the subject and to look at it as being on the table and worthy of debate, not in a dissimilar way to what the minister of finance tried to initiate before the budget last February. Remember, we all participated in a prebudget debate. There was consultation, albeit too brief at that time, to try and bring in the business and corporate sector.

Public consultation is something that has not been generally practised in this country in the past. More is the pity because now when we enter into public consultation and try to glean from it ideas and concepts that will guide us, cynics say that it is a bit of window dressing and the government will go on and do whatever it wants anyway.

As the member knows, the gun control issue was another one where public consultation was undertaken by the ministry. People travelled across Canada all summer long and talked to Canadians. I point out that in the previous firearms acquisition bill the former minister would not even entertain a written brief, not one written brief.

This is a new exercise for Canadians. If the government treats this process with respect, then we all gain.

The member talks about a two cents a litre tax. I also read the newspaper article and I have no knowledge that any such thing is contemplated, but I certainly would welcome a debate on it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member, who is also a member of the Natural Resources Committee, a question further to his speech on ecology. My question is quite specific. Do you not think that we could have put all the billions of dollars that are going to be invested in the Hibernia project into projects other than petroleum projects, into renewable energy projects such as hydrogen, for example? What the Bloc quebecois is saying is that the federal government's interference in areas of provincial jurisdiction is not merely constitutional in nature, but involves amounts of money that Canadians, and therefore Quebecers, are paying for projects that are not viable financially or ecologically. Do you not think that better choices could have been made?

[*English*]

Mr. Reed: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for that question.

I can remember sitting on the Ontario Hydro select committee during 1976 to 1980 when the debate raged over the construction of the Darlington nuclear plant. I remember that from our perspective Darlington was too expensive to contemplate. After the debate we realized that the utility had gone ahead and committed something like $500 million toward Darlington, a facility that has now cost about $15 billion, which is absolutely ludicrous.

• (1745)

I remember being quoted in the paper as saying that sometimes when we get so far into something it is very hard to get out. I expect that one could say something similar. We inherited the Hibernia project. We did get out of the Lloydminster heavy oil issue. We were able to extract ourselves from it. We are living with what is reality at the present time.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I used to sound like the hon. member through the seventies and early eighties when I believed the lies we had at that time about consumption and about available resources.

I come from a place where we have world scale petrochemical programs that we were told would only last another five years. We have now extended them for twenty years and there is no foreseeable end to our ability to produce.

The member referred to China. What about the alternate energy that will in fact come about such as coal gasification? China has huge resources of coal. What about some of the alternate energy forms that are there just waiting to be taken over? What about all those?

Mr. Reed: Madam Speaker, China is a very interesting country. The last time I checked it was installing hydro units at the rate of 15,000 a year. China is the world's largest producer of hydraulic turbines. It builds good stuff, incidentally.

There is a pent up demand for energy in countries like China that far exceeds our ability to comprehend. We should be able to turn it to our advantage. Whether it is petroleum export or whatever, I do not see forms of energy competing against one another per se. As a matter of fact I see them complementing one another.

In terms of petroleum I would suggest that Sheikh Yamani was right. The commodity itself is probably too precious to combust. We can look at the clean air targets. The business of

coal combustion, for instance, is something we are probably shying away from because it is a direct contributor to greenhouse gas.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. I am sorry but the hon. member's time has expired.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*) I have been requested by the chief government whip to defer the division until a later time.

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*), the division on the motion now before the House stands deferred until 5.30 p.m. tomorrow, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

• (1750)

[*English*]

Ms. Catterall: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The deferral motion you just read stated 5.30 p.m. tomorrow. It should be after the conclusion of government business which may or may not be as early as 5.30.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the House agree?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to rise in the House to speak on Bill C–52, a bill to consolidate the government services department.

Over the last number of years we note there have been paradigm shifts in terms of how business is done. When we on this side of the House were elected the Prime Minister decided that we were to operate with fewer cabinet ministers. We were to work in every department to make sure, if there were any savings to be made, savings would be made for the Canadian people. We were to deploy our manpower to make sure it worked in the most efficient manner possible to get the best bang for the dollar.

Recently scientists watched a set of Canada geese flying and they found out that they flew in a particular *v* formation. When they studied it they found that one wing was slightly longer than the other. They also found out that if the one bird in front led for quite a while it created a vacuum which made it easier for the following birds to fly. As that bird got tired it would pull back and another bird would take its place. As a result the birds could travel 70 per cent farther than they otherwise could.

I hope all members of the House try to stretch the dollar that much further so that Canadians could get the best possible dollar value from us. It is up to all members to look for ways to save. I do not think it is incumbent on us always to be critical. We need to make sure that people working for governments know they are working for people who work very hard and honestly to get their salaries. They in turn expect a fair return on their dollar.

I am really pleased today to speak on behalf of the consolidation of the department. Since we started debating Bill C–52 my Bloc colleagues have repeatedly asked that the government produce regular statements, monthly reports, and open up the federal government contracting process. According to them the purpose of the monthly reports would be threefold: to keep taxpayers informed, to stimulate competitiveness, and to ensure that government decisions are open and transparent. There is no doubt that these are worthy goals.

However I assure the Bloc members and the House that the government has already taken many steps to do just that. From

the very onset of its mandate the government has been committed to fairness and openness in government contracting.

Public Works and Government Services is Canada's largest purchasing organization. As the principal purchasing agency for the federal government it has responsibility for approximately 65 per cent of total government purchasing. The rest is spread over about 100 other federal organizations. The department buys some $10 billion worth of products and services each year.

Taking into account the procurement activities of the agencies under its purview, Public Works and Government Services issues approximately 1,000 contract transactions each day. It goes without saying that administering such a large volume of transactions is a huge undertaking. However there are cost effective systems in place at Public Works and Government Services Canada which allow the Canadian public to be effectively and fairly served while having unfettered access to information about government contracting.

• (1755)

There is no need to waste time, energy and taxpayers' money tabling reports on contracting activity, given the fact that the information is readily available and accessible to the Canadian public.

The issues raised by the Bloc members, namely access to contracting information, competitiveness and the integrity of the procurement process, have been and continue to be priorities of the government.

We did as promised in the red book and have taken a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government. As one of Canada's largest buyers of goods and services and a major real property manager, the Department of Public Works and Government Services is committed to providing the nuts and bolts information which helps all companies across Canada to do business with the federal government.

One tool is the open bidding service. It is also known as OBS. It is an electronic bulletin board that gives fast and equal access to opportunities to bid for government contracts. It provides information about upcoming requirements and the documents companies need to bid on them. It provides equal access to public works and government services, opportunities valued at $60,000 or more for construction and maintenance services and $25,000 or more for other types of government procurement. With OBS anyone anywhere in Canada has access to the same information at the same time.

The Department of Public Works and Government Services also produces the government business opportunities or GBO publication. It lists the same opportunities as OBS. It is printed three times a week and provides very timely information. In addition to advertising contract opportunities with the federal government, the OBS gives notices of contracts the government intends to award on a sole source basis. In this way companies have the opportunity to challenge the government's rationale for single tendering.

If in response to a sole source notice another supplier can demonstrate that it can meet the government's requirements for a particular contract, a competition will be held. It is another way by which the government stimulates competitiveness.

Not only does the government already make information available on proposed business opportunities to all Canadians, but it also provides information on contracts that have been awarded. The information is posted regularly on the OBS as well as published in the GBO. A contract history data base is available on OBS which provides information on any contract awarded on open bidding service since 1989. It allows anyone anywhere in Canada to see which companies have been awarded open bidding contracts, for what goods or services and for what value.

The open bidding system is designed to allow easy and equitable access to information on government procurement opportunities both in process and historical. The system effectively addresses access, competition and accountability.

All MPs have been invited to subscribe to the OBS. By getting onboard they would certainly have access to all the information they need on contracts being awarded in their ridings. Easy access to information on contract opportunities is the key to ensuring fairness and openness to suppliers.

• (1800)

However, this government also believes in independent redress for suppliers who may believe that the government's actions have not met their commitment to openness and fairness, and suppliers who believe that they have not been treated equitably are able to appeal to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. It is an independent board to which suppliers can seek quick and inexpensive redress for procurement subject to the NAFTA.

If successful, the supplier may be awarded payment of compensation or recompetition of the procurement. This is yet another mechanism through which the integrity of the procurement process is maintained.

More generally, each department is accountable to Parliament, suppliers, and therefore every Canadian for its activities including procurement through the annual tabling of the *Main Estimates* and the report of the Auditor General.

The public sector is under intense scrutiny today. Canadians are demanding that the government not only control the costs of services and administration but also that it acts in a fair and open fashion. Clearly, with all these mechanisms currently in place, the Department of Public Works and Government Services is providing equal access to the federal market, fairness in awarding contracts and ensuring that the information on contracts to

be awarded or that have been awarded is available and accessible to all Canadians.

There are policies and systems in place to ensure that the government procurement is open, fair and transparent, and that means no political influence. All contracts are subject to the requirements of the Treasury Board contracting policy whose principles and procedures I again emphasize ensure an open, transparent and competitive contracting process.

Up to date information on contracts awarded is currently available every day to any Canadian anywhere across Canada on the OBS. This information is very time sensitive to suppliers. With the information currently available and accessible suppliers know right away about the approach, for example, for subcontracting activity. A monthly report is not only a duplication of the information already available, but of very limited benefit to suppliers as it is only an historic record.

The OBS makes the system better and fairer for the government, for Canadian business and, most important, for the taxpayer.

Several other federal departments and crown corporations as well as the provincial governments of Alberta and Ontario have chosen to use the OBS to advertise their procurement needs, giving potential suppliers a window on a multi–billion dollar market. It also saves the government money, some $3.5 million annually, in document printing and advertising costs.

The tabling of monthly reports of contracts awarded is a duplication of effort. The Bloc members have condemned that kind of attitude in this House: "Nobody in this House can support ridiculous or useless spending". That was the member for Laurentides, February 10, 1994.

With their demands Bloc members are asking this government to do just that, more ridiculous and useless spending.

As the member for Laurentides has said in this House, we must try to eliminate duplication in order to reduce costs, to save money, to become more efficient.

This government is streamlining and eliminating waste. It is not the intention of this government to spend taxpayers' dollars producing reports that no one will read when there are effective and proven means of accessing the same information.

As a member of this government, I strongly believe that there is a compelling need, especially in these days of strict fiscal restraint, to ensure that each dollar spent by this government is a necessary expense and that it represents the best value that can be achieved in the use of that scarce resource; every dollar counts.

• (1805)

This government's commitment to the integrity if the procurement process has been made very clear with the increased use of OBS and the recent release of the new guidelines for public opinion research and advertising contracts.

The Minister of Public Works and Government Services has also introduced a new clause aimed at eliminating contingency fees. Bidders are now required to certify that they have not hired a lobbyist to solicit award of a contract where any part of the payment to the lobbyist depends on the client obtaining that contract.

In conclusion, I will once again state that Canadians already have access to up to date information anywhere in Canada on the government's procurement activities. That is the key to a truly competitive process.

This government believes strongly in the importance and the integrity of the procurement process. Canadians have a right to know that their government does business in an honest and open way and who it does business with. They also require that their government not waste money by duplicating its efforts.

This government will continue to serve the Canadian public by ensuring that an open and fair procurement process is maintained in the most cost effective way possible.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is appropriate following my colleague's speech on the importance of our fiscal resources and using them well that I speak about those other resources which are perhaps even more important in delivering services to Canadians and ensuring good government for Canada and those are the people who are also a valuable resource.

Bill C–52 will give legislative force to the amalgamation of the former departments of public works and supply and services as well as the translation bureau and the government telecommunications agency. This is clearly in line with our government's commitment to make federal government operations more efficient and less costly to the Canadian taxpayer.

Madam Speaker, I will inform you and the House that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, in this debate.

[*Translation*]

This merger will significantly reduce the administrative and other costs involved in providing most of the central services required by federal agencies and departments.

[*English*]

The overall staff requirement will be reduced by more than 20 per cent from 18,000 at the time of amalgamation to about

14,000 by 1998. Clearly such a reduction will substantially reduce the salary budget of the department—by more than $1 billion over the next decade.

Our government also recognizes that there is a very important human dimension to this downsizing, necessary though it may be.

[*Translation*]

We realize that the savings which we intend to achieve will inevitably affect the lives and careers of many public servants. That is why we are now taking all necessary measures to make this transition the least disruptive possible for those directly concerned.

[*English*]

The need to streamline operations and reduce the cost of government is by no means unique to Canada. It is a problem being faced by the provinces, by our municipalities, in the United States, in Europe and throughout the industrialized world.

I believe that the program of support and assistance being introduced by our government is one of the most enlightened of its kind and is recognized as a leader in the field. Unlike the previous government which regrettably was inclined to downgrade the public service and treat it as a scapegoat for its own failures, our government recognizes that the quality of our people is our most important strength.

• (1810)

We will work closely with our public servants and the unions that represent them to minimize the impact of these difficult but necessary staff reductions. The broad strategy will be to retain to the greatest degree possible the skills, the experience and the loyalties of the affected employees within the public service and to give the greatest possible assistance to those who cannot be retained in finding suitable employment elsewhere.

Specifically, each affected employee will be assigned a workforce adjustment adviser to provide job search, marketing assistance and other services on a regular basis.

All surplus employees will be offered a one–week course developed with union participation dealing with such issues as stress management, financial counselling and job search techniques. Surplus employees will be provided with links to specialized services as required, such as the employee assistance program, because we recognize that not only are people going through a career change but they are going through a significant life change.

Extensive training, advice and support will be provided to managers in planning and implementing reductions with special emphasis on communication with all employees. We recognize that the manager has a key role to play in ensuring that downsizing is implemented fairly and with maximum consideration for our employees.

[*Translation*]

We will fully apply the directive on reassignment for employees declared surplus.

Among other things, this means a guaranteed position in the federal Public Service to the extent that the employee can be retrained or is ready to consider relocation. It also means that employees will receive six months' notice if they are declared surplus and will be entitled to retraining courses for up to two years.

Under the work force adjustment directive, surplus employees will be entitled to salary protection if they are appointed to a lower position. If they wish to resign, they will be entitled to a lump–sum payment equal to six months of salary. Also, employees who are over 50 years old and have more than five years of service will receive up to 15 weeks of salary as severance pay as well.

Our government intends to work as closely as possible with the various public service unions in implementing these changes.

[*English*]

The unions and employees are understandably not entirely happy with the reductions in government staffing levels that are taking place throughout the country but they recognize the reality of the times and they know that we want to work with them to co–operate in ensuring that these lay–offs are conducted fairly and in accordance with government policy and directives.

In this regard, workforce adjustment committees are already in place at the national and regional levels of the former departments. The government is continuing to discuss and examine with the unions the most effective way to consult and co–operate on the reshaping of the new department.

In this exercise departmental managers are being encouraged to consider innovative strategies and the voluntary use of flexible work arrangements such as part time work and job sharing as a means of minimizing the impact of these changes.

The process of downsizing has already begun and there are currently some 250 surplus employees in the inventory of the department. It is encouraging to note that to date the majority of surplus employees have been dealt with through retraining and redeployment with very few involuntary lay–offs.

The components of this department in particular have an excellent record in treating their employees fairly.

• (1815)

I think hon. members will agree that our government has gone to extraordinary lengths to try to minimize the negative effects of departmental restructuring on the workforce. This is a clear demonstration of our commitment to build a new and stronger

relationship with the public service and to demonstrate that we both respect it and value its work.

The morale in the federal public service took a rather severe battering during the Tory years in power. We are determined to re–establish a new and better relationship based on mutual trust and mutual respect.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I address the House this afternoon. As a matter of fact, this is the first time I get to participate in a debate since the Prime Minister appointed me Chief Government Whip.

I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister publicly, in front of my constituents, for appointing me and to tell all my hon. colleagues in this House that I will do my very best not to disappoint them. I will try to carry out my duties as whip in such a way as to keep the caucus united under the excellent direction of the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Perhaps there is a symbolism in the fact that my first speech following my appointment is a speech on the contract award process. Why? Because this whole issue of contracting is one that I, as the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, consider very important.

We have before us today a bill introduced by the Hon. Minister of Public Works and Government Services, with an amendment moved by a Bloc Quebecois member, namely the hon. member for Québec–Est, seconded by the hon. member for Charlevoix.

Listen carefully to what the Bloc Quebecois member is proposing. His amendment reads as follows:

> [That] this House declines to give second reading to Bill C–52—

Listen to this. He would have us decline to give second reading to a bill to amalgamate federal departments. What is the purpose of this bill? To prevent duplication. Where have we heard this before: to prevent duplication? Who has been advocating such action in this House? Madam Speaker, our colleagues opposite.

I can see the hon. member for Drummond smiling. She knows full well that her party claimed to be the champion of the use of government funds by stating that duplication must be prevented. With all due respect to their sovereignty, I must tell the hon. members opposite that today, a Bloc Quebecois member has actually asked this House to refuse to pass this bill to prevent duplication.

The reasons the Bloc Quebecois member does not want consent to be given are known. They are stated on page 6529 of *Hansard* for Tuesday, October 4, 1994. Let me read them to you, Madam Speaker. As a fair, non partisan member of this House, you can see clearly how the hon. member is mistaken. He says, and I quote the hon. member from the Bloc Quebecois:

> Bill C–52 should have more teeth.

He is asking that consent be refused because he would want the bill to have more teeth. He may have some trouble with these subtleties but, not to worry, it will all become very clear, I think, when you hear what the member of the Bloc Quebecois said, and I quote:

> This is the Bloc Quebecois's proposal: We ask that a public review board be created under the bill to scrutinize contracts awarded by the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to ensure openness.

There is the Comptroller General of Canada. Then, after public funds have been spent, there is also the Auditor General of Canada, at the risk of surprising the members opposite.

• (1820)

There are audit mechanisms in place before and after contracts are awarded. So the Bloc's first proposal does not hold up.

Second, said the member for Charlevoix, we ask that a contracting–out code be clearly defined in this bill. Again, at the risk of surprising the hon. member, there is a mechanism in place for all contracts awarded by the Department of Public Works and Government Services. I must say that I handled such matters in the past. Suppliers must fill out statutory declarations assuring the government that subcontractors have been paid before they can receive benefits from the government. This practice is now in effect. So the Bloc's second request does not hold up either.

Now listen closely, Madam Speaker, to the Bloc Quebecois member's third request: "Third, we demand that members of Parliament of all political stripes be consulted about and kept informed of the government contract awarding process involving the ridings they represent." Well, well, well! This sounds a lot like patronage. Is it because the leader of the Bloc Quebecois used to belong to a political party that was partial to patronage? Is that the reason? Is it a leftover from the Tory era? Probably not. It is probably just a coincidence.

Another funny coincidence, if I remember correctly, is that the former leader of the Conservative Party used to represent the riding of Charlevoix, did he not? The current member for Charlevoix was on the executive of his association, before he switched parties, of course. I am not referring to the days before the Bloc Quebecois leader switched parties: I am referring to the days before the member for Charlevoix switched parties. Indeed, as you know, these people have had a tendency to switch parties. During his career, the Bloc Quebecois leader switched parties five times; he will likely do it two or three more times again.

Mr. Bonin: It will not be long!

Mr. Boudria: "It will not be long", says the hon. member for Nickel Belt. I congratulate him for being so eloquent, as he usually is, and also for being so perceptive.

My colleagues from the Liberal Party do not see the use of setting up a patronage system as demanded today by the Bloc Quebecois. No, Madam Speaker. We, Liberal Party members, do not agree at all with that suggestion.

I was just referring to politicians who have switched parties and I see that the member for Richelieu just came into this House. I am convinced that he is interested in this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The hon. member for Richelieu, on a point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, my grandfather used to say that only fools do not change opinion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, but this is not a point of order.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, it all depends on how foolish the original idea is.

So, these are the proposals made by Bloc Quebecois members today. They are saying that we should not go ahead with Bill C–52.

The Liberal Party dealt with this issue in a document called the red book—and members opposite must surely have heard about it—and I would like to quote excerpts from the part of that document on how to put an end to waste.

Billions of dollars are spent indiscriminately on useless programs. It is time the government spent public money as carefully as Canadians do with their own money. A Liberal government will review government spending and cancel the extravagant helicopter contract approved by Kim Campbell. The document then lists the rest of the useless expenditures.

Those are the priorities established by our party during the election campaign, and we remain committed to fulfilling our election promises. We still intend to serve Canadians well.

Finally, I want to refer to a document on ethics and morals in the public sector, which was released by the Liberal Party when we formed the opposition and when I was the critic on government administration. Recommendation No. 4 in this document states that the Liberal Party wants to merge the Department of Supply and Services and the Department of Public Works into a single department, the Department of Government Services.

• (1825)

There you are, Madam Speaker. In 1992, we consulted Canadians and defined our program. In 1993, we presented that program to Canadians in the red book. And in 1994, we are fulfilling our commitments. That is the difference between the Liberals and the members opposite. We have said the same thing before, during and after the election campaign, and we will continue to provide a good government to Canadians, in spite of the efforts of some members opposite.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I do not think the hon. member's appointment has made him any smarter. His speeches have not changed.

In fact, I did not move this amendment, I merely seconded it, because you will recall, if the hon. member would read the text of the motion, that the amendment was moved by the hon. member for Québec–Est, Jean–Paul Marchand, and seconded by the hon. member for Charlevoix.

The bill amalgamates the departments of Public Works, Supply and Services, Procurement and Communications and Translation. We wanted the government to use this bill to provide some transparency in government procedures. People often say it is time the government stopped wasting money.

If we consider contracting out alone, between 1984–85 and 1992–93 there was a 56 per cent increase in this area at Public Works. There was an increase of 114.2 per cent in National Defence. There was an increase of 207 per cent at Health and Welfare. There was an increase of 247 per cent at Supply and Services. There was an increase of 628 per cent at Customs and Excise.

Although the Auditor General does a very good job, in his report he said he had been unable to assess whether the government had received its money's worth for the amounts spent on contracting out. How many people in the Public Service have been put on the shelf, while the government decides to have their work done on contract? What we want is a monitoring committee, consisting of public servants, elected representatives and people working for the Auditor General.

It also says in our amendment that members from each riding should be consulted, and I would like to explain that this was put in because of a statement by a Liberal member on the committee, who I think deserves all the credit. He said that he read a public notice in his riding that the government was preparing to make some changes in the post office there. He saved the government a million dollars. We moved the amendment simply in the interests of transparency.

My question is directed to the Chief Whip. Does he agree that the government should include elements in its bills that would reflect great transparency?

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but I thought the hon. member was making a speech, because he had been going on for quite a while. The hon. member wants to know whether we favour more openness. I am sorely tempted to answer with the following question: How could the creation of a structure

which could increase patronage be an instrument of greater openness?

• (1830)

The member opposite totally missed the boat regarding this bill. We have the tools to ensure transparency. The member said that it takes a committee to go along with the Auditor General. We already have one, it is called the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Once the Auditor General's report is tabled in the House, it is automatically referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts without even a motion from this House.

Under the present Standing Orders, it is automatic. All government contracts the Auditor General wants to comment on are included in his report if he believes that it is in the interest of this House; consequently, they are automatically referred to this parliamentary committee. Therefore, once again, the member's arguments are flawed. Yes, we need greater transparency, more accountability, and yes, all parliamentarians agree that we need to cut costs. This bill is going to accomplish all that and we already have all the other necessary structures.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on second reading of Bill C–52, the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act.

I have listened to the debate on this bill with great interest and have noticed once again how the members of the opposite side will stretch logic to the breaking point in order to turn discussion to their pet subjects.

I have also noticed that no argument, no matter how sound, will steer them away from these pet subjects with the result that we who support the passage of Bill C–50 must repeat dozens of variations on the same factual themes. They are indeed factual themes which no amount of political rhetoric can dismiss.

Bill C–52 is a clear instance of sound legislation to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of government. It eliminates overlap and duplication. It provides for consolidation and coherence in government purchasing and contracting. It generates vast savings and taxpayers' dollars thus contributing to deficit reduction and helping restore public faith in government.

It eliminates antiquated, redundant legislation and regulation, bringing administrative practices into the electronic age. It permits single window access to information for clients, suppliers and taxpayers. Despite the declarations of members of the opposite side, there has been a great deal of talk about transparency.

Despite that fact, it has been clear from the outset that this government is committed to fairness and openness in government contracting. This government is determined to ensure that all contracting is undertaken in a manner that keeps the Canadian taxpayers informed, stimulates competitiveness and ensures that the process is open and fair.

Treasury Board promulgates policies that are aimed specifically at these objectives. It clearly bears repeating that the information on the magnitude of the government contracting already exists and this government is making improvements to ensure even greater openness.

In the meantime, the government encourages all suppliers and all members of Parliament to use the open bidding service that advertises upcoming opportunities to supply goods and services.

With this system, information on current as well as past purchases is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to anyone and everyone who is interested. Suppliers no longer need to be included on a government source list. They no longer have to await an invitation to bid. They can review available opportunities in their product or service areas and order the required bid documents for those that they are interested in. Documents are forwarded immediately by fax, mail or courier.

At the same time as we take measures to ensure open access to contracting information, every practical means must be brought to bear to reduce expenditures and ensure maximum value for each dollar spent. Members on both sides of the House have acknowledged the magnitude of the task of government purchasing. The federal government is Canada's largest user of private sector suppliers with more than 200,000 transactions per year. It buys everything from stationery to military equipment.

• (1835)

Members should bear in mind that by relying on program experts in the various departments the number of contracts that require the review of ministers is very small, consisting of large, risky or sensitive purchases. It is the task of Public Works and Government Services Canada to make many of these purchases on behalf of other departments. Nonetheless, close to half of all the contracts are awarded under the authority of individual departments.

Yet despite this diversity of sources and despite the massive information already or shortly to be in the public domain, members opposite insist that the government should compile and publish separate detailed information. The additional cost of gathering and publishing such information would be a glaring extravagance that flies in the face of fiscal restraint.

One hon. member has said that if research is necessary to compile the information, and I quote directly: "Goodness, gracious, hire some researchers to do the job". Another member has argued that since the cost would be such a small percentage of the total cost of government purchasing, it is really negligible.

Is that responsible opposition and criticism? I do not think so. Is that legitimate concern for sound administration of public funds? Or is it perhaps the very kind of thinking, the very lack of respect for taxpayers' money that got us into our deficit difficulties in the first place?

A good example of an inaccurate picture is the case of Saint John Shipbuilding and the patrol frigate program. A listing of contracts by constituency would show that contract in a New Brunswick riding but no less than $1.2 billion of the work will actually go to Quebec suppliers.

An excellent example of misleading information is the case of the petroleum companies which bill all their government sales through their Ottawa offices. It represents hundreds of millions of dollars of business per year, none of which is supplied by Ottawa.

In the end the government has to serve its clients and the public purse in the most effective and least expensive manner. Members on both sides of the House quite rightly insist that wherever feasible contracts should be competitive and should go to the lowest quality bidder.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been requested by the deputy government whip to defer the division until a later time. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until tomorrow at the end of Government Orders and following the other deferred votes, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

• (1840)

Does the House agree to proceed with adjournment proceedings?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have asked a question of the Minister of Transport, in fact the entire side, a number of times. I have asked the minister, I have asked the parliamentary secretary, I have even asked the chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport. My question has been regarding the Pearson airport contract. If they think this is a bad deal we wanted to know what they thought was a good deal.

In spite of asking all these different people, I have never received an answer. What I want to do for a moment is take a look at what is good and what is bad about this deal; first what is good, from my perspective, of course.

It would have involved $740 million of private enterprise money going into the rebuilding of terminals 1 and 2 without any cost to the taxpayer. It would have created world class terminals at competitive and comparable rents for airlines. It would have had blended use of terminal 3 during the construction period, minimizing public disruption. There would have been a tremendous advantage to Air Canada and perhaps even Canadian Airlines.

It would have created a new world class air terminal and would have provided enhanced economic and tourism benefits for central Canada without cost to the air industry in other parts of the country or the Canadian taxpayer.

Then there is the matter of jobs, jobs, jobs—the Liberal Party election cry. The Pearson development contract would have created 14,000 person years of construction employment and another 1,200 permanent new jobs in the new facilities.

What is bad about this contract? According to the Liberals, this contract had no cancellation clause. What is interesting is that there was no cancellation clause for Terminal 3, for Vista

cargo terminals or for the Vancouver local airport authority. They claimed that it had limited bidding. The reality is that hundreds of contracts or requests for proposals were printed, dozens were picked up, and the fact that only a few were qualified to bid on it can hardly be deemed the responsibility or problem of the Pearson consortium.

They claimed that the rate of return on investment was too high; the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce did not think so. It was one of the original investors but they dropped out because the rate of return dropped to less than 14 per cent, which they thought was too low for the degree of risk involved.

They complained that the contract was signed during the election campaign. Most legal opinions agree that the actual binding date of the deal was August of 1993, before the election was called.

A very selective censored review of terminals 1 and 2 provided to Robert Nixon by the associate deputy minister and classified as secret, indicates the following: rate of return too high? The Pearson Development Corporation return on investment was endorsed as reasonable by both the Department of Finance and a government hired independent consultant. They claimed the crown was not getting a good return but the reality is this report said the crown's rate of return was considerably better than a crown construction option.

I have to provide at this provide an apology because in my letter to the minister which I sent a week ago I claimed that his action was unprecedented. In actual fact, the War Measures Act in 1942 which saw the Japanese stripped of all their property, legislated payment and denied the right of appeal, sounds rather familiar.

They claim that $445 million is the compensation sought. Court documents show no amount has been claimed, only the right to an arbitration tribunal.

So far this is all my side. Is there a Liberal side? We do not know. We keep asking the question and they keep refusing to answer it. The question is, and I will ask it again for the fourth time, if this is a bad deal, what is a good deal, what are your alternatives?

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not sure that is the question we are supposed to be debating tonight. I will try in my short two minutes to respond to the member's addendum to his question.

First, the Liberal government's position is pretty clear. We cancelled the deal. Canadians obviously thought we made the right decision because they elected us in majority numbers; in fact 98 out of 99 Ontario seats, for the member's recollection.

The current Prime Minister had given ample notice during the election that he wanted to review the deal to see where the public interest was. Once we were elected we put the public interest first and that was to cancel the deal as we had promised to do before the election. There is no question where the Liberal government stands. We think the deal was a bad deal for Canadians. We cancelled the deal.

I find it incredible that the Reform Party is actually supporting the deal. The member knows because he is the transport critic that the standing committee held hearings on Bill C–22 and brought forth witnesses to discuss the pros and cons of the bill and the deal.

It is unquestionable that the highest court in the land, Parliament, which is to determine public interest, has determined this was a bad deal. Courts may decide on the value of a contract cancelled or not; but the highest court in the land, Parliament of which the Reform Party speaks so highly each and every day, has the right to determine pubic interest.

We are not standing still. We are moving through our national airports policy to make sure that Pearson is the flagship of our Canadian Airport Authority. The municipalities have named their representatives. The minister has announced the completion of the north–south runway to be used for safety reasons in inclement weather, not on a daily basis. We have been waiting for the appointments of the other members of the CAA so we can get on with building Pearson, spending the $740 million, creating jobs and making sure that Pearson remains the world class facility it was supposed to be.

We are committed not to waiting until 1998 as the member suggested in his original question but to getting on with building Pearson in the public interest as a non–profit organization called the Canadian Airport Authority. We would welcome the Reform Party's support of Bill C–22 and not it being allies with Conservative senators, which is also incredible.

We hope to get on with building Pearson and have the support of the Reform Party in that regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.47 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 18, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

LOWER CHURCHILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 1993 annual report of the Lower Churchill Development Corporation Limited.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition signed by voters of the riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard stating their opposition to the proposed amendments to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The petitioners are asking Parliament not to amend the Canadian Code of Human Rights by adding the rather vague expression "sexual orientation" to the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination.

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present two petitions signed by 60 residents of Kaleden and Oliver in my riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt. I would like to point out that to date 413 people from my riding have signed petitions regarding the same subject, gun control.

The petitioners oppose further gun legislation. They call on the government to provide strict enforcement of existing statutes governing the use of firearms in the commission of a criminal offence, with particular emphasis on the rigorous use of section 85 of the Criminal Code. Further restrictions on law–abiding citizens will not solve the problem of crime in Canada. Government must deal with the real problem and not punish law–abiding citizens.

I support my petitioners.

• (1005)

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to rise on behalf of 685 residents of the constituency of Edmonton Southwest to present a petition that speaks against euthanasia.

The petitioners pray that the Parliament of Canada will ensure that palliative care is active and compassionate, that it can relieve the pain and suffering of the terminally ill and help families without the danger of suicide.

It is my pleasure to present the petition and I concur fully with the petitioners.

Mr. Berger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if I could seek the unanimous consent of the House to revert to committee reports for the purpose of tabling a report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Members have heard the request of the member for Saint–Henri—Westmount for unanimous consent to revert to presenting reports from committees. Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY

Mr. David Berger (Saint–Henri—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Industry entitled "Taking Care of Small Business" or, in French, *Pour financer le succès de la PME*.

This report contains 24 recommendations aimed at creating a financial climate more favourable to the development of small business in Canada.

[*English*]

The report could not have been done without the tremendous hard work and non–partisan co–operation of all members from all parties of the industry committee. I wish to thank everyone who participated in the report.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, on the tabling of this report I would like to join the chairman in saluting the 58 witnesses who participated in the committee proceedings and thanking the people who sent us 62 briefs.

I also want to stress the highly positive atmosphere in which the proceedings took place. I must say however that, in spite of this positive attitude, we had to dissent on two major points which we believed not to be in the best interests of Quebecers. The first point concerns the fiscal relationship between the Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs du Québec and the federal government; we will comment on this further during the forthcoming press conference; the second point regards the Small Businesses Loans Act; instead of restricting its scope, we would like to see it broadened to include all small businesses, not only those involved in exports, so that in the new economy, small and medium sized businesses can rely on this act for their working capital. That is all for now, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before I see the member rising, according to our standing orders concerning the tabling of reports from committees, if and when there should be a dissenting voice, members from Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition have an equal amount of time to that of the presenter of the committee report.

I submit with the greatest of respect to all my colleagues that the Chair cannot extend the floor to another member to speak on the same report.

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With unanimous consent, could we be afforded that privilege just for a very brief comment?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Of course the Chair is the servant of all members of the House. Is it the wish of the House to extend the privilege to the hon. member? Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here this morning and to be able to support and to be part of a process in which democracy is operating in its truest form.

The committee developed recommendations that will support small business. These were developed based on the people's commentary. The committee has come up with recommendations that in my opinion will definitely help to develop small business in Canada.

Some of the key recommendations are the increase of competition among financial institutions by increasing the number and kind of institutions that provide financing; setting interest rates under the Small Businesses Loans Act that are commensurate with risk; developing a code of conduct for banks; and the establishment of a bank ombudsman with the power to investigate and order compensation on matters of breach of duty or maladministration in order to ensure a level playing field between businesses and banks.

• (1010)

We know that small businesses play a major role in the economic development of Canada. We need to shore up this part of our sector. Our economic future is dependent upon them and this report. If the government sees fit to implement the recommendations, we will have a better climate as a result of this development.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all the questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from September 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I will recognize the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I want to apprise the House we are at the stage of debate where members have a 10–minute allocation without questions or comments.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–41 addresses an area of the criminal justice system which we call sentencing. There is for me a certain sense of déjà vu. A bill not identical to this was introduced in the last Parliament.

Colleagues on the justice committee at that time viewed the bill as flawed and made a collective decision not to proceed. As a result the sentencing legislation, which has been in the works for some 10 years or more, languished for another period of time. That legislation was flawed from the point of view of properly defining what sentencing should be or could be and it

also failed to take adequate account of the role of the victim in a criminal law sentencing decision.

At least members on this side of the House and to some extent all members are the authors of the bill currently before the House. I am proud to stand with the Minister of Justice in presenting this bill for its consideration.

Certain refinements have been made to the bill. There have been a lot of contributors. It is only fair to acknowledge these contributors over all of the years. This is not something that came off the assembly line and was cobbled together quickly.

Over the years contributions have been made in the area of criminal law sentencing, at least in laying the new groundwork, by the Law Reform Commission of Canada, the Canadian Sentencing Commission, and former members of the House of Commons. I recall members of the other place also contributed to the debate. There have been some special individuals inside the House.

We should give credit to those in the Department of Justice who have shepherded the bill through to the present time. Last but not least is the Minister of Justice. He has come forward with what we believe is a landmark in the sense that not previously in our history have we attempted to codify the sentencing regime in the Criminal Code. We have not had a statute that specifically targeted the issue of sentencing.

Sentencing was referred to in the government's election platform. Some credit is due to a lot of members in the last Parliament, not just on the government side, but some credit is also due to the flexibility and foresight of the current Prime Minister who accommodated this in the party's platform. Now it is our job in the House to review it, refine it should the need be there and put it into law.

• (1015)

What is worth noting for the record is this bill is not corrections legislation. It does not deal with penitentiaries. It does not deal with parole. It does not deal with sentencing terms per se. The sentence that could be given by a judge is set out in the Criminal Code, minimums, maximums or whatever. This bill does not set out the penalty or potential penalty for a particular crime. This bill does not deal with gun control per se. It does not deal with the way we deal with gradual release of our inmates. It is not any of those things. Notwithstanding, it is a landmark piece of legislation.

This bill consolidates and updates in a codified form our Canadian developed law of sentencing. Much of this law has been developed in the courtroom by judges. It was created judicially with reference to the Criminal Code, our criminal law traditions, our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other common law elements that judges have taken into account over the years.

This is perhaps an opportunity for the legislators to play their role in giving the appropriate definition, guidance and framework to the judges who have for the last 100 or more years carried the burden of sentencing in the discretion that has been given to them under the Criminal Code. Here is our chance as legislators to provide a framework for them.

One of the major functions of this bill is to define the purpose and principles of sentencing. This was an issue in the previous legislation. It still may be an issue. It may be an area in which some refinement may be useful at committee stage recalling that as we debate the bill now we are debating the bill in principle. I am certainly going to support the bill in principle.

In terms of these actual definitions, it might be useful for the committee which will study this bill to look with a magnifying glass at the actual wording of the purpose and principles of sentencing as set out in the bill. There is some alleged fuzzing thinking. It is just alleged. I am not saying it is fuzzy, I am saying that from my point of view the wording in section 718 could be slightly more simplified and perhaps more orthodox than it is written at the moment.

In that regard, and I will put it on the record, I have a sense that in trying to define the fundamental purpose of sentencing Department of Justice officials have used the definition of purpose of criminal law. There is a difference between the purpose of criminal law, that being generally or usually defined to be the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society, and the purpose of sentencing which is just an element of the criminal law. The purpose of sentencing, in my view, is to promote respect for the law and respect for the criminal law system which does all of these other things for us. However, that is a rather narrow perspective at the moment as we debate the bill in principle and that can be taken up later.

I want to address the sections of this bill dealing with potential for change from the aboriginal perspective. It would be wrong to say there is now in existence an aboriginal system of criminal justice. There are some pilot projects through the goodwill of aboriginal Canadians, the people on their reserves, people in the criminal justice community, the police and the judges.

• (1020)

There has been some leadership there in an attempt to develop a system in the aboriginal community that works. I do not think there is a member in this House who would walk into a reserve in northern Canada and say they believe affairs on the reserve ought to be run the same way they are in downtown Montreal or Vancouver or at King and Bay Streets in Toronto. These are two different worlds.

Our aboriginal Canadians never did apply for Canadian citizenship. We bestowed it on them. There is plenty of good reason to look for ways to make the criminal justice system work on these reserves that are very much removed from the urban way of Canadian life.

I look forward to working on that aspect of the bill. I will make note of my interest in section 745 of the Criminal Code which is related to sentencing provisions. This bill does not address that specifically. It might be constructive and useful to take a closer look at section 745 of the Criminal Code, the section that permits a decreased or reduced parole eligibility date for those serving life sentences, and at the wording of section 718(2) which deals with aggravating and mitigating circumstances that a judge may take into account at the time of sentencing.

There is an initiative put forward in the bill which may be useful. It would certainly bear discussion at the committee stage when we look at the entire package.

I will indicate my wholehearted support for the bill in principle. I look forward to further deliberations at the committee stage.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C–41. The purpose of this bill is to introduce changes to the sentencing system of the Criminal Code. A number of aspects of this bill do improve the sentencing process.

Canadians are demanding improvements to the criminal justice system. Perhaps Bill C–41 will address a few of their concerns. However, some aspects only appear to be positive. Half measures or blatantly misleading proposals are not what they want.

Despite the introduction of the statement of purpose and principle of sentencing, judges will still have the same latitude under this legislation as they do today in imposing various and inconsistent penalties.

This month I have received over 4,000 letters and faxes as well as petitions containing the signatures of over 12,000 residents of the lower mainland demanding real deterrents as a fundamental part of the justice system. I believe that inescapable, real consequences are part of such a deterrent.

Respect for the criminal justice system stems from equality before the law. Where is the principle of building confidence in Canadians that their safety and security is a primary goal of an accountable justice system that must include the principle of equality?

As I address the issue of equality before and under the law, I would like to address the so–called hate crime section of this bill. It reads as follows: "Evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation of the victim shall be deemed to be aggravating circumstances".

There is no question that it is totally reprehensible that a person should be attacked viciously or otherwise because of their personal characteristics. The attacker should be punished fully for the offence. However, this section of the legislation poses several dilemmas which need to be addressed.

How will the courts determine that a crime was motivated by hate, prejudice or bias? Will prosecutors launch investigations into the backgrounds and motives of every person convicted of assault in order to determine whether that assault was based on a personal bias against the victim?

How will this affect current backlogs in the courts? Will only the most obvious crimes be subject to this section? Will the courts later overturn a verdict delivered by a lower court because it later seemed that the assault was or was not motivated by hate, prejudice or bias, even though the assault on the individual took place?

• (1025)

Why should one form of assault be judged as more hideous or unacceptable than another? What happened to the fact that any assault on a man or a woman is completely unacceptable and should not be tolerated regardless of motivating factors? It is the viciousness of the attack that needs to be judged, not whether the accused harboured personal prejudice toward the victim. There is a problem with the enumeration of categories upon which bias, prejudice or hate will be decided. Is hate only an aggravated crime if it falls within these categories?

What about a person who is attacked because someone does not like their chosen profession? Consider for a moment the popularity of lawyers and politicians. Occupational bias is not on this list. What if they hate someone because they are rich or because they are poor? Class distinction is not on this list. The person who is mugged and beaten half to death for their wallet and keys to their expensive car by someone who resents their status or achievement will see their accused face a lesser sentence than if the same accused had attacked them for their religious beliefs. There is great inequity in this type of legislation.

I would like to bring to the attention of this House a couple of incidents from my own province of British Columbia which will help illustrate the problem with this particular clause.

The first occurred in B.C. to a young man by the name of Andre Castet. Let me read from the coverage of this case provided by the Vancouver *Sun*: "But no less than a month after the Sidney teenager died from a beating, its his former classmates and the community who must regain voices and steps broken by the tragedy. 'People are still grappling for an explanation for this—something they can latch on to', says Derek Peach, a grade 12 English teacher at Parkland secondary, the 800

student Sidney school where both Andre, 17, and his two accused killers attended classes last year".

Would the parents and friends of the victims feel any better about this tragic death if they knew that the accused would be facing a stiffer penalty because the crown prosecutor could prove that the attack was motivated by hate, prejudice or bias? Since there does not seem to be any such evidence should there not be an outcry of injustice from those same parents and friends because the accused will not suffer as harsh a penalty as they might if it could be proven that they hated him?

What about the case in my own riding of Coquitlam, the tragic and senseless death of Graham Niven? His death sparked an outcry from the public which resulted in a rally attended by over 5,000 people demanding stiffer penalties for those youth convicted of crimes of violence.

Again, I quote from an article in the Vancouver *Sun*: "A man who was kicked to death last weekend was helping a teenager in trouble, the victim's roommate said Tuesday. Graham Niven, 31, had just called a taxi for a stranded Burnaby youth before a confrontation with a group of youths outside a Mac's convenience store in Coquitlam early Saturday morning. 'He was being a good Samaritan' said roommate Steve Hoskins Tuesday. 'He gave his last $7 to a kid from Burnaby who had missed the last bus home."

The people in my riding do not want the accused getting off lightly because they are young offenders but they also do not want them getting off lightly because they cannot be found guilty of hate, prejudice or bias. They destroyed a man, along with his dreams and goals, and left his family and friends with nothing but their memories and their pain. No matter what the motivation for the crime the sentence must reflect the tragedy and hideousness of the crime. An assault is an assault and must be treated with the full extent of the law.

I would also like to address the inclusion of sexual orientation in this legislation. I am personally opposed to the inclusion of this term and would like to outline the reasons for my stand.

My party affirms the equality of every individual before and under the law and the right of every individual to live freely within the limits of the law. I assert that homosexuals already have the same rights and privileges as all other Canadians as guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Sexual orientation in itself is not a legitimate basis for special enumerated protection. I will give several reasons.

First and foremost sexual orientation does not possess the characteristics essential for inclusion in the list. Human rights are protected on the basis of immutable characteristics such as age, gender and race, or the universally accepted positive characteristic of religion. These criteria have not yet been established for the category of sexual orientation and in particular the undefined term as presented in this legislation.

As well my conclusion is based on the position of my constituents. Recently in a questionnaire sent out from my office I asked whether my constituents agreed that sexual orientation should be included in the charter as a protected category along with race, colour, religion or gender. A decisive 65 per cent of respondents rejected that notion.

• (1030)

It is my duty to represent the concerns of my constituents. It is also my duty as an elected representative to consider all consequences and implications. As illustrated in the debate in this House, the inclusion of such a term as sexual orientation would result in a profound infringement on the longstanding rights and freedoms of Canadians.

Would the label of crime of hate be applied to even the expression of one's deeply held religious or personal convictions if those personal convictions were that homosexuality was immoral? That has been proposed.

Would it be a crime of hate to express personal freedom of association by the exclusion of homosexuals in churches or private associations or even as roommates? These and other questions will be raised in broader ways as we discuss the government's proposed changes to the Human Rights Act.

May I say that a government that denies the moral will of the majority of Canadians by forcing a vote on party lines is denying the very basics of democracy.

In conclusion, society demands that a criminal justice system enforce deterrence of the offender with just and predictable consequence. It demands the principle of equality under the law to be applied to all Canadians. Assault or any other crime for whatever reason should receive the full force of law regardless of the range of emotion behind the motives for the crime. Canadians want justice applied without the intrusion of mind police or political correctness. Canadians want laws and systems better defined to protect society as a whole.

Bill C–41 introduces more potential for inequities and unpredictability in an already flawed system.

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can think of nothing more frustrating for Canadian people than laws which are in theory intended to protect and reflect our sense of what is right and what is wrong but which in practice continuously prove to be ineffective or variable in their application and result.

Our legal system forms the network that binds us as Canadians. It is the framework under which we all agree to live and be judged. With variability or uncertainty of application and use, the strength, control and credibility of this vital tool of human management is undermined and society as a whole is weakened.

In response to a growing sense of frustration on the part of Canadians, the Minister of Justice has tabled Bill C–41, an act on sentencing reform. In an effort to refocus the application and use of our laws Bill C–41 provides clear direction and guidelines to the courts on the purpose and the methods of sentencing. Prior to Bill C–41 the role of Parliament was simply to set maximum penalties for offences under the Criminal Code. With this legislation Parliament is looking at the fundamentals, the policy objectives of the sentencing process.

This legislation sets out that the fundamental purpose of sentencing is to contribute to respect for the law and the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society. The framework provided is of enormous significance. Sentencing is not simply about giving sentences. Rather, sentencing must serve the fundamental purpose of creating a just and safe society.

Bill C–41 provides as well a holistic vision of sentencing. Sentencing should not be solely about jails and prisons. Effective sentencing, sentencing that deters repeat offenders, also involves alternative measures such as restitution and conditional sentences.

Research has clearly shown that these forms of sentencing are more effective in combating crime than a strictly law and order approach. One only needs to look south of the border for evidence of this. In the United States the rate of imprisonment is 400 per cent that of Canada's yet 200 Americans are victims of violence every hour despite annual expenditures on police, courts and corrections that exceed $70 billion. One cannot seriously argue that the United States is a safer country due to its bigger jails, tougher sentences and capital punishment. In fact, the opposite seems true.

Bill C–41 outlines another sentencing principle that I would like to briefly address. Under this legislation the courts should take into consideration the principle that a sentence should be increased if there is evidence that the crime was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on the race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation of the victim. Some say that this provides special status for these Canadians, particularly homosexual Canadians. If these people have any special status, it is the special status of often suffering abuse simply because of their minority characteristics.

• (1035)

Bill C–41 ensures that the courts consider these circumstances when deciding upon sentences. This is not about granting special status. Rather it is about affirming equality for all Canadians. Homosexual Canadians should be able to walk on our streets without the fear of being attacked just because of their sexual orientation. Just as heterosexuals do not have to live with this fear neither should other Canadians who have a different sexual preference.

This is about promoting equality, not granting special status. It is also saying that Canadians will not stand for crimes based on hate.

Many of my constituents have expressed to me their concern that the criminal justice system does not do enough for the victim. I strongly support Bill C–41 because it does address this concern in several ways. One obvious way is that it provides for victim impact statements at section 745 hearings. Victims will no longer go voiceless at the early parole hearings.

A second provision for victims that I would like to discuss in more detail is restitution. Bill C–41 would allow the courts to consider ordering restitution to individual victims or to the community to cover property damage or personal injury. This provision responds to the demands of victims to have their needs considered by the justice system.

Crimes can have a tremendous financial impact upon victims. Is it more effective to have these offenders only put behind bars? Where does that leave the victim? Or should the perpetrators be hit where it hurts, in the pocketbook, which will promote responsibility for their actions?

Previously victims had to apply to receive compensation for their losses. Bill C–41 provides a process for restitution to be considered as part of the normal process of sentencing.

In cases in which the court orders an offender to pay restitution and a fine but where it is clear that the offender does not have the means to pay both, Bill C–41 states that restitution must take precedence. This demonstrates that this legislation is committed to helping the victims of crime.

I strongly support this move toward restitution. Why should victims of crime go uncompensated while the offenders simply spend time in custody? I would think for non–serious crimes rehabilitation of the offender can be more effectively achieved through directly seeing what damage has been caused to the victim.

I believe and would request that the framework for restitution as set out in Bill C–41 be extended to cover the special circumstances of certain specific crimes. I am particularly thinking about the issue of domestic violence. In most cases a severe economic inequality results from these situations.

If a woman makes a horribly difficult decision to press charges and leave the scene of abuse she in most cases retains responsibility for the children. She is forced to seek temporary shelter, needs to find child care or care for her children, often with very limited economic means.

I believe that restitution would be particularly important in cases involving domestic violence because of the economic inequality that results. Women and their children are too often left at a severe disadvantage. Too often the abuser spends some weekend in jail or pays some fines but the victim is left with

financial stresses in addition to the obvious physical and emotional trauma.

Under Bill C–41 restitution orders for bodily harm only cover pecuniary damages specifically including loss of income or support. It is unclear how broadly the courts might interpret pecuniary damages in ordering restitution in the cases of domestic violence.

I am suggesting that we should not leave this judgment to chance. We should define pecuniary damages in cases involving domestic violence to specifically include loss of income as well as costs related to temporary shelter, child care and transportation. These are costs that are directly incurred as a result of the abuse. The courts should consider these when ordering restitution.

Abused women are often forced to spend time in battered women's shelters since they are the only places they can afford and which offer protection. Perhaps a portion of the restitution order dealing with temporary housing could go directly to support these shelters as well.

I acknowledge this is not a solution to the problem of domestic violence. Solutions have to be found in addressing problems before the abuse occurs in looking at the inequality between men and women and looking at the problems of poverty and alcoholism. However, I think that restitution offers an excellent opportunity to address the economic inequality that can result from domestic violence.

• (1040)

Another significant problem is that women often do not report abusive situations. Restitution would only be ordered after a conviction is obtained. I realize that this is only a small consideration to the emotional and physical challenges, but if women knew that compensation would be there in the end they might be more encouraged to report the abuse.

Requiring the courts to consider the specific circumstances of domestic violence cases in ordering restitution would help the victims of domestic violence. Requiring convicted abusers to financially compensate their victims would provide another good indication to offenders that they are responsible for their actions.

In closing, I strongly support the measures that are included in Bill C–41. The maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society depends on good and fair sentencing. This legislation provides a framework for our courts so that they in turn can give our community, Canadians, just that.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C–41. I do so on experience gained as a community worker in the criminal justice system from 1975 to 1993. I have 18 years experience working with offenders, victims, police, prosecutors, judges, correctional workers and the public. I have also worked with many volunteers involved in the justice system.

My work was in the Waterloo region where we pioneered many programs in the field of community justice and corrections. Victim reconciliation, community mediation, Kitchener House where offenders serve provincial time in a halfway house, the first bail program in Ontario, law day and justice weeks were all pioneered in the Waterloo region. In the Waterloo region crime and justice are a community responsibility.

Bill C–41 is an omnibus bill that updates sentencing practices. I applaud in particular the section dealing with the imposition of fines. Under the current law close to one–third of admissions to Ontario jails are for the nonpayment of fines. We have a ridiculous situation where in lieu of collecting a $200 fine we end up spending thousands of dollars to jail the offender.

For too long we have been incarcerating people for no other reason than their being poor. It is reminiscent of debtors prisons. Too many of our aboriginal people and too many of our economically disadvantaged people occupy our jails. This bill will address this injustice and will use community service work to replace costly incarceration.

It is important when we talk of crime and justice issues to recognize that offenders and victims are people who come from communities and are not aliens from another planet. Solutions to issues of crime are complex and involve all segments of our society.

Having reviewed the debates on Bill C–41, I am troubled by the simplistic solutions put forth by the Reform Party. It would have us believe that capital and corporal punishment along with longer prison sentences would produce a safer society in Canada. If the simplistic solutions dictated by the Reform Party had any basis in fact then I submit that the United States would be the safest society in the western world.

We know and I am sure the Reform Party knows this is not the case. The United States has the highest crime rate and the most violent crimes in the western world. It executes and jails more people than any other in western society. Surely the Reform Party would not want to trade the safety of our streets in Canada for that of the United States.

One of the biggest problems we have with the issue of crime is the perception created by the American and our own news media. They create a perception that in Canada we are living in a society where crime and violence are much more prevalent than the statistics indicate. Canada is not the United States.

• (1045)

Our society is much less crime infested than the United States. We do a disservice when we pander and reinforce misconceptions. I would suggest that the Reform Party is pandering to misconceptions. I would further suggest the debate on firearms we are engaged in today is driven by the images of

gun laws in the U.S., along with its horrendous crime statistics, rather than by the reality in Canada.

There is no question that our justice system needs improvement, but in reality we have one of the best justice systems in the world. To continually attack the integrity of our justice system as the Reform Party does is to undermine it. If Canadians were to believe that our justice system does not work they would not report crimes and would not sit on juries. If the public is not supported the justice system breaks down.

There is no question that one victim is one victim too many. The issue becomes how to keep our communities safe. There is no question that to deal with crime we have to make crime prevention and community safety everyone's concern.

In the Waterloo region we have one of the safest communities in Canada and we do not rest on our laurels. We have established a regional committee on crime prevention and community safety that has two main mandates. The first is to mobilize the community to fight crime, for crime prevention is everyone's responsibility. The second is to deal with prevention through programs. We all know that a child who goes to school hungry or a child who is victimized is tomorrow's offender.

The community in the Waterloo region, in co–operation with the provincial and federal governments, has to deal with this social reality. It is of interest that the strongest proponent of dealing with the root cause of crime on the Waterloo crime prevention and community safety committee representing a broad sector of our community is the police.

There are no simple solutions to the problem of crime. To deal with crime we have to attack the root causes of crime and not just deal with symptoms. The answers to crime prevention lie at the level of individual communities where we work to enhance our own, our neighbour's and our community's safety. Crime and justice is a collective responsibility that we all share.

Much of the debate on Bill C–41 centred on the clause of the bill dealing with an offence being motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on the race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation of the victim. If the crime was based on any one of these points it shall be deemed to be aggravating circumstances in the case of sentencing.

We have heard arguments that all crime should be treated the same. I cannot disagree in stronger terms. I am defending this clause because I believe if at any time somebody is attacked for no other reason than being part of a minority group, surely the law has to take a much stronger measure in preventing others from doing the same.

It is imperative to remember that in the case of the Holocaust we had persecution on the basis of religion. It took six million deaths to raise consciousness with regard to this problem. I cannot understand how anybody could extend the clause of the bill which specifically talks about sentencing to talking about spousal support for homosexuals. It talks about someone being attacked for no other basis than sexual orientation, religion or nationality, and about the offender being more harshly dealt with.

That is one of the more important clauses in the bill. I thoroughly support it. I regret some members of the House would have the public misinterpret what that clause says.

• (1050)

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased I arrived on time from my riding to speak in this debate. It is a very important one that raises some fundamental questions about who we are as a nation, the values we hold dear, whether or not we are compassionate or just seek vengeance when we are wronged. It also says a great deal about the type of society we are trying to build for our children who, after all, are the people for whom we are holding the country in trust.

Everybody has spoken about Bill C–41. They talked about all the major provisions of the bill. I am not going to attempt to go through them again. However there are a couple of provisions in the bill which I think the public in the riding of Dartmouth will be very pleased to hear about.

During the election campaign law and order, whatever that means or whatever was the definition of the day, seemed to be the thing most people were concerned about. I knocked on doors and received calls from people concerned that the criminal justice system simply was not working. These people were not rednecks, right wingers or crazy people; they were concerned about the safety of their communities.

Somewhere in the mix over the last number of years there has been a problem. The fundamental problem has come from the fact that when we came in with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which was a very bold initiative of the government of the day that was applauded by nearly all Canadians, it switched the pendulum over to individual rights and away from community rights. Indeed at times there are community rights which must be taken into consideration.

How often have we heard individuals ask why it is always the rights of the individual who has broken the law, who has wronged the community, who has sought to injure an individual, steal their property or whatever, that are paramount and more heavily weighed than those of the victim?

The bill deals with sentencing. It starts to address some of the real concerns expressed by Canadians. I am not going to indicate that I have done a study and that I understand or I know that the concern of Canadians about rising crime is founded in fact or not, because that simply does not matter. Everyone can quote statistics. The most recently quoted ones are that we are not becoming a more violent society and that crime rates are actually down. As a legislator I am concerned about the perception in my community that people are less safe today than they were 3, 5, 10 or 15 years ago.

From time to time it is up to us as legislators to come forward to debate and try to figure out if the laws and the principles they were founded on, like the Young Offenders Act and some of the sentencing provisions in legislation, are actually attaining their goals and if they are not to try to change them. It does not mean we always have to respond to public opinion or that legislation should be a knee–jerk reaction. It should not be that at all. If members have their ears to the ground in their constituencies and if they strip away their partisan approach to public policy making, they can get a fairly good idea about what is in the public interest. Clearly some of the reforms in the bill are in the public interest.

The optics of the bill have to be seen to be fair as well. One thing that disturbs me a great deal is the focus of the public eye, through the media and through members of this place and others in public, on a very specific provision of the bill. I am saddened that the level of debate on sentencing has fallen to whether or not individuals should be subject to harsher sentencing, or if the crimes they have perpetrated were against persons and based on hate then the judge should look at that provision. The debate being about whether or not any group in society is being conferred special rights does a great disservice to the level of debate that has taken place in the Chamber since Confederation.

We are not here to respond to those who will slap us on the back when we make remarks either overtly or thinly veiled against minorities. The previous member who just spoke put it quite nicely. He referred to a tragic piece of history; he referred to the Holocaust and how in the minds of the people who supported the Nazi regime in Germany it was fine to discriminate based on a person's religion. It is not fine and if anybody thought it was, society has changed. It is not fine to discriminate against persons because of the colour of their skin.

• (1055)

I have the largest, oldest, indigenous black community in Canada. When I have an unemployment rate of 10 per cent in my riding, three miles away their unemployment rate is 48 per cent. I may not be able to prove it because there is systemic racism. I am sure if every employer were blind we would probably have a more even distribution of the unemployment load in my area.

Any type of act predicated by hatred for a group based on whatever factor—if they have two green eyes, if they have an arm or two arms or one is shorter than the other, or if it is sexual orientation—has to be recognized as something that is not supported by the legislators and is not supported by the people of Canada.

It has done a great disservice to the bill and to individuals who have been harmed far too often in the past by our refusal to discuss these issues as well as the issue of hate crimes in a full and unbiased atmosphere.

A couple of things are not in the bill. We are talking about Bill C–41 and its impact on sentencing. We have heard of all the great things in the bill. There are a few things I think should be in there, and if they are not they should find their way into legislation.

Unfortunately I live in an area that is now the pimping capital of Canada. In the riding of Dartmouth we lay claim—and we are not pleased with or proud of it—to probably the largest illegal pimping ring in Canada. It extends into the United States as well. That pimping ring has been going out and luring girls—and this is a victim crime—as young as 11 years of age into juvenile prostitution. They are luring them into illegal drug use and then into prostitution on the streets of New York, Niagara Falls, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver, Halifax, Truro, and small towns near any of us.

All too often very few of these girls are ever rescued. They are children. They are not adults who choose to get into this way of life. They are children who are literally stolen from our schools and off the streets. If they ever get out of the cycle of prostitution they are like walking zombies. They have no self–worth left. They are usually addicted to drugs and alcohol. They have no life ahead of them. Their lives are destroyed; their families' lives are destroyed.

However, when we deal with sentencing in the law most of these guys get off with three to six months in jail. In Nova Scotia that means they go to a minimum security institution and three months later they walk out. They have not lost even one penny because one of their friends will have taken over their stable of young juvenile girls on the streets and they will still maintain the financial incentive to break the law.

This has to stop. This is murder of the worst kind because the soul and the spirit of the child, of the woman, or the young girl are being killed, but she is not being killed physically. They are hollow empty vessels after these low life scum are finished with them. In our laws we most often treat that type of crime less seriously than if somebody absconds with $100,000 or $10,000 from the Bank of Nova Scotia.

Crimes against children when the sentencing comes down from the judge in a court of law in many cases are dealt with less

harshly than crimes against property. That is simply wrong. For anyone who does not understand the full implication, there have been a number of articles written in *Chatelaine* and *Reader's Digest* in the last number of months. This is one of the worst crimes that happens in Canada because it happens to defenceless children.

I have spoken to the Minister of Justice a number of times and we could probably get support for one of the things I would have liked to have seen in the bill. If the government is not prepared at some point to deal with the issue then I am prepared to deal with the issue as a private member by putting a motion in the House.

I am not one of those right wingers who believes we should lock everybody up; I am the exact opposite. This is one of the few crimes, I am told, where the length of sentence will be a deterrent. For crimes against our children like sexual crimes against our children the legislation should indicate the revulsion of Canadians and of legislators. There has to be tough minimum sentences. In my view not one of those pimps who destroy the lives of young girls should get out of jail before a five–year minimum sentence is carried out. If I had my druthers it would be a 10–year minimum sentence, but they are out in three months.

• (1100)

For everybody who is out there watching and listening to these debates, if they have a young daughter or granddaughter, if their neighbour has a 10, 11, 12 or 13 year old and they think they are safe when they are going to school, they are not. There are predators out there, predators our sentencing law does not protect our children against.

Although I support this bill, I encourage members as I encourage the Minister of Justice, to be a little more bold. I ask the minister to bring legislation into the House as soon as he possibly can to deal with this most abhorrent crime of pimping juvenile women, juvenile girls, our children.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C–41, a bill that fulfils yet another Liberal red book promise, sentencing reform within the criminal justice system.

During the past election campaign there was great debate over public security. That debate raged in some quarters as a debate of extremes. Some of these extremes have found their way through the electoral process into the House, which is as it should be.

The House, by its very nature and by its very culture, is a place of polar views and the residence of extremes, which are used sometimes as a vehicle for expressing opinion and as a vehicle for driving a point home. Other extreme views are strongly and I would suggest in some quarters unreasonably held.

That is the great risk and quite frankly the great beauty of the democratic system. The views will be heard. The views will be challenged. The views will be studied. They will be agreed with or they will be discarded. As in the case of the 1993 election, there will be a predominant view in the House which will succeed. That was reflected in the election by our forming the government. There was a predominant view in the land and Canadians overwhelmingly elected the Liberal Party of Canada to govern. From this overwhelming support, we have as we must taken our mandate. It is a mandate for job creation, for tolerance among disparate groups. It is a mandate for economic growth and a mandate for safer streets through tough but humane measures that recognize the supremacy of the rule of law.

It seems the charter has become inconvenient for some members of the House. The charter has become the subject of derision. The charter has become something for which some members have no respect.

Since 1979 I have practised law in the criminal courts of Ontario. Since 1982 I have acted as a prosecutor for the crown attorney's office in Windsor and Essex county. Between 1986 and 1988 I also served as a federal prosecutor. I know more than just a little about the subject matter in this debate.

I have defended and I have prosecuted the criminal. I have done both successfully within the bounds of the rule of law and since 1982, when it was enacted, within the bounds of the charter. I have seen the system at its best. I have seen the guilty convicted and punished even though the charter was in place. I have also seen the not guilty walk away. Most times when this happens the rule of law and the charter have prevailed. It is a tool for democracy and a tool for democratic resolution of disputes. It is also a tool that applies fairness within the system.

This bill is part of a fair, reasonable and responsible approach to the problems of public security that face our communities.

• (1105)

It is a bill that recognizes that intolerances exist in our society, intolerances that Canadians abhor. Sections which relate to hate crime and to crime arising out of hate recognize not special rights for individuals but recognize that our society abhors that kind of treatment of individuals. It is not there to create special rights for any given group and to provide excuses for individual behaviour. It is there because we as a society do not tolerate and promote hate. The bill has to be seen within the overall framework of Liberal philosophy and of the Liberal solutions to problems today.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on some of the problems in our society other than the Criminal Code, other than the behaviour of prosecutors and other than what some think are the causes of crime.

I suggest that what we should look at is crime as a part of the overall problems that plague our society. In the city of Windsor, part of which I represent, we have had an excellent recovery recently from the recession which has really wracked industrial Ontario and all parts of the country. Fortunately for Windsor our recovery has been on the leading edge of the recovery and has been quicker because of our excellent industrial base. We have found as we have begun to recover and as our unemployment rate has gone down that our crime rate has also gone down.

I suggest that the Liberal red book and the current government policy which promote economic recovery, job creation and reforms will give people a dignified means to make a living and contribute to our society. This will interact with bills like Bill C–41 to reduce and to handle crime in a way that is healthy and productive within our society. I would also suggest that as the greater Canadian community prospers, we will see a related decrease in the types of social problems that plague us.

No service is done to the community by firing the issue up to a point where it cannot be reasonably and responsibly addressed. No service is provided through disinformation to the electorate, through driving home a subject irresponsibly and emphasizing issues which serve only to inflame and frighten the citizenry without offering responsible solutions.

Increasing penalties for crimes—in particular I am thinking of non–violent crimes, property related crimes, regulatory offences and the like—and increasing incarceration penalties for those types of crimes do nothing but increase the financial burden on our citizenry and force the government into the pocket of its citizens in terms of taxation which some people see as another form of criminal activity.

I suggest that this bill addresses the financial bottom line in society in a very clear, creative and helpful fashion. It provides alternatives in terms of sentences which are based in the community so that offenders will be recognized as offenders. Offenders will be punished for their crimes and they will be rehabilitated within the community itself rather than being isolated and put into institutions which are phenomenally expensive to support.

• (1110)

On the other hand it takes a hard and I would suggest long awaited look at criminals whose activities are violent and extremely offensive to our citizens. By amending the parole section and by taking a good hard look at some of the sentencing problems that we have in our system for violent offenders, we are offering protection to our citizens where that protection is needed and where it is wanted.

This bill takes a balanced view. This bill takes a humane view. This bill respects the rule of law. It is a statute that fits within the overall Liberal philosophy, the red book philosophy, which respects the citizenry, which seeks to protect the citizenry and which seeks to elevate the quality of life for all Canadians.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, N.D.P.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise during debate at second reading of Bill C–41, legislation which is a comprehensive package of amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada.

I know that my constituents have a number of concerns about elements of the legislation. Because we are at this stage in second reading in which there are some 10 minutes remaining, I want to take this opportunity to focus on one particular provision of Bill C–41 which has been the subject of considerable debate and controversy.

It is the provision of Bill C–41 that deals with the question of so–called hate crimes, crimes which are motivated by bias, prejudice or hate, and which are based on a number of criteria set out in Bill C–41. Those criteria include race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation of the victim.

The question of the inclusion of sexual orientation of the victim has been the subject of some debate both inside and outside the House. I want to take a couple of minutes to explain why I believe it is profoundly important that sexual orientation be included in the hate crimes provisions of the bill.

However, before I get to that specific subject, I want to note that the reference to hate motivation as a factor in sentencing already exists in the province of Ontario. The Ontario attorney general has directed crown attorneys to argue that sentencing should be increased when a crime is motivated by specific hatred. A number of guidelines are in place to guide the work of crown attorneys in this.

I want to give a couple of examples of circumstances in which sentences have been increased because a crime has been motivated by hatred. Lelas was a case involving the desecration of synagogues. This crime was quite clearly motivated by hatred, by anti–Semitism, by the hatred of Jews. The Ontario Court of Appeal increased the sentence as a result of that. Another is the case of Moyer, a neo–Nazi skinhead who urinated on gravestones in a synagogue. This was considered as an aggravating factor in sentencing and the sentence was increased.

There is the case of Hoolans who went to a so–called hate rock concert and was urged to go coon hunting at this concert. Well he did. He went out and beat to unconsciousness a Sri Lankan dishwasher. When the judge looked at sentencing for this particular crime, because the crime was clearly motivated by hatred on the basis of race, the sentence was increased.

• (1115)

In that light I want to ask what are the implications of the argument of the member for Central Nova and other members of this House, including the members of the Reform Party? What are the arguments for excluding sexual orientation from Bill C–41?

The arguments are very clear. They say that it is just and right and appropriate to increase sentences if a person is motivated by hatred on the basis of religion, race or sex, but it is not if you are motivated by hatred on the basis of sexual orientation. What kind of message would this House be sending to Canadian society if we accepted that message?

Just last weekend in Toronto two men on a downtown street walking home from a cafe, the Second Cup coffee shop, were attacked. Six young men piled out of a van and beat up these two men with fists, boots, and beer bottles, right in the heart of downtown Toronto. As they beat them and injured them, in a pool of blood and broken glass they were calling them faggots. That is gay bashing. Gay bashing occurs tragically too often in my home community of Vancouver, in Toronto, Halifax, and New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, and in many other communities. It is not always bashing of people who are gay or lesbian. In some cases it is bashing people who are perceived to be gay or lesbian. They are not gay or lesbian at all but because these thugs, these people who are motivated by hatred, believe they are gay or lesbian they beat them.

This legislation is saying that is wrong. It is saying that if we are to sentence people who are convicted of serious crimes of assault and other crimes and those people are motivated by hatred that judges should take that into consideration as an aggravating factor.

Frankly, I am astonished that a party like the Reform Party which says it believes in law and order would not understand that importance. I am very surprised and very disappointed at that. I have to say I am even more disappointed in the position taken by the member for Central Nova and a number of other Liberal members of Parliament on this issue. That member has said that sexual orientation should be taken out of Bill C–41, not the other grounds in section 41, but sexual orientation.

The implication and the message which is sent out by that is that it is okay. There is one standard if you beat up people based on race or religion and there is another standard if you beat up people based on sexual orientation. That is the message that goes out. If there is a different interpretation let her silent colleagues get up and say so. Let the member for Toronto stand up and say what he thinks about that kind of hateful language. That is what we are talking about here.

In fact, even the vice president of the Central Nova Liberal riding association, Janet Rosenstock, has said she is opposed to the position taken by the MP for Central Nova in this debate. She said the legislation does not single out sexual orientation any more than it does physical disability. It does not give special rights to gays or any other groups. That is the vice president of the riding association of Central Nova. She says, and perhaps Liberal members might find this interesting, that in its simplest terms if the hated are not named specifically prosecution of hate crimes is virtually impossible.

• (1120)

We in this House want to send a very clear and strong signal that we believe that prosecution of hate crimes must not only be possible but must be vigorously enforced. That is the message we want to send out.

I urge members of this House to support this legislation. I urge members of this House to recognize that this is an issue of fundamental justice. It is not an issue of any kind of special rights or treatment. I urge that that be recognized.

To those who say it is necessary to somehow define sexual orientation, I have something to share with them. Sexual orientation has been in legislation in this country for a number of years. There has been absolutely no need to define it to avoid abuses.

I appeal to members of this House to support this provision. Recognize that to do otherwise would be to send out a message of intolerance, a message which this House surely does not want to send to the people of this country.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this bill goes a long way to improving our criminal justice system. Yes, it will be debated pro and con.

Moves must be made. We as a Liberal Party made these commitments during the last election campaign and we will carry them out. Improvement in the way sentences of probation are decided in the courts and handled in the community for example by specifying the information that should be in a presentence report and increasing the penalties for offenders who break the conditions of their probation are a very important part of the provisions in this proposed legislation.

We know that during probation period many people have not been apprehended, could not be apprehended and went on to commit other crimes. The streets in this country have to be made safe. The communities across this country, rural and urban, have to be made safe. There has to be respect for decency and law and order.

Canada is looked upon throughout the world as a very civilized, law–abiding and internationally interested partner on the international scene. It is this government's aim to bring that respect to the legal system, the parole system and the justice system in general in Canada.

There have been horror tales in the media and for just cause over the last number of years. The decay of any system must be stopped. We must put in its place the barriers and the inhibitions that are necessary for that to happen.

There also has to be a change in the treatment of these people. We are not going to gain anything by simply throwing people in jail for long terms. They are going to come out the same as they were before, or worse. This point has been argued time and time again.

It is going to be very important that there be proper liaison among the national Department of Health, the justice system and health ministers across this country to make sure that people in prison are treated so that when they do get out they are not a threat to society. If they are not ready to be released, they should not be released. That has to be a reality in our justice system.

• (1125)

We heard of the person who a few years ago was stopped at the Canada–U.S. border at Niagara Falls by American customs people and turned over to Canadian authorities. The Canadian police were notified but nothing could be done under the then legal system because the person had committed no offence. That person committed two murders before being apprehended in London, Ontario. He ended up shooting himself. In the interim he had shot two women in the head.

These things have to receive as serious attention as the crime itself. If a person is breaking parole or is out on bail, they must be monitored. One iota of disobedience to the bail and parole system must be cause for apprehension. That individual should be taken into custody so that he or she will not commit other crimes.

The Government of Canada in co–operation with the provincial governments must be absolutely serious about putting these new rules into the system. They may never be enough so amendments must follow to tighten up the system and protect the public. There is no way in a growing society that we can allow these offences and unsafe conditions to continue.

We have seen examples from around the world where growth in the areas of crime and the justice system have been handled badly. They ended up with the problems they have today for example in Chicago, New York, and other major cities across the United States, as well as in England and other countries. We as a nation that has grown rapidly in population over the last 20 years cannot go in the same direction.

The justice and legal system must serve the safety of the citizens of this nation today, tomorrow and on into the future. A mentality must be built up whereby we will not allow any decline in the safety of today's citizens or future citizens of this country. Canada can indeed be recognized around the world not only as an internationally caring country but as a nation that pays great attention to the safety and well–being of all its citizens.

A big challenge, yes. A big start here, yes. It must be continued. We must work on new ideas, a vision of building a nation that is safe and respected and will carry on with the qualities that our forebears wanted for Canada.

• (1130)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my intervention in this debate today is going to be relatively short but I hope important.

I would like to caution the government, the minister, the committee about the danger of some of the aspects of this particular bill. I want to use a specific example which came to mind when I was listening to the debates.

I was thinking of little Randy. Randy was a young boy about two years old who lived for a while with a very close member of our family as a foster child. In order to reunite him with his sister, he and his sister were adopted by a couple. Imagine how shocked we were when we heard that Randy and his sister and their adoptive mother had been murdered. It really hurt our hearts. I can hardly speak of it now without the emotion of that occasion returning.

One of the things in this bill is the government proposal to get into the mind of the perpetrator of the crime to find out what motivated him. We really do not know what motivated the person who did that evil deed.

I am greatly offended when I stop to contemplate that someone would venture to say that a person took the life of another person simply because he had a different coloured skin, simply because he had a different religious background, simply because he had a different sexual orientation. If that could be proven and that person is now subject to a more harsh sentence than the person who took the lives of Randy, his sister and his mother, leaving that husband and father bereaved in that way, I am deeply offended.

I believe this government makes a colossal error by starting to say that we are going to base sentencing on what we think was in the mind of the person.

I would like to also say something with respect to sexual orientation. The hon. member has talked about that. He has added to what other people have said imputing somehow to the members of the Reform Party an improper motivation, which I think is against the rules of the House in any case. He has said that we somehow hate these people because we are talking about these ideas.

Again, I have some level of resentment being told that I cannot openly and honestly debate an issue without getting into

name calling. That is wrong. I believe we ought to have total freedom of speech in this place particularly if we are going to be able to debate and to bring in laws which are absolutely the best for the future of this country and for its citizens.

I do not know how to communicate to the member and to all the members of that community that we do not hate them. A friend of mine was of that particular orientation. His funeral was this year. The hon. member can say that I hate homosexuals and he is totally wrong. In the case of this friend of mine who died this year of AIDS I know and every thinking person in Canada knows that if he would have behaved sexually he would not have had that disease.

I would like to promote very simply that what we need to do in this country is promote sexual fidelity. We need to promote a lifestyle which is healthy, right and good. In no way should we be promoting a lifestyle which has such dangers, even according to what the Minister of Health has said in this House.

• (1135)

I would like to urge all of the members of this community to recognize that we are trying to do what is right, we are trying to do what is good. To legitimize the homosexual lifestyle in this way is a wrong direction.

Further to that, it is again misguided. I remember when I was a young man. Members should all recognize looking at me sideways now that I have a propensity for a little wider girth than others. I have had that all my life. I was some 180 pounds when I was in grade 8. I remember coming into the big city school as a farm kid from Saskatchewan. One day some of the mean city kids beat me up. The best I know the reason was that they were taunting me for being fat and then they proceeded to beat me up. It was not a happy experience. It was many years ago and I still remember it. It was a traumatic event.

By the same token, I do not believe that any citizen in this country for any reason whatsoever should be subject to being beaten up. It is my understanding that there are laws in place right now which would provide for punishment for people who do things like that. I submit to the different people who are classified specifically in this Bill C–41 proposal that they are already included. If you are beaten up the person who did it should be found and punished in a substantial way so that there is a deterrent to this type of thing.

I think we should simply say, as the Reform Party always says, a good country, our nation is going to be strong if we can come to the place where we treat our citizens equally without regard to how they are classified into subgroups, without regard to what race they belong to, without regard to whether they are male or female, without regard to any of these other classifications.

I implore, I beg, I plead for the minister and the committee to think very carefully of the implications that are being included in the proposal that is being given here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Call in the members.

Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been requested by the chief government whip to defer the division to a later time. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until this afternoon at 5.30 at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

* * *

• (1140)

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ACT

The House resumed from October 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of The Department of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today in the House to speak in support of Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Over the past few months it has been my privilege as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage to work closely with him in advancing the department's initiatives on many fronts. I have had occasion to journey to the farthest reaches of our department's operations, visiting and consulting with local officials and community groups. Most striking among my findings was the intense enthusiasm of our Department of Canadian Heritage personnel whose zeal I am sure is fueled by the value they attach to their work.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is not some distant or insulated agency. It is an active participant in countless commu-

nities. In a real sense the department is a large part what makes many towns and cities into strong communities, very often the focal point, the gathering ground for communities, events or institutions that might not exist were it not for the support of the ministry.

From museums, parks and orchestras to sporting and multicultural events, literally millions of Canadians are attracted to our programs every year. The Department of Canadian Heritage is the guardian of our inheritance as Canadians. This department, this minister, stands at the gate protecting rich and unique elements of our culture, our vast stretches of unspoiled habitat, national historic sites, buildings and monuments, which offer Canadians a glimpse of the struggles that built this country.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is the protector of our artistic tradition, our sporting tradition, our official languages, the multitude of contributing cultures from our native citizens to the newest Canadian.

This is not a department which regulates a commodity. Our product is a better Canada, enriched with its natural and historic treasures.

[*Translation*]

Up to now, the debate taking place in the House has highlighted a number of interesting points, not the least of which being the diversity of programs administered by the new department.

Bill C–53 reflects very well the mandate sought by Heritage Canada and the scope of its field of endeavour. Although this has been mentioned by others, I should repeat that Heritage Canada incorporates programs from five existing or abolished departments.

It is easy for some to say that these programs have little in common, but this is a very superficial way of seeing things. A more thorough examination reveals that the three main areas of activity in the department have a lot in common, and I will come back to that later. More than that, they mesh very well and contribute to the prime goal of the department which is developing Canadian identity centres and encouraging the contribution of all sectors of society to the growth and vitality of our culture.

[*English*]

One of the major sectors of the Department of Canadian Heritage is Parks Canada, formerly a part of Environment Canada. National parks, national historic sites and the historic canals under the stewardship of Parks Canada represent some of the best examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage. These gems are to be found in every region of the country. The economic activity and tourism generated by the department's operations in this program area are of vital significance to many local economies.

• (1145)

The parks service is mindful of its importance to these communities and has been at the forefront of efforts to fashion innovative partnership arrangements with private and not for profit enterprises in carrying out its mandated responsibilities.

The second major sector of the department encompasses those programs which are aimed at the promotion of Canadian identity and civic participation. As one would expect with such a broadly based mandate, this sector includes an impressive sweep of program areas. In fact some of the government's most important initiatives are being implemented in this sector. They include the promotion of official languages, the pursuit of excellence in amateur sport, the promotion of our cultural diversity, and the encouragement of the full and open participation of every Canadian in society.

Here then are the programs that speak to us regarding what it means to be Canadian, that set us apart from the rest of the world, and that have helped Canada earn its top ranking by the United Nations for overall quality of life.

[*Translation*]

The third main activity of the department is cultural development and heritage. This includes arts, broadcasting and heritage preservation, as well as cultural industries like film, video, sound recording and publishing.

As regards the wide variety of activities involved, the best way to describe them is to quote the short statement in the government's red book on the importance of culture. Here it is: "Culture is the very essence of national identity, the bedrock of national sovereignty and national pride. At a time when globalization and the information and communications revolution are erasing national borders, Canada needs more than ever to commit itself to cultural development".

This shows not only the importance of the department's programs, but also stresses what its prime objective should be: To develop policies and mechanisms to ensure a steady growth of artistic and cultural sectors both strong and dynamic.

[*English*]

During debate on the bill we have heard the Minister of Canadian Heritage outline the important connotations imparted by the term heritage. For me one of the most meaningful uses of the term is to capture myriad ways in which we express ourselves not only to our fellow Canadians but to the world. In my view heritage conveys the idea of the link between the past and the present in matters of human endeavour, whether they be related to culture, language, shared values or common experiences.

When I think of Canada and its heritage what springs to mind is a nation forged on the principles of respect for the use and

equal treatment of its two major languages, French and English; of respect for the cultural diversity, the traditions and the contributions of its aboriginal citizens and their languages; and of fundamental respect for basic human rights and values and an all encompassing and abiding devotion to democratic principles. It is no exaggeration to say that all these sentiments and ideals will find expression and action within the programs embodied within the Department of Canadian Heritage.

It is vital not to lose sight of what will be accomplished by the passage of Bill C–53. Moreover the bill should not be viewed in isolation. It is part of a greater reorganization of government being effected through the passage of various pieces of enabling legislation now in different stages of parliamentary review.

This redistribution of programs and responsibilities, as we are all aware, had its origin in steps taken by the previous government last June. The current government has put its stamp on the reorganization, redefined it and refined it. We are now proceeding with the task of confirming these changes in law.

• (1150)

This exercise, however, is but one component of our overall effort to provide Canadians with the most effective and open government possible. Toward that end it should be emphasized that the government's program review is ongoing and that the tabling of the various pieces of enabling legislation is part of the process.

The wording of Bill C–53 establishes the overall responsibilities of the Department of Canadian Heritage without being prescriptive as to how the mandate will be delivered. In other words the bill does not limit the types of changes that government may implement to make services more responsive and efficient in the current fiscal context.

The enactment of the bill will summon the coming wave of re–engineering efforts in the department that can only yield even greater efficiencies and more focused services. We must not allow Canada to grow pale from the leaching of its natural and cultural resources. We believe in a Canada infused by the advancement of our sense of Canadian identity and participation as a society and by the continuation of our cultural development and the protection of our priceless natural and cultural heritage.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my colleague for her presentation, which could not be any clearer or more interesting.

With regard to her quote from the red book about culture being really important, why did the Liberal government not take this opportunity to establish a department that could have been called something other than the Department of Canadian Heritage? I, for one, would have called it the department of tutti frutti, since it includes a little of everything whether or not it belongs there. So why not give us a department other than this one?

Why did the Liberal government not take this opportunity to do the right thing? When they were in opposition, they criticized the Conservatives for creating such a department; now that they are in office, they do the exact same thing the tories did.

How is it possible, now that the information highway is just around the corner, that no mechanism has been provided for in the Department of Canadian Heritage to deal with this subject, that there is no regulatory power over the information highway, that telecommunications remain separate from communications, that the CRTC will continue to be split between culture and industry, and that we will never be able to resolve copyright issues because this government lacks courage once again and does what others did before it? It must go back to the drawing board. How can they justify this according to the Liberal party's philosophy? I wonder.

Ms. Guarnieri: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Quebecois complaints only make the achievements and importance of Canadian heritage stand out. We often hear that Canadian culture belongs to all Canadians wherever they come from. I think the hon. member should be the first one to admit that we save taxpayers, including Quebecers, money. She should applaud us instead of criticizing us because we do not do exactly what she wants. The Bloc's goals are different from those of the department.

Mrs. Tremblay: What are the Bloc's goals?

Ms. Guarnieri: You do not understand me? She wants me to speak in English. But I want to practice my French but, as you can see, she will not give me this opportunity.

• (1155)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order! I would like to remind you that comments must be made through the Chair and not directly from one member to another. You can use the official language of your choice.

Ms. Guarnieri: Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the hon. member that Canadian culture belongs to all Canadians wherever they come from. I read the hon. member's speech and I am surprised by her suggestion. She proposes that francophones be confined to local cultural resources only.

I want to add that Canada's culture and history were built by all Canadians together. Sharing our culture and history is the basis of Canadian heritage. It is easy to see why the Bloc

Quebecois is against our goal. I think that Quebecers and Canadians agree with us.

When the hon. member talks about telecommunications coming under the purview of the Department of Industry, is she aware of the growing role of telecommunications as an important source of Canadian economic activities? Broadcasting is easier to integrate into the mandate of Canadian Heritage, as it relates to Canadian culture, identity and content.

Departments work in close co–operation—and I think the hon. member will agree with this—in order to manage these sectors efficiently. I wonder why the hon. member is laughing, when she should be applauding us for saving Canadians, including Quebecers, money. I think that she should be applauding.

[*English*]

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary was talking about looking for ways to cut spending in government. I would like to offer one right now.

The department of multiculturalism is redundant. Not only do Canadians not want to see a department of multiculturalism but people in various multicultural communities around the country do not want to see it. I refer to a recent article in *Saturday Night* magazine wherein noted Canadian writer Neil Bissoondath talked about doing away with the whole idea of multiculturalism. He happens to come from the West Indies, but he is a Canadian writer and that is what he calls himself.

There are people in the Liberal caucus who say we must do away with hyphenated Canadianism. I urge the parliamentary secretary to use her influence on the minister, in conjunction with other members of caucus who feel the same way, to do away with the department of multiculturalism which is absolutely and completely redundant in the eyes of the Reform Party, many Liberals, the Canadian public and the ethnic communities around the country.

Ms. Guarnieri: Mr. Speaker, I sometimes feel the Reform Party should be called the 1 per cent party because it spends all its time criticizing 1 per cent of the government programs.

The government believes in communities, strong linkages among communities and promoting understanding from wherever people come. The government is committed to pursuing programs which foster understanding and harmony.

However it is a dark day for members of the Reform Party; they should be promoting and endorsing the bill. How does the opposition permit itself to criticize an administrative change that saves all kinds of moneys for taxpayers and actually reduces bureaucracy? The number of assistant deputy ministers has been reduced from 14 to 3. It increases efficiency. Actually the administrative cost savings will be $7.3 million. They may scoff at that, but it is $7.3 million of Canadian taxpayers' money. Members of the Bloc and Reform should unite and applaud us for this initiative rather than indulging in tangential tirades about programs. These improvements would actually increase efficiency. It should leave the Reform speechless but they prefer to remain groundless rather than speechless.

• (1200)

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting exchange. I rise to oppose Bill C–53 because it affirms the continuation of officially sanctioned multiculturalism. It encourages division along racial, linguistic and cultural lines.

We are going to continue to have anglo Canadians, French Canadians, native Canadians, Chinese Canadians and a host of other hyphenated nationalities, but apparently no plain, ordinary Canadians. John Diefenbaker must be spinning in his grave.

It is ironic that a department dedicated to "the preservation and enhancement of Canadian heritage" should be charged with state sponsored multiculturalism. This is a contradiction in terms.

For generations Statistics Canada, which used to be called the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, has been obsessed with our ethnic origins. Until fairly recently one could not even if born in Canada be recorded by the census taker as a Canadian. Ottawa now accepts the reality that we Canadians exist. However the 1991 handbook for census takers assures us that they must continue to inquire into the racial origins of our ancestors, again I quote: "to ensure that everyone, regardless of his or her cultural background, has equal opportunity to share fully in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada".

I am not sure what that pretentious bureaucrat slop means but one interpretation could be this. The government wants to know where the money should be sent to buy votes, where to distribute the pork and how to tailor certain government policies to appease voters whose first loyalty is still to the old country.

The Liberals and the scattered remnants of the other two traditional parties endorse official multiculturalism. This foolishness began with the racially and linguistically biased concept that Canada is a coming together of two founding nations, French and English. This understandably irritated native Indians, western Canadians of Ukrainian ancestry, Newfoundlanders whose ancestors were here centuries ago and just about everyone else. As a pedigreed Heinz 57 Canadian I was a little ticked myself.

To resolve the problem it was ordained that everyone belongs to a distinct subspecies of homo–Canadiansis, another of the Trudeau government's wonderful legacy of destructive policies. The maintenance of ancestral culture should be a matter of

personal choice at one's own expense. That would be commendable.

What we do not need are federal politicians saying: "Here is money to preserve and promote the cultures of the societies which your ancestors wished to escape from". This is an absolutely immoral abuse of the power of taxation.

It is the Reform Party's position that official multiculturalism is a divisive force that encourages ghettoization and wastes our tax dollars to do it—$25 million last year. This annual slush fund is doled out to hundreds and hundreds of entities without justification.

• (1205)

Why for example should the various Ukrainian committees get hundreds of thousands of dollars in public funding? If they want to dance the prysyadka, more power to them. They are better men than I, but why should I help to pay for their athletics? Most of them are at least fifth generation Canadians. The first and second generations living in rude cabins in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan got all the exercise they needed clearing land and working away from home to earn a little hard cash. They prospered, helped to build a nation and preserved their language and culture with no help from anyone.

Four years ago I spoke at a Reform Party organizational meeting at a hamlet north of Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The meeting was held in the Ukrainian hall, a 70–year old building made from hand hewn logs, nicely finished and decorated with icons, scrolls and pictures of patriarchs. No civil servant had had a hand in it. That is multiculturalism.

Why do the descendants of these Ukrainian settlers have their hands out now? I suspect it is because they see everyone else lining up for grants. Being practical people they want some of the action.

According to clause 7(a) of the bill the minister may provide financial assistance in the form of grants, contributions and endowments to any person. That is outrageous. One of the principal functions of Parliament is the approval of appropriations. This legislation gives the minister, in other words the bureaucrats, carte blanche to give away money without even cabinet oversight.

The long list of grants to cosy little social and cultural organizations contains such gems as $12,000 to the Icelandic League—more fifth generation Canadians—to finance a convention; $22,575 to the Institution of Ethnic Minority Writing; $72,000 to the National Council of Canadian Filipino Associations—we are going to dance the tinikiling too—$20,000 to the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. Here is a beauty: $19,254 to the Lu Hanessian Productions: Love Notes, to produce a musical review of 27 songs and musical vignettes about human relationships.

The government has apparently become a little sensitive about these long lists of grants that appear in newspapers. More and more of this stuff is being camouflaged in grants to umbrella groups like the Canadian Council for Multiculturalism Intercultural Education, $205,000; the Cross Cultural Communications Centre, $114,000.

I have been thinking of organizing a club for my particular ethnic group. I will call it the Mixed Origins Line Dancing Association for the Genetically Challenged. That should be good for a grant of at least $100,000, provided I make the application in a red envelope.

I grew up in an ethnically diverse community. All of western Canada had been ethnically diverse for generations, when Toronto was still a WASP enclave where on Sundays travellers could starve or die of thirst right on Yonge Street. Times have changed; I will not pretend that we lived in a sea of brotherly love. Every group felt superior to some other group, but we got along. We were glued together by a common language, shared history, the adverse conditions of that time and place and, above all, by a lot of intermarriage.

• (1210)

Now the federal government by stressing diversity instead of human commonality is weakening that glue and it is weakening the social fabric of our nation. Ghettoization is in; adaptation to new surroundings is out. Why learn the language and social customs of your adopted country when you can hide in an enclave from which emissaries are sent out every day to come back with sustenance and interface with the wicked outside world.

Every few years a politician will stop in your community, figuratively pat people on the head and patronizingly solicit your votes as a vehicle to combat racism or preserve cultural diversity.

Now lest any hon. member dismiss my deeply held convictions on this matter as the insensitive views of one white guy in a suit, somebody who does not understand, I would like to conclude my remarks by quoting a few recent immigrants.

Dr. Rais Khan is a very wise new Canadian who heads the department of political science at the University of Manitoba. A couple of years ago he was guest speaker at the Reform Party assembly in Winnipeg. I would like to quote some of his remarks verbatim. He said: "I did not come here to be labelled as an ethnic or as a member of the multicultural community or to be coddled with preferential treatment, nurtured with special grants and then sit on the sidelines and watch the world go by". Later in the same speech, he said: "If I want to preserve my

cultural heritage, that is my business. If I want to invite you into my home to eat some spicy traditional food, that is our business. If I expect you to pay for my cultural activities, that is your business".

Bharati Mukherjee, a writer who emigrated to Canada from India, felt marginalized here. She blamed Canada's obsession with multiculturalism for making her a psychological expatriate, so she moved to the United States after being here for 15 years. She says that Canada has chosen to be a mosaic but by preserving differences it also preserves bias.

One of the most eloquent opponents of multiculturalism is Al Meghji, a professor of law at Dalhousie University. I believe he is Canadian born but in the eyes of the multiculturalists he is an Indo–Canadian whose fragile identity must be preserved from the dark forces of assimilation. I will quote him at some considerable length.

He states: "Multiculturalism undermines the efforts of those who are seeking to forge a national identity and prevent the disintegration of an already fragile nation. Whatever the purpose of multicultural policy, the net result is that it highlights and accentuates differences among Canadians. What is needed is not a policy that emphasizes differences but one that promotes common goals and nationally shared values while at the same time allowing the expression of individual identity".

I have one last name on my list. He has been previously mentioned. I would like to quote him at a little more length. Neil Bissoondath is a prominent Trinidad born Canadian author. Some of you may have read his collection of short stories *Digging Up the Mountain*. He was a darling of the chattering classes until he had the temerity to question the doctrine of official multiculturalism. Now he is in big trouble for saying things like multiculturalism is a policy that seeks merely to keep a diverse population amenable to political manipulation.

• (1215)

A very prominent and very white chatterer who is well known to most of us in this House has asked a snide question. Now he wants to reject his brothers, his sisters, his nieces, his nephews. So much for politically correct tolerance.

It is the responsibility of government not to encourage immigrant people to maintain their separateness but to help them, especially through language courses to integrate into Canadian society. Even that would be more than the old timers got. They put down their roots, helped each other and thanked the stars that they had arrived here. Their children became unhyphenated Canadians through their own efforts and now this government like those that have preceded it for the last 20 years is trying to rehyphenate their great grandchildren. You cannot bind a nation together with hyphens.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek especially with respect to his comments dealing with the Ukrainian community in Saskatchewan. I am one of that community and my hand has never been out for any moneys from any group for funding for any of the cultural events that either I or any of my children have attended and continue to attend.

In particular in Saskatchewan we have groups such as the Hutterites who came from Europe to escape both language and religious oppression. They were hard working people who came to Canada to preserve their religious beliefs and language.

Can the hon. member tell us whether these individuals are objecting to integration into Canadian society? Should they be treated in some different manner to prevent them from being able to live in communities on their own where they preserve their language and their religion and are not integrating into society? The speech seemed to indicate that they should. This applies not only to the Hutterite communities but to the Mennonite communities, et cetera.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his very astute observations. I applaud him for not participating in riding the gravy train. He probably noticed that I was looking right at him when I made that portion of my speech.

With respect to the Hutterian Brethren, I do not think there is any contradiction when I say that I have no problem with their continuing to live their lives apart from Canadian society the way they do. The reason is that they do this entirely with their own resources. They are not subsidized. They are not getting part of that $25 million a year. They do not have civil servants coming around telling them: "Fellows, have we got a deal for you". They are very independent people. There are several of their colonies in my constituency and I have no problem with that at all. I have problems with the other things I mentioned.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions. I listened to the hon. member and I find myself in accord with some of his remarks and in disagreement with others.

When he talks about rejecting multicultural policy, is he not really talking about rejecting a kind of implementation of it? I take it the hon. member is not really against multiculturalism. He is against a multiculturalism policy which tends to divide us rather than unite us. If I understand the member correctly, he still is in favour of our multiethnic nature as a country.

• (1220)

I have also been looking at the grants issue to various ethnic groups and I have found during the last government a correlation

between payments to ethnic groups and election years in which the actual payments increased.

Would he care to comment on those two points?

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. I will go to the bottom first and work back up.

I am aware of those figures. I had intended to mention them in my speech but through oversight I did not, and I thank him for bringing that to the attention of the House.

I know that this is by its very nature a multiethnic society. There will be people who will be assimilated quickly into a melting pot, as they call it south of the border. There will be others, like the Hutterian Brethren, who will maintain their individuality for generations.

As long as this is done as a matter of free individual choice, neither I nor my party has any difficulty with it. The magic words are free individual choice. Do it on your own folks. Do not expect me to pay for it.

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I speak to the House today as one who supports Bill C–53.

Today I would like to speak in a comparative fashion concerning the comments made by the hon. member for Kootenay East before the House broke for the recess. At that time he proposed that national parks be removed from the Department of Canadian Heritage and put into the Department of the Environment. In reviewing his comments I fail to understand the rationale.

He stated that he has, in a very anecdotal way, some experience with national parks, as his riding contains three of them. In his specific examples of concerns he spoke only to one environmental situation, namely the difficulties of maintaining naturally evolving forests. The remaining issues he mentioned dealt with maintenance of highways, user fees, enterprise units, hiring practices and office locations. I would suggest that these are administrative as opposed to environmental issues.

Nevertheless there are undeniably important links to be maintained with Environment Canada in the science and research sectors as they relate to national heritage exemplified in the national parks system. This is being accomplished now through a memorandum of understanding between the two departments. Specific areas of interest include membership on the science committee on participation, the biodiversity strategy and the protected areas strategy, all of which are multilateral initiatives involving a wide range of government departments.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is both the client department of Environment Canada and a leader on specific issues such as the protected areas strategy in the same way that other departments such as fisheries and oceans are both clients and leaders on specific environmental issues. This sharing of responsibilities among departments not only focuses the right kinds of expertise on the right issues, but in the case of Canadian heritage adds an extra supporting voice at the cabinet table for dealing with them.

Parks Canada is an organization that comprises responsibilities for both the natural and the cultural heritage of our country and has done so under many different names and departments since 1919. It has, quite simply, a natural and a cultural component that are not mutually exclusive.

[*Translation*]

Nationally and internationally, efforts are being made to recognize that history, culture and nature are interdependent. This is largely reflected in the UNESCO Convention on the protection of natural heritage and world culture, which he represents as the minister responsible for Parks Canada.

[*English*]

As the new Department of Canadian Heritage includes the bulk of natural cultural programs over and above those within Parks Canada, there is a unification of that element of our national and international responsibilities.

• (1225)

Moreover the national parks and national historic sites are tangible symbols of the best of our Canadian identity. The Department of Canadian Heritage has national responsibilities, programs for the enhancement of Canadian identity that will build on this element as well.

An example of this kind of synergy that is developing throughout the new department of heritage is the heritage tourism initiative which we on this side of the House are supporting. Given the wide mandate the department now enjoys, there are tremendous opportunities to build an exciting, economically significant and, probably most important, a sustainable international program based on the cultural institutions and natural wonders of this country. To this end the government is also committed to the completion of the national parks system, the expansion of our national historic site themes, and the establishment of new national marine conservation areas.

I would point out that new guiding principles and policies for the range of activities undertaken by Parks Canada were completed under the umbrella of Canadian heritage. When these policies were tabled in the House last March it was to considerable acclaim for the many stakeholders involved in these aspects of national heritage. There was a clear demonstration that they had been involved in their development.

With regard to the specific concerns raised by the member for Kootenay East I would note that it does appear strange that the Department of Canadian Heritage is involved in the road maintenance business. However I do not comprehend how that

translates into an argument for returning the national parks to Environment Canada.

In any event there are roads, national transportation corridors, that pass through some parks. There is no question about that. As they are within park boundaries there is an obligation of the responsible department to ensure their suitability and safety. In some parks work is contracted out or performed under an agreement with the province.

The member will be interested to know that Parks Canada is reviewing all its road operations to ensure the most effective means of proper maintenance. That could well mean consolidation of operations in the four mountain parks.

I understand well the member's argument that highways are normally managed by provinces and should not be funded by Parks Canada. Accordingly the government will take the member's suggestion under advisement.

I found that the member's comment on road tolls for commercial through traffic in national parks to be somewhat confusing. There was no such road toll nor is one being contemplated.

On the question of the enterprise unit for the operation of hot pools I believe that this project is turning out to be successful and should be a good pilot for similar ventures. Staff will continue to be hired on merit and where appropriate, business opportunities that can be realized will be pursued. I welcome his support for a more businesslike approach to park operations as exemplified by the enterprise unit at the hot springs. The member will be pleased to know that this initiative is one of many that represent the future direction of management in our parks.

I trust that I have answered the member's concerns. I conclude by saying I am proud to support Bill C–53, which creates the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at the departmental briefing, officials from this new department told us there would be no streamlining, no downsizing and no cash savings. A few moments ago the parliamentary secretary was talking about a saving of $7.3 million.

I wonder if the hon. member could tell us where that saving is going to come from. Where is it going to get that money, especially since there is a recommendation tabled with the bill that will allow the department to spend more money? I wonder if the hon. member could straighten us out on this point.

Mr. Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, in all fairness it is difficult to answer a question raised in an earlier speech with respect to a speech made by the parliamentary secretary. Perhaps the member ought more properly to have addressed the question to her.

• (1230)

As I understand the concerns raised by the hon. member, I have been advised by the parliamentary secretary that the figure of $7.3 million will come through streamlining administrative procedures within the department.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, we are here today to debate a bill establishing the Department of Canadian Heritage and amending and repealing certain Acts. This bill is known as C–53.

Its title suggests that this bill simply reorganizes a department. The heritage minister himself presents it to us as a technicality. But in fact, this bill goes far beyond the mere restructuring of a department. Indeed, this bill proposes an inefficient and dangerous distribution of government responsibilities.

Let me highlight two important points where the bill is seriously off track. First, let me point out a serious inconsistency in the sharing of departmental responsibilities. Once again, the government is acting in such a way that the left hand will not know what the right hand is doing, since the sharing of responsibilities between the departments of Industry and Canadian Heritage raises various problems of jurisdiction, competition and policy.

To illustrate what I am saying, I shall now quote what the bill says about the department's field of jurisdiction. First, clause 4 says:

> 4. (1) The powers, duties and functions of the minister extend to and include—

In French, the bill says "de façon générale". What does this mean?

> —all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department—

If it is already somewhere else, the heritage minister does not have to be concerned with it, and anyway it is "de façon générale".

> —relating to (Canadian) identity and values, cultural development—

Let us look at some areas of jurisdiction. Subclause 2 says:

> (*d*) cultural heritage and industries, including performing arts, visual and audio–visual arts, publishing, sound recording, film, video and literature;

This subclause also includes broadcasting and the formulation of cultural policy as it relates to foreign investment.

My colleague said that it is a real mish–mash. You see, the minister's portfolio includes the arts, cultural industries, museums, heritage, broadcasting, physical fitness, amateur sport, multiculturalism, the status of women, parks, historic sites and

canals, state ceremonial and protocol and so on. I felt like saying "Alouette" at the end of this long list.

There is a problem and let me mention an obvious one, copyright. When it comes to culture, copyright must be strictly and effectively protected. Here, copyright comes under both Industry and Heritage; Industry is in Bill C–46. There is a problem.

• (1235)

I would also like to mention a document just recently published by the Canadian Conference of the Arts that points out, with respect to copyright, that the division of powers between industry and heritage will slow down the legislative process that should one day lead to fair compensation of artists and creators for the commercial use of their works. I understand the government's good intentions, but I quite simply do not believe there will be any concrete results.

Secondly, I would point out to this House that the bill does not address the cultural and societal impact of technological advances and in particular of the so–called electronic highway. The second objective set out in the Throne Speech with respect to the electronic highway is to strengthen Canada's cultural sovereignty and identity, in the singular, I note, as if there were only one cultural identity in Canada.

The stakes are high. Certainly, in Canada, Quebecers have a cultural identity. Can we speak of one cultural identity for the rest of Canada? I am not sure we can. Maritimers have their own values, heritage and history. Canadians from the Prairies have a different history, heritage and set of experiences that are also uniquely their own. The same can be said for Canadians on the West Coast and for Ontarians, with their very different history. This assumption of a single Canadian identity worries me.

I was speaking of the electronic highway, technological advances and the Department of Canadian Heritage. The latter, in its eagerness not to miss anything, is aiming in all directions, but is missing the real targets, the challenges we must meet in the next few years, not ten or twenty years down the road.

And here we should mention technology. Broadcasting, communications and telecommunications are being revolutionized. As I speak, the real stakes, the real players, the real pieces of this incredible puzzle are not immediately apparent. The problem is a multi–facetted one. On the one hand, there are the suppliers of telephone services and infrastructures, the telephone companies, of whom there are several in Canada. On the other hand, there are the cable distributors, which bring television to the homes of so many Canadians and Quebecers.

These two major players are in the process of merging and using computer technology to transmit their signals, with the result that there will no longer be any difference between my telephone conversation and a television broadcast. The electronic signals travelling through the wires will be the same.

• (1240)

The contents will change but the container will remain the same. This container will travel at very high speed on the optic fibre, which is basically a glass wire along which light can travel. Light can carry much more information in one second than electrical current. In fact, it is ten times faster. This means that a single fibre–optic cable can replace a huge number of copper wires. Then there is the coaxial cable of the type used by cable distributors. This cable is also capable of carrying large amounts of information.

With these cables, we are on the way to acquiring the physical capability to carry information of any type from point A to point B at astounding speeds. Technologically, this is feasible in the very short term. The problem is knowing what information will be carried.

If we are talking about telephone conversations, just between you and me, that will not make much of a difference. If the technology enables me to make banking transactions from my home, that is already an improvement on the present situation. If I can make banking transactions with other countries around the world, with electronic movement of capital, then the flow could be substantial and I understand that the Department of Industry would want to look into this. As a matter of fact, so should the Department of Finance and the Department of National Revenue.

In terms of programming, what would happen to cultural programs and television programs as we know them? Will we continue to have local antennas broadcasting according to the familiar sequence? I do not think so. We are headed for a drastic changeover. At present, you turn on your T.V., select a channel and watch what is on, without having any input regarding the sequence. This is as if you were to go to a restaurant, went in, checked the menu and were told: "Here are your choices of soups, your choices of appetizers, your choices of main dishes, your choices of desserts and your choices of beverages, and these are your only choices". Today, when you select say the CBC, you take what you are served. It is direct and simple, but if you do not like what is on, you turn the dial to another station. Again, you watch what that station is offering, in the sequence it has decided. But no more.

In just a few years, you will find yourself in a situation similar to being in a cafeteria. You will not tune in to a station; rather, you will look at a list of programs which will have been prerecorded—sometimes 20 or 30 years earlier, since there are already video libraries containing large numbers of prerecorded tapes—and you will decide what you want to see and when. This is what I call a cafeteria–style of selection. You want three desserts but no soup? Fine, the decision is yours. You want more

of these vegetables? You do not like turnip or broccoli? They are good for you. No, Mr. Speaker, I know that you do like turnip and broccoli. So, you choose what you want and then pay for it. This is how it will work.

The real problem is that each consumer will now decide what he or she will consume. The question then is: Who works in the cafeteria kitchen and prepares what is available? Who will prepare these programs and according to what standards? Who will define what is good and on what basis? Who will conduct inspections in the kitchens?

If this was done in a single facility housing these kitchens, we could go there and see what goes on, but these kitchens will be located all over the world. The information highway gives instant access to data located anywhere. We do not have the ability to control what producers do in other countries.

• (1245)

To what extent will we be able to ensure the second objective stated in the Speech from the Throne, namely the strengthening of Canada's sovereignty and cultural identity? I am not only referring to Quebec's cultural identity, which is a lot easier to protect since the majority of Quebecers are French–speaking. However, in the rest of Canada, where the majority speaks English, access to American production, for example, will be incredibly easy.

So far, the issue of Canadian content has been discussed in terms of broadcasting time. So much time is allocated to Canadian programs and so much time to American content. This is fine when you are in a restaurant with a fixed menu. The soup is Canadian, the potatoes are American, the steak comes from western Canada, while the dessert is home–made. However, when you are in a cafeteria, you choose what you want and there is no way of making sure that a consumer will opt for a quantity of Canadian products which is equal, greater or lower than that of foreign goods.

Of course, one can resort to the video store technique which consists in allocating a certain number of shelves to Canadian productions and leave the rest for foreign ones. However, nothing guarantees that customers will go for Canadian productions in a proportion that matches the space allocated on shelves. No one is at the door to control what customers choose.

We are in a similar situation with the information highway. At first glance, it seems that it will not be easy to control. However, in terms of technology, the Department of Industry is taking quite an interest in wires, cables, connections, interfaces and protocols, while the Department of Canadian Heritage is making pious wishes regarding our cultural identity.

This bill essentially gives the Minister of Canadian Heritage the right to talk about heritage without giving him the power to regulate or to intervene at any level. It does not give him any real power to ensure that Quebec and Canada's values are protected at a time when the stakes are extremely high because we find ourselves in a situation where we are facing the unknown.

I am thinking about this Minister of Canadian Heritage who, question period after question period, explains to us when we are wondering about the CRTC or the Museum of Nature that these organizations are independent, that they have their own set of rules and that they will do a good job. Well, do we really need a Minister of Canadian Heritage? I think I have expressed my concerns very clearly but, to give you a brief summary, allow me to say that at a time when the telecommunications and cable industries are converging, which threatens the level of cultural content from Canada and Quebec, it seems totally inconsistent that the mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage be outdated with regard to these issues.

In conclusion, I support the amendment proposed by my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata to withdraw this bill which, I am sorry to say, is bland, colourless and has a strange smell to it.

• (1250)

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc Quebecois has expressed its concerns about the federal presence in cultural matters. I listened with a great deal of interest to what was said, but I must admit I was somewhat surprised at the cafeteria metaphor.

They worry that people are allowed to choose. They worry that people do not have the knowledge, the discipline or the ability to make informed decisions about the kind of food they should eat.

As you know, thousands of people use the Commons cafeteria, and I think we have quite a variety. People eat more than cakes and cookies. They are concerned about good nutrition. All Canadians, especially young Canadians, are very much aware of the importance of good nutrition.

In the bill before the House today, we want to give Canadians a chance to make choices and not necessarily make those choices for them, as the hon. member for the opposition assumed. I trust the public, and I am confident that our fellow citizens can make informed decisions. After all, the purpose of this department and the objective of the Government of Canada is to establish links among the various elements that make up our country.

I think we can benefit from the experience of a fisherman from the maritimes, a logger from Quebec, and a western farmer. I think we should realize that the genius of federalism

lies in having invited these various elements to come and build such an extraordinary country.

Once again, the opposition talks about controlling. Controlling whom? Controlling choices made by adult individuals, by people who want to find a way to express themselves? For instance, the federal government never intervened when Pierre Falardeau decided to do his film *Octobre*. I must say I do not share the views expressed by Mr. Falardeau. However, the Government of Canada, through Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board, agreed to produce, to fund this film which, as you all know, is raising a lot of questions and causing a lot of debate. People say it is not a big success because unfortunately, the Government of Quebec refused to participate.

This goes to show that when partnership is lacking, some projects often never get off the ground. And some are often not well received by the general public. In any case, I wish the opposition would realize that as far as Canadian heritage and culture are concerned, the goal of this government and of all creative artists has always been to stimulate our intellectual curiosity and urge people to reach beyond the horizon. Oddly enough, separatist nationalists often say they want a Quebec that is open to the world. So why not start with a Quebec open to Canada, and vice–versa? I think we already have a system that works well and is very open to the range of different opinions we have in this country.

To go back to the cafeteria metaphor, I am glad to know I have a choice and that this choice is a matter of individual freedom. Unfortunately, the opposition only proposes to remove or control those freedoms we take for granted.

• (1255)

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, to have a choice is great, but to have the right choice is even better. But the hon. member opposite seems prepared to consume anything, provided he has a choice. The Americans rely on the power of money and on competition to bring down the price of the cultural product in the United States and the price of using communications and telecommunications resources and infrastructures. And they succeeded at it. But a small price buys a small amount, as is unfortunately too often the case on this side of the border.

Our cultural industry has great merit and does great things, both in English Canada and in Quebec. The danger is that this bill, which basically gives no power to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, will have a disastrous effect on our culture and our cultural industry. I am pleased to see that the hon. member opposite shares my concerns. What makes me sad, however, is that he does not realize that this bill does not have enough teeth to deliver the goods.

I would be delighted if he interceded personally with the Minister of Canadian Heritage and his caucus to have this bill withdrawn and replaced with a bill which would truly deliver the goods he was referring to.

Mr. Gagnon: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I find the remarks made by the hon. member opposite quite legitimate. I agree with him that the system is not perfect. It is true that further efforts are required to safeguard the Canadian cultural space, whether French Canadian or English Canadian. And I believe that is the primary goal of the Canadian National Broadcasting Strategy. There is no doubt that the bill deals with several aspects that extend beyond radio and television broadcasting.

It also deals with parks, as well as multiculturalism. That is true. Matters that affect culture also affect the cultural industry, and the hon. member is right in saying that we must remain wary of the American competition which, as we know, can be plainly disloyal at times not only vis–à–vis the Canadian culture but also other cultures worldwide.

Take France, England, Japan for example. These are countries that already pay closer attention to their cultures because of the massive American invasion in our cultural spaces. The fact remains however, and I believe all the hon. members agree on this, that Quebec and the francophone culture in Canada, which certainly extends beyond the boundaries of Quebec, are better protected in a federal context than if left to fight the American cultural giant on their own, alone, without any friends or allies.

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, I have time for three short quotes. First, I would like to quote the Arpin report to Ms. Frulla–Hébert, who was Quebec's minister of culture. It says: "We can conclude that overlap between the two levels of government clearly exists in terms of structures, programs, target groups and even legislation and fiscal measures". It talks about culture here. "We can even talk about duplication which leads to one–upmanship. The two governments have different policies and priorities for the same target groups. Measures taken by the federal government sometimes flatly contradict Quebec's options. Harmonizing the action of the two levels of government has always been difficult. The federal government never wanted to recognize Quebec's precedence in cultural affairs".

To conclude, Keith Kelly, National Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, said: "Telecommunication companies seem to be prepared to penetrate the world of broadcasting and the government must ensure that their activities have a beneficial impact on Canadian cultural industries. Reaffirming the separation of telecoms and broadcasting companies in these two bills simply freezes a status quo which is no longer appropriate today".

Mr. Speaker, that is why I spoke as I did this morning.

• (1300)

[*English*]

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to share with hon. members present my views on the legislation that will establish in law the Department of Canadian Heritage.

As an opening comment I must say that a reading of Bill C–53 has convinced me of the importance of this piece of legislation. This department is called upon to play a central role in the life of Canada and Canadians.

The legislation reflects the sweep of the new department's mandate that includes responsibilities in the areas of cultural development, multiculturalism, official languages, heritage conservation, national parks, national historic sites and amateur sports.

Moreover the policies and programs of the Department of Canadian Heritage are meant to promote increased understanding of our diversity, the involvement of all citizens in Canadian society and an increased awareness of our cultural and natural wealth. In other words the department is active in those areas that have clear links to our identity as Canadians.

One of the pre–eminent characteristics of Canada has always been its multicultural nature; in fact it is a vital comment of our national identity. This multicultural dimension is one of the most exciting realities of our society, one that should be cherished and nurtured. I find it very comforting therefore to read in Bill C–53 that the new department will be responsible for the promotion of the greater understanding of human rights, fundamental freedoms and related values as well as multiculturalism.

All Canadians must experience a sense of belonging to the country. Multiculturalism seeks to bridge the gap between cultural communities with diverse interests and backgrounds. I have referred to Canadian heritage as a new department. However as most members know the department has been functioning well for almost a year and a half.

Passage of the bill is a necessary legal step and will serve to confirm the areas of jurisdiction within which the Minister of Canadian Heritage will exercise his powers and carry out his duties and functions, one of the key sectors that will occupy the time of the minister in ensuring the growth and development of Canada's cultural section. Never has this area been more important than now, given the significance of the contributions to the Canadian economy.

I will not repeat the figures and statistics that others before me have quoted in support of that contribution. Rather I will focus on the role of the federal government in cultural development. Some maintain that culture above all is a way of looking at the world and a manifestation of our civilization. This unique view of the world is one of the features that allows one group to distinguish itself from others. In short, without culture there is no identity.

Most would agree that the federal government's responsibility in cultural matters extends to those areas that are pan–Canadian, interprovincial and international in scope. Federal endeavours in these areas remain complementary to those of the other levels of government. It is crucial there be many agents of cultural development and for governments to play an active role. The federal government's role is to ensure that Canadian artists, creators and cultural industries are able to produce and that Canadians have access to those cultural products.

No better example can be given than the current efforts of the Minister of Canadian Heritage to ensure that the Canadian cultural content will be readily accessible to Canadians on the rapidly evolving information highway.

I will now turn briefly to the department's specific programs to promote the country's two official languages. These programs are designed to provide opportunities for Canadians to appreciate and profit from our rich linguistic heritage and to communicate with and participate fully in federal institutions such as the one we are in today.

As anyone who has travelled exclusively and extensively abroad will attest, it bears emphasizing that Canada remains one the world's most favoured nations. Our prosperity and civility are products of much hard work and cannot be taken for granted. Duality is an essential element for our identity and our defining characteristics.

• (1305)

The English and French languages and the people who speak them have shaped Canada and helped define its identity. The federal official languages policy is designed to reflect this reality. I am proud to be a member of a government committed to a vision of Canada where vital English speaking and French speaking minority language communities can contribute to the economic, social, cultural or scientific life of our country.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage also has responsibilities in the areas of heritage policies and programs. The Department of Canadian Heritage provides support and assistance to museums across the country. At the same time the department ensures that the environment in which our national museums function, including the National Archives, the National Gallery, the Museum of Civilization, the Museum of Nature and the National Library, is conducive to giving Canadians maximum accessibility to our cultural heritage.

When I think of the heritage of Canadians my thoughts often turn to our national parks and national historic sites. The

Minister of Canadian Heritage is charged with the weighty responsibilities of preserving these priceless examples of our nature and cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. These parks and sites represent the very essence of our identity as Canadians.

Parks Canada is one of the major components of Canadian heritage. It provides strong leadership in the management of protected heritage areas and aims at promoting sound principles of stewardship and citizen awareness. Parks Canada also leads the field in ecological and commemorative integrity by adhering to international conventions. Canadians can take pride in the internationally recognized contribution of Parks Canada to heritage conservation.

Nationally and internationally there is a trend toward regionalization, that history, culture and nature are intertwined. This is strongly reflected in the UNESCO convention concerning the protection of world culture and natural heritage for which the Minister of Canadian Heritage is Canada's representative.

In summary, it is clear the programs of the Department of Canadian Heritage span Canada's past, present and future. In many ways the department can be regarded as the flagship of Canadian identity, bringing together the diverse mix of federal programs that will help us confront and surmount the challenges that lie ahead.

I look forward to the passage of the legislation and the official creation of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before recognizing the member for Surrey North, I want to advise the House that the block of five hours of debate which entitled members to speak for a maximum of 20 minutes with a 10–minute question or comment has lapsed. We are now going to the next stage of debate which allows for 10–minute interventions without questions or comments.

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to participate in any debate in the House. Today I join in the debate on Bill C–53 concerning the creation of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Before getting into the text of my talk today I refer to a comment that was made earlier in the debate about the saving of $7.3 million in relationship to the bill. At a departmental briefing it was indicated there is no streamlining involved with the bill; there is no cost saving and there are no layoffs. I am left a bit mystified as to where the saving of $7.3 million will come from.

A number of speakers have preceded me in the discussion and have addressed a number of the components singled out by the government as comprising the mandate of the department.

• (1310)

When reviewing the items in the bill one wonders what criterion was used for the selection of these items for the department. For example, according to Bill C–53, it includes such things as multiculturalism, national parks, historic sites and canals. It moves on to the field of amateur sports and the advancement of equality and status of the English and French languages. Then it goes into the field of broadcasting and so on.

When the present government was restructuring the ministry at the beginning of this session it would seem that items which were left over along with a few others that were pulled from other departments have been lumped together to create the Department of Canadian Heritage.

This questioning of the practicality of placing diverse and unrelated items in the same department leads to a more fundamental question as to what is Canadian heritage. Webster's dictionary defines heritage as something that we inherit at birth; in other words it is like a legacy. It is something or anything that is derived from the past or from tradition. By definition, then, heritage of an individual or group or a country is what we actually inherit at birth, that which was created and moulded by the actions of those who preceded us, just as what we do now in our lifetime will become the heritage or the mould of the lifestyle for those who come after us. For example, briefly, those in the present inherit a base from the past to build on for those in the future. That would be what heritage is.

A basic source contributing to our heritage is the consensus of our society to recognize specific events and/or issues as being valuable to retain for our future development and to create and maintain these things through tangible symbols as a constant reminder for those who follow us in the future. When events of the past no longer directly influence how we govern our lifestyles today, they tend to move from the concept of heritage into what we call our history.

Following this definition, I question the purpose of the Department of Canadian Heritage. I feel that the citizens of the country do not need a Department of Canadian Heritage at all. We in the House must realize that everything we do in terms of the laws we pass, the issues we discuss, will become part of the legacy we leave to those who follow us, which will be their heritage.

Instead of there being a specific Department of Canadian Heritage, all departments or ministries should be responsible through the legislation they propose for the development and maintenance of everything we do, of the heritage for those who are to follow, not just a single department.

The government's role is simply to provide a legislative framework for all persons living in Canada and to provide an overall framework within which individuals and groups of

individuals and Canadians generally can define their own existence. As long as they operate or define it within the parameters of Canadian legal jurisdiction it will become or carry on as heritage.

For example, persons who come to Canada have the opportunity to maintain their heritage, such as language or dress, as long as that heritage or the components of that heritage do not come into conflict with established Canadian laws, the equality of men and women, for example.

People should not come to Canada to recreate the country they left. That begs the question of why they left in the first place. People who immigrate to Canada do so because we have a country that is very attractive to people all over the world. Our response to those who come should not be to reproduce the country they left behind but to do our best to maintain Canada so that it will be as attractive to other people as it was to them.

On this subject I quote from an October 5 article in the *Globe and Mail* written by Sonja Sinclair, a freelance writer and self–described Canadian by adoption rather than birth:

• (1315)

"At the risk of being politically incorrect, I believe that those of us who left our original homelands whether by choice or necessity have no business complaining that the country that offers us a refuge happens to be different than the one we left behind. This does not mean that we should not criticize things that we believe to be wrong or better still try to improve those that seem to be imperfect. Neither does it mean that we should forget where we came from or if we choose keep alive our native language and our culture. What we should not do is expect the government or our fellow citizens to do it for us and foot the bill".

Canada's history is filled with cultural groups that immigrated to this country and maintained their own heritage. For example, the persons of Ukrainian descent who immigrated to western Canada this century did not have a department of heritage to show them or to help them maintain their traditions. They did that on their own and their community in Canada is much stronger for it.

Anyone who has been to a wedding in Vegreville can attest to the enduring strength of the Ukrainian culture in Canada. It is government arrogance to believe that people with different cultures will maintain their cultures only as long as they are able to receive money from federal governments to help them remember their own heritage.

Therefore, what it is to be Canadian, that is our heritage, is defined by the actions of the people and groups of people within the parameters of legislation as determined by the governments of this country.

The meaning of Canadian should be defined from the bottom up and not the top down. The process for defining our nation should go from individuals to groups of individuals, to community, to province, to region, to nation. This is the only way our struggle for identity will be resolved.

We do not need a Department of Canadian Heritage. Government's role is to provide good legislation and parameters for the present and future growth of our country. With this our heritage will be looked after by the citizens themselves.

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C–53 because I believe this nation is probably the world leader when it comes to identifying the importance of heritage and what that means to all of us.

To suggest that we do not need a department of heritage is to suggest that this country does not have a vision or focus or direction as a nation and nothing to build, that things will happen as they may, that regionalism will evolve as it may, that one part of the country need not talk to the other part of the country and that culture need not be reinforced in any which way.

However, today I would like to concentrate my comments around the whole issue of multiculturalism which hon. members of the Reform Party have made a great to do over in this House in the last several days.

What is multiculturalism? The first problem is that the members have totally misunderstood what that is. They keep referring to it as the Ukrainian community out west or the such and such community somewhere else which maintained their dance, their culture and their food. That is not only what multiculturalism is about. That is such a minor part it happens quite by itself as an hon. member rightly pointed out.

Multiculturalism is a fundamental policy that acknowledges the reality of what Canada is today. It is a multicultural society made up of peoples from all over the world.

Over the years it has been to the advantage of what used to be referred to as the mainstream to maintain the status quo of us and them. In the discussions even today I keep hearing the us and them, those people, the cultural people, the multicultural people. Those are the people who are neither English nor French. With respect, that is not what multiculturalism is all about. Multiculturalism defines this country. That means if one looks at a circle the perimeter of the circle is multiculturalism and that is Canada. Within the circle are Canadians of British descent, Canadians of French descent, Canadians of Italian descent and so on, and the aboriginal community. Within that circle is where we try to develop programs to deal with equity and to arrive at an equitable kind of society.

• (1320)

Without the fundamental policy, the concept of multiculturalism, I will tell members what happens. I have dealt for 20 years with program delivery of services in this country. Multiculturalism applies to every government department, not just to the department of multiculturalism. It is a policy, it is an idea. When policies are developed by different departments if the concept of multiculturalism is not taken into account at the very development of that policy the delivery of that policy will not reach everybody. It will be very inequitable.

The people developing both the policy and the mechanism with which to deliver it do not have either the experience or the understanding of the different peoples of this country. In order to be able to understand the needs of people in this country, in order to build a policy and a delivery mechanism that does not have barriers within it that would prevent people from accessing what is their right to access, that policy is not developed properly.

The policy assists in schools, the discussion of equality within the school system, so that children will learn about one another and are able to respect each other's backgrounds, are able to work together and be proud of who they are. The curriculum in this country for the longest time—these are very simple examples that should not even have to be made—ignored totally the contribution to Canada and around the world of peoples of different cultural backgrounds.

When we take into account the policy of multiculturalism we begin to say we must take into account all the contributions of all the people in this country. Christopher Columbus was not a North American; his name was Cristoforo Colombo. There are many others who came to this country over the last 200 years. People of Chinese background who built the railway in this country made a contribution to build this country. The Europeans who cleared the west made a contribution to this country. The Italian Canadians who built the railway as well and were incarcerated during the second world war, many of them built this country. This is not an us and them country. It is a we country.

Canada is a nation that is evolving. The culture of this country is evolving. It is not a British culture entirely. We are very respectful of the institutions.

The member across the way from the Reform Party a week ago suggested that people of immigrant background if we continue with multiculturalism will not respect Canadian institutions. I find that insulting. I am a Canadian and I respect Canadian institutions.

What is a Canadian? I was not born here. I came here at the age of nine. I am very proud of who I am and where I come from, but I am a very proud Canadian first and foremost. To suggest that people who have heritage that is not English or French are not proud Canadians is an insult to people in this country. Multiculturalism is the equalizer. It is the acknowledgement of what we are as a nation and that is what we are building.

Countries around the world have called us and asked us to share our experiences with them. Australia has taken our policy and taken it much further than we have. Germany has recently asked that we help it to develop a similar policy because the world around us is changing. We have countries where because of religious or ethnic differences people are killing each other.

We in this country are developing a model of coexistence, of mutual respect for one another and that is what multiculturalism is about. It fosters that respect. It helps us to build an evolving society. Nothing is static.

Every one of our heritages is just as important as the other. No one is more or less important.

• (1325)

It does not mean that Canada as a state and as a country is not something that we are all proud of and that is first and foremost in our minds. It does not mean that Canadians who are not of British or French background did not fight and die in the world wars.

Some people say that multiculturalism is divisive and is causing the divisions and the breakup of this country. That is highly insulting.

An hon. member: Look around, it is.

Ms. Minna: It is not. You are. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I thank the hon. member for recognizing her indulgence.

Ms. Minna: I am sorry, but it does not. It is not the people like myself who are neither of English nor French background who are causing the breakup of this country.

We believe in multiculturalism, in having a policy that acknowledges that this country is not what it was 200 years ago. Even then it was not what people claim it was. It was a multicultural nation from day one.

The model that we are building is one that we can be very proud of. The moneys used are for programs to develop and implement the ideology and concept of multiculturalism. One may disagree with a specific program but to disagree fundamentally with the policy is absolutely wrong.

I want to quote some of the statements that have been made in this House over the last week. One of the statements suggests we are funding specialist groups at the expense of the taxpayer. Are we not all taxpayers? Are the people who receive the funds not taxpayers? Why do some suggest that of us and them, those people are not taxpayers? This policy is not one of us and them, it is a policy of all of us. It affects every single Canadian.

There were statements such as this policy encourages large groups to remain apart from the mainstream. Who is the mainstream? In metropolitan Toronto the mainstream is all of us. There are some 100 different languages spoken. That is the mainstream of metropolitan Toronto, Hamilton and many other large urban centres in this country. I am not sure what is meant when people say the mainstream and what that is supposed to be.

Sometimes I am asked why I do not become a Canadian. What does Canadian mean? Canadian simply means that you are a citizen of this country who respects the laws and the citizens of this country and who will work and fight for this country.

An hon. member: We choose the government.

Ms. Minna: We choose the government, that is right. We vote and we have a democratic process. That is what Canadian means. Every Canadian in this country has a different heritage, a different place that their parents came from, a different vision or a different region, but we are together as Canadians and that is what Canada is about. We are hybrids, some of us.

Some Canadians are first generation, some third, some fourth. Nonetheless, we are citizens of this country and we are Canadians. Multiculturalism is the only policy that this country has which is the equalizer, which brings this country together to create the model that this world needs.

In of all places, the *New York Times*, a writer stated that if Canada killed multiculturalism and the experiment died here it would be a sad state of affairs because if it died in Canada there would be no hope for the rest of the world to develop the same thing. I say to this House that it is time that people began to look at this government policy and include themselves in the future of this country instead of trying to maintain the status quo that never was.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, the bill we are debating today in the House is a perfect example of the measures which we strongly oppose and which explain why many Quebecers have come to embrace the sovereignist option. That is why I support the amendment of my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata to withdraw this bill and refer its subject matter to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. The purpose of this amendment is, of course, to prevent the House from proceeding to second reading of this bill, which deals with the concept of promoting the Canadian identity. A basic reason why we are opposed to this bill being debated now in this House is that many ethics problems have not been resolved yet.

• (1330)

When we talk about promoting the Canadian identity, it goes without saying that the mandates and subsidies of the various government agencies will support this goal. Such is the case with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which should logically promote a big and beautiful Canada, but especially a united Canada.

A declaration made by the Prime Minister of Canada on June 18 leaves no doubt as to the directives given to the CBC. The Prime Minister said: "There is a law governing the CBC's operations and I will ask them to obey this law. Among the obligations outlined in the law is that of letting people know about Canada's advantages".

They would ask a broadcaster to voluntarily provide biased information in order to fulfil a mandate given by the Canadian government. It is very difficult to swallow. During an election campaign, for example, the air time allocated to the main political parties is monitored to the second. If one party gets more coverage than another, the news room will soon receive a telephone call from the party that feels slighted. This golden rule is the only guarantee that the population will be shown both sides of the coin.

Reflecting his leader's thinking, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said in 1977: "I cannot see the CBC taking a neutral stand to show both sides of the issue. During the referendum campaign, employees must stand squarely on the pro–Canada side".

Mr. Speaker, as this statement shows, our Minister of Foreign Affairs was already advocating in 1977 that this Crown corporation—24 per cent of whose operating expenditures are being paid by Quebecers—should take a biased position. Today, this same Minister of Foreign Affairs travels around the world preaching a healthy democracy, which he would flout here in his own country.

I saw him last Sunday in Haiti with President Aristide extolling the benefits of democracy. If democracy is healthy in a country like Haiti, why would he deny that this same democracy is just as beneficial here in Quebec, in Canada? It is very dangerous for the future.

It remains to be seen whether the opinion of the minister I just told you about has evolved since 1977, but I doubt it. What the Prime Minister and his Minister of Foreign Affairs said amounts to favouring, for example, the no side during the next referendum campaign, either by giving them better air time or by boycotting events favourable to the sovereignists. It amounts to asking Bernard Derome to look disgusted when mentioning the benefits of having a sovereign Quebec.

• (1335)

Such an attitude means one of two things: first, all Radio–Canada employees are federalists, or at least lack some professional ethics and agree to give a biased view in their media coverage; second, Quebecers do not realize that democracy is being cheated. For all those journalists, news desk officers, producers,

technicians and others who have contributed to establishing Radio–Canada's reputation as a serious and credible organization, these comments are outrageous and reflect a blatant lack of respect for the right of Canadians and Quebecers to be informed. In fact, such comments jeopardize the credibility of Radio–Canada's news bulletins.

On top of these horror stories, the daily *Le Devoir* reported last April that the gap between programming budgets for the French and English networks is constantly increasing. There is no alternating here: every year the gap gets greater. Last year, the difference was $76.4 million. Indeed, Radio–Canada's budget was $69.7 million, while CBC got $146.1 million. And then Radio–Canada is being told how to present its news bulletins. There are limits to taking advantage of Quebecers.

To say that a nation is defined by its culture and its language is stating the obvious. We will continue to fight relentlessly until we get all the necessary tools to ensure Quebec's cultural development. Quebec's interests cannot be the same as that of a population with a different culture. The best example of this is the recent film released on the events which occurred in October 1970, to which the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine referred this morning. The producer, Pierre Falardeau had to defend his project because a Liberal senator campaigned against it, claiming that Telefilm Canada should not have to support such projects. Political schemers and movie producers do not have much in common.

In conclusion, the mandate given to the Department of Canadian Heritage goes totally against Quebec's will. We urge the government to recognize Quebec's distinct and specific character and we will keep doing so.

• (1340)

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–53 takes a very realistic and comprehensive approach to the new realities and problems confronting Canadian society. The new Department of Canadian Heritage is an instrument to promote Canadian identity. Multiculturalism is a part of this new department because it helps to define us as Canadians.

The department's programs and policies reflect the changes that are taking place in how we see multiculturalism, in terms of its realities and present problems. At first, the purpose of the policy on multiculturalism was to protect cultural identities and promote exchanges between cultures. However, since 1988, when the Parliament of Canada unanimously—I repeat, unanimously—passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the policy has evolved considerably. In addition to its initial cultural dimension, it now includes a social and economic focus.

[*English*]

We know that exclusion can be said to present a threat to democracy for it impedes equal and full participation for all. It leads to alienation, a sense of disenfranchisement, and feelings of powerlessness. Alienation leads to political apathy that diminishes both the society and the individual within society.

According to the 1991 census of Canada, 42 per cent of Canadians identify themselves as having at least one origin other than British or French. Canadians with origins other than British or French now make up the majority in every major urban centre west of Montreal. By 2006 the proportion of Canadians who are visible minorities is expected to be between 13 and 18 per cent. In Toronto some estimates suggest the proportion could be as high as 50 per cent.

The increasing diversity of our population presents a profound challenge for Canadian society. In order to avoid conflict and maintain social cohesion, institutions within education, policing, justice, media, health and social services, business, labour, municipal and other sectors will have to redouble their efforts to develop policies, programs and practices adaptive to the reality of Canadian diversity. At the same time public education initiatives are necessary to promote among Canadians the value of their diversity and the tangible benefits that can be derived from it.

[*Translation*]

The federal multiculturalism policy is dynamic, because it responds to new challenges to society. Today, both policy and programs provide a response to major problems connected with racism and racial discrimination and to the problems encountered by immigrants seeking to become a part of Canadian society.

I want to make it clear that multiculturalism is everybody's business, not just that of members of ethnic and cultural minorities. We all gain if we are able to give everyone a chance to make his way in society and make a full contribution towards building a stronger country.

[*English*]

Canadians are consistently expressing growing concerns about racism and racial discrimination. In November 1993 Decima Research found that an overwhelming 86 per cent of Canadians have identified racism as a problem in Canadian society. Further, 53 per cent of Canadians believe that racism has increased over the past four to five years. When asked to identify those individuals or organizations that could best promote harmony and acceptance, a majority cited the federal government and/or the Prime Minister. In March, Ekos Research found that over three–quarters of Canadians feel that an

appropriate future role for government is to "promote tolerance and understanding throughout Canadian society".

I would submit that the above facts clearly demonstrate that this bill reflects the aspirations of Canadians and that the programs that it enables respond to the demands of the majority of Canadians. This government is in touch with Canadians.

[*Translation*]

It is in our own interests to try and preserve harmony. A society that understands the value of diversity and is prepared to make the adjustments that are necessary will enjoy an enviable reputation internationally.

• (1345)

John E. Cleghorn, president of the Royal Bank of Canada, says that our success as a nation depends on our ability to channel our country's rich diversity in ways that will make us truly competitive on the world markets. Because of an increasingly globalized economy, Canadian businesses must turn to new markets.

In doing so, they can take advantage of Canada's abundant resources and a knowledge of other cultures, other languages and other ways of doing business. I would even say that businesses that are able to make this adjustment will have a competitive edge when the time comes to hire, and keep, qualified staff in a tight labour market. Multiculturalism reflects Canada's basic values. Multiculturalism derives from the general framework of civil, political, social and linguistic rights enshrined in the Canadian Constitution.

[*English*]

These values are consistent with the results of a large national attitude survey conducted in 1991. On questions relating to diversity an overwhelming 95 per cent of citizens believe you can be proud to be Canadian and proud of your ancestry at the same time. Seventy–six per cent believe that multiculturalism applies to all Canadians regardless of ancestry and 73 per cent have close friends who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Canada's multiculturalism policy is an eloquent testimony to our commitment to upholding the value of diversity as well as setting an example for the rest of the world. As a member of the United Nations our country has signed several international articles affirming our commitment to better the human condition at home and abroad.

The international convention on the elimination of all forms of racism and racial discrimination obliges us to take positive measures against racial discrimination. The international covenant on civil and political rights addresses the rights of all persons to enjoy their own culture, practice their own religion and use their own language.

Other articles to which we are a signatory such as the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights and the international convention on the alienation of all forms of discrimination against women speak with conviction about basic Canadian values.

[*Translation*]

It is extremely important for the Government of Canada to act on its commitments and realize the values proposed therein. This is even more important today, when countries throughout the world are turning to Canadians for support. Every day we hear news about civil disobedience, political oppression, public chaos and fighting in the streets. It is a reminder that these societies urgently need a model on which they can base hopes for a better future.

If as legislators, parents and citizens, we can keep working together to improve the Canadian vision, we will have something to offer the world, something of immense value. This brings me back to the real purpose and crucial role of the multiculturalism programs that will be part of the new department proposed in Bill C–53. These programs will help Canadians, whatever their cultural roots, become full members of our society and make a significant contribution to that society.

That is why the lion's share of the $22 million worth of subsidies and grants administered by these programs is intended to help new Canadians become integrated into our society and to eliminate racism and racial discrimination throughout Canadian society. We also support efforts to deal with problems such as institutional change and the integration and participation of all individuals in Canadian society.

[*English*]

Let me also emphasize that a great deal of work involving no funding is carried out by officials of these programs. For example, our strategy on diversity and the economy forges important partnerships between government, business and communities to seize the economic opportunities afforded by our diversity. In a similar way we are working with our federal colleagues in the Departments of Justice, Solicitor General, National Revenue and others to accelerate work on the issue of hate crime, the importation and distribution of hate propaganda.

• (1350)

Examples of the department's strategic partnerships include its work with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Advertising Foundation, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters and the Canadian Bar Association.

As an ideology, multiculturalism reflects the reality that our society is becoming increasingly diverse. It is an ideology based on the shared values of acceptance and mutual respect. It is a visionary statement about the kind of society we are all really working to achieve, one in which each Canadian can realize his

or her full potential, economically, socially, politically and culturally.

Bill C–53 provides the government with a framework for action by which it can continue to build a society based on fairness, respect and is inclusive of each and every Canadian.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Colleagues, as a junior presiding officer it is not my place to call the attention of the House to anyone in the gallery. However earlier this day I was fortunate enough to have the visit of a group of young students from Bishop Macdonell School in my riding. I want them to know that if they are in the House, and if I could acknowledge them, I would. I would simply say welcome and thank you for your visit.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague across the way I am proud to be a Canadian. Prior to that I was an immigrant. I see no reason to support this bill.

I begin with the idea that this bill is going to save $7.3 million. I cannot find this anywhere in the document. Rather it appears to me to be a hodge–podge of ideas designed to remove more tax dollars from the pockets of taxpayers.

The bill proposes an omnibus department of government designed to promote a greater understanding of human rights. How often do we hear that? It has not one word about human responsibilities.

The bill proposes a department to promote fundamental freedoms and related values. The term related values has no meaning to most Canadians. What values are related to fundamental freedoms? Could it be that the term may give another minority group another reason to challenge the current charter or human rights legislation because their values are related to fundamental freedoms?

The bill allows for the establishment of multiculturalism, another tax grab. The Liberal government started multiculturalism as a means of using tax dollars to buy votes and it continues to do that today. Canadians, if given a choice between funding special interest groups under the guise of multiculturalism or funding education, health care and social services, would always vote for the essential services, not for a waste of tax dollars.

I recently attended a multicultural event. It was marvellous. We had ethnic food, represented by 14 countries, flags flying for each country, ethnic dancing. It glorified the splendour of young men and women, wearing ethnic costumes, depicting the varied artistic culture of their homelands.

This event did not cost taxpayers one red cent. It was entirely funded by those in attendance. There was a $20 admission fee. Not only did everyone have a great time, the event earned enough money to assist one group with its building fund. That is my kind of multiculturalism, the proud display that cost taxpayers nothing.

The bill proposes to finance the cultural aspect of the status of the artist. Could anyone please tell me what that really means? It surely sounds like another waste of taxes to special interest groups who are so successful in lobbying the government for hard earned tax dollars. Another example of a catch–all phrase that steals taxes from essential services is the government's intent to fund cultural and heritage industries, including every form of entertainment imaginable.

• (1355)

In case the government does not know, we have a vibrant entertainment business in Canada that does not need tax dollars to survive. It is funded on a user pay system. If citizens partake in any event they pay for it. What is wrong with the free enterprise system funding cultural heritage industries? All the user–pay system does is stop wasting tax dollars.

The government proposes that this new super department will oversee sites, canals, battlefields, railway stations and federal buildings of historical importance. I ask, who decides this importance? More special interest groups clamouring for tax dollars? More than likely.

Also the bill proposes to have control of national parks. Since there are national parks in my riding this is of special interest to me. My constituents already know a small band of radicals have the heritage minister's ear. Instead of allowing Canadians access to their national parks he seems intent on doing whatever is instructed by these radicals to prevent our national parks from being open to call Canadians.

It seems the minister listens to those who are already established in the parks and are preventing others from doing likewise. Again, special interests will control this department.

The bill proposes to encourage and promote development of amateur sport. Yet every parent I know that has their child in organized amateur sports like hockey, ringette, baseball and soccer are finding it more difficult each year to afford keeping their child in any of these sports. Again, special interests receive the tax dollars.

The bill proposes to advance the equality of status of English and French with the use of federal tax dollars. The provinces should be controlling language, not the federal government. Again special interests will benefit and all Canadians will pay.

The bill will allow spending tax dollars on state ceremonies and Canadian symbols. May we ask what ceremonies and what symbols, or dare we ask?

The bill also proposes to fund with tax dollars the formulation of cultural policy as it relates to foreign investment. Can anyone in the House tell Canadians exactly what this means? Who knows? I doubt if this government knows either.

The Speaker: My colleague, yes, indeed, you do have some time remaining and I am looking forward to hearing what you have to say after question period.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

PERSONS CASE

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks a significant event in the history of our nation. Sixty-five years ago on October 18, 1929, Canadian women were formally recognized as persons by the British Privy Council.

This victory came after a lengthy political and legal battle led by the famous five: Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, and Henrietta Muir Edwards, five persons of incredible vision and perseverance.

As a result of their work and the subsequent decision, women became eligible for appointment to the Senate. One year later in 1930 Corinne Wilson became the first woman to sit in the Senate of Canada.

Today with 18 women in our Senate, we continue to work toward equality for all persons in every facet of our society. As we keep alive the spirit of the famous five and the legacy of the persons case, Canadians can be proud of our strong history of activism and our continued commitment to social justice.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, in presenting his economic statement yesterday, the Minister of Finance simply added a purple cover to the document presented in 1984 by the Liberals' new mentor, Michael Wilson.

The Minister of Finance is trying to tell us that social programs are the main obstacle to employment in Canada. Nevertheless, considering how much the population has grown in the past five years, we are still some 800,000 jobs short of the 1990 employment level. That is nothing to boast about.

Given this fact, what are they proposing to us? Solutions which the Liberals criticized and scorned every day that the Conservatives were in office. There is a limit to inconsistency and political expediency. From their first reactions, the people know this limit better than the Minister of Finance does.

* * *

[*English*]

KYLE BROWN

Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Trooper Kyle Brown has been sentenced to five years in jail on charges of manslaughter in the death of a Somali prisoner. The minister of defence is now appealing, demanding a longer sentence for Brown.

The minister and the military establishment knew all along that a longstanding defence existed for Brown who was obeying an order of his superiors, an order that he did not understand to be so outrageous as to be obviously illegal. The Supreme Court last March reaffirmed the availability of this defence.

Furthermore, the minister and the military establishment ignored the well known effect of Mefloquine, a malaria drug administered to Canadian troops in Somalia. Side effects include violent dreams, hallucinations, confusion, anxiety and mental depression. Mefloquine could have precipitated the murder of the prisoner and Master Corporal Matchee's attempted suicide.

The minister of defence should today order the release from military detention of Trooper Kyle Brown pending an investigation into this affair.

* * *

WOMEN

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 65 years ago today, women won the right to be recognized as persons.

We in the Liberal Party use persons day to honour the accomplishments of women and to acknowledge that we still have a long way to go. The members across the way in the Reform Party celebrate it by belittling the accomplishments of women.

The member for St. Paul dismissed women in the Liberal caucus, claiming they were given their jobs by the Prime Minister. She must be confused by her own party's selection process. After all, it was the Reform Party that had candidates fill out an application form.

Many women contested nominations in the Liberal Party, far more than got elected. The battle waged by every female Liberal MP was real. The fact they made it through a male dominated and sometimes sexist process must not be diminished.

S. O. 31

PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the birthday of a very important political scientist in our country's history. Today is the birthday of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a man who served this country and served this House of Commons for many years, a man who believed in strong national programs. From strong national programs we created a great national will.

I think it is incumbent on all of us in this House today to recognize the great work that he has done on behalf of Canada.

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WOMEN MPs

Mme Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Beaver River suggested in her statement that some women MPs on the government side were not duly elected.

The residents of Beaches—Woodbine are well informed on their democratic rights as citizens of Canada. After six months of meeting and discussing with them the Liberal agenda as outlined in the red book and after six months of evaluating my credentials and preparedness for public office, the voters of Beaches—Woodbine gave me 9,000 votes more than the next closest candidate.

It would seem that the member has forgotten a very important event that took place in October 1993 which is called an election.

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[*Translation*]

MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, year after year, the Auditor General denounces federal mismanagement that costs taxpayers billions of dollars.

Do you want some examples? What about the $4 billion wasted by inefficient federal management of real property? What about the $3 billion of contracts issued without bids, when the Auditor General himself says that $1 billion could have been saved here? And what about the billions of dollars of military spending that is no longer justified today?

Instead of slashing only social programs that meet the needs of the poorest people in our society, the government should first clean up its own yard. Examples of wasted public funds are not lacking. The government should start by properly correcting its poor management instead of blaming the unemployed for all the fiscal problems in this country.

• (1405)

[*English*]

BILINGUALISM

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of this House to a piece of propaganda masquerading as a news story.

In this story Alliance Quebec wrongly accuses the Reform of wanting a unilingual country by passing a resolution at our assembly calling for the repeal of the Official Languages Act.

This is the type of propaganda the government and its status quo allies use to colour the fact. If the government and its language lap–dogs were to speak the truth they would tell Canadians that the repeal of the act will cost nothing but will save millions.

Bilingualism in Canada is safe through the guarantees contained in the BNA and the charter. Alliance Quebec knows these facts but refuses to state them, not because it fears for the future of French and English in Canada but because it fears the loss of over a million dollars in annual federal funds which it receives through the Official Languages Act.

Speaking of money, the national debt now stands at $534,738,000,000.

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[*Translation*]

SPORTS

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to underline the exceptional performance of Dave Barr, Rick Gibson and Ray Stewart, all from British Columbia, who recently won the Dunhill Cup, in Scotland, which is the world championship for golfing.

I also want to congratulate Montreal's Impact soccer team for its impressive victory in the North American soccer championship.

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[*English*]

WOMEN MPs

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been said by the Reform Party that the road to Parliament was made easier for Liberal women.

I rise to remind this House that Liberals sought the best candidates. They searched for and found top quality people in order to assist the Prime Minister of our government to do what is right for Canada. We were elected because of our commitment

and experience. Women and men in the Liberal caucus know that we have an obligation to serve this country through good government.

Nellie McClung, an early leader of women's rights, is quoted as saying: "Never retract, never explain and never apologize. Get the thing done and let them howl".

Certain members may find that all they know is how to howl, but our caucus, women and men, have joined our Prime Minister in getting the job done.

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WOMEN MPs

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to point out to those opposite who deride the accomplishments of female parliamentarians over here that I, like others, took all comers at a nomination meeting and I won.

I want to say that I am proud of that accomplishment and very proud of my brothers and sisters whom the Prime Minister had the good sense to appoint. He has the plan, he has the team and he has more female parliamentarians to support him than any other leader in history.

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[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, there was disbelief on international financial markets after the comments made yesterday by the Minister of Finance. The fact is that these stakeholders are simply asking the minister to take concrete action to stop the wasting of public money. Yet, one year after his appointment, the Minister of Finance is still content to merely look at the extent of the damage caused to Canadian government finances.

The deputy chairman of the Deustche Bank of Canada summarized the concerns of the financial community when he said that the finance minister's pledge to lower the deficit is certainly praiseworthy, but that investors will want to see concrete action. Must we conclude from the finance minister's failure that our 127-year old federal structure is too heavy and obsolete to adequately meet the challenge of improving the situation of government finances?

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[*English*]

WOMEN MPs

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of howling, it appears I may have struck a chord by questioning the Liberals' nomination not election process. The normally docile government backbenchers came alive with protests and howls of indignation.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester passionately claimed that she was duly elected in her riding and the hon. member for Edmonton East—I could go on and on today—went to great lengths to show that residents in her riding and no one else chose a Liberal candidate.

• (1410)

How about some testimonials from those who were perhaps appointed? How about the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore? Why is she so quiet? What about York Centre or Hull—Aylmer? Nothing to say? We want testimonials from these people. How about my friend from Saskatoon—Humboldt? Does she have any comments on the nomination?

Were these people appointed or democratically nominated, not elected? Do they subscribe to the views of their Prime Minister who when asked why he appointed more than 14 candidates, male and female, said in a press conference "sometimes Canadians just cannot be trusted to make the right choice".

* * *

YOUTH CLUB SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Canadian Soccer Association held its youth club soccer championships. The tournament was played over four days and included teams representing all provinces. I had the pleasure of attending the under 15 division in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and was pleased with both the boys and girls teams in this division representing the city of Scarborough.

The girls under 15 division, the Scarborough West Rouge Soccer Club, finished third. In the boys under 15 age group the national championship was won by Scarborough's Alexander the Great team representing the Greek Canadian community's Olympic Flame soccer club.

These fine young men and women from all across our country have developed their skills and talents at the championship level and deserve the recognition of all the members of the House. Together with their hard work and effort this competition has instilled in them the importance of fair play and true sportsmanship.

I would encourage the Minister of Canadian Heritage to continue his support for our young Canadian athletes.

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PAUL BRODIE

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Wednesday, October 19, at Government House, Paul Brodie a resident of Bala in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka, will receive the prestigious Order of Canada award.

Mr. Brodie is recognized as Canada's ambassador of classical saxophone and founder of the World Saxophone Congress. Having played for 35 years, Mr. Brodie has performed in 2,500 concerts. He has been the guest of high commissions and embassies in England, France, China, Israel, Australia and others. From the small, picturesque community of Bala, Mr. Brodie has travelled to small communities throughout Canada.

In the Parry Sound—Muskoka region Mr. Brodie has been kind enough to share his art with young students by performing in the many schools in my riding. I congratulate Mr. Brodie for winning the Order of Canada and wish him continued success in the future.

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APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 50th anniversary of success for apprenticeship programs in New Brunswick. Over those 50 years 50,000 diplomas and certificates have been granted to New Brunswick students in 65 different occupational areas.

[*Translation*]

New Brunswick is proud to offer its citizens new occupational programs in the field of high technology, thus preparing them to meet the challenges of the next century. The co-operative efforts of employers, unions, governments and students have had the effect of making occupational training an important element in the province's economy.

[*English*]

As the demand for highly skilled workers increases in Canada, the future for apprenticeship looks bright. The continued support of apprenticeship programs is not only an investment in youth and an investment in the New Brunswick economy but an investment in the Canadian economy.

* * *

PATRICK KELLY

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am hearing concerns from my constituents and have been studying the facts. I would like to add my name to the list of individuals urging the government to take action in the case of Patrick Kelly. Mr. Kelly is the former RCMP officer who was convicted of murdering his wife based on eyewitness testimony.

The eyewitness has since reversed her position yet there have been unacceptable delays in the process which could lead to a new trial. Since the conviction of Mr. Kelly allegations of dishonesty on the part of the investigating officers have also been put forward.

Dawn Taber, the eyewitness who was critical in putting Mr. Kelly behind bars, has rescinded her testimony claiming she lied in court under pressure from the investigating officers. While the government has called an independent review into the case, I am concerned that the Minister of Justice has yet to give a deadline for the review's completion.

It is imperative that Patrick Kelly receive a speedy review of this conviction in light of these new revelations and receive the justice he deserves.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance sounded the alarm on the state of federal public finances. He said, and I quote:

> We are in hock up to our eyeballs. That can't be sustained.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Does he share the gloomy diagnosis of the distressing state of federal finances, as given by his Minister of Finance? Does he intend to take urgent action to kill the deficit?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when you are $500 billion in debt, you have a serious problem. That is what the Minister of Finance said yesterday, and we are taking steps to remedy the situation by reducing the annual deficit. The objective we clearly stated in our campaign platform was to bring the deficit down to 3 per cent of GDP after three years. We will do what it takes to get there.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, once again, all we get is words and a rehash of the objectives the government set out in the red book more than a year ago. What we have is a case of total paralysis, as confirmed by the Prime Minister, while his Minister of Finance also told him yesterday that the situation is untenable.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Does he not realize that after almost a year in power, it is high time that his government decided to act and that what he just said is no longer enough to calm the growing concerns of the financial community?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we brought down a budget in February, and we predicted a deficit of $39.7 billion. We are confident that at the end of the year, we will be below that level.

At the time, we also predicted that the deficit would be around $32 billion at the end of the second year and would drop to $25 billion—the level required to meet our objective of 3 per cent—by the end of the third year. We said, I said so myself as did the Minister of Finance, that we would do what it takes to meet our objectives.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very frank with us, since he just told the House they will do absolutely nothing between now and the budget next February to deal with the disastrous situation his government just disclosed. This is a very serious matter. We have here a clear and flagrant admission of irresponsibility.

Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to say to the Prime Minister, and to the government that has often asked us for suggestions on concrete measures that the Bloc has been suggesting concrete measures for some time but the government has refused to listen. What is the government waiting for to cut—Here are some concrete measures. Make a note of them, why not. What is the government waiting for to cut the fat out of federal operating expenditures? To eliminate the unconscionable waste caused by administrative overlap? To get rid of tax havens? To abolish the undue privilege represented by family trusts? Those are concrete proposals. Would the Prime Minister care to respond?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question put by the Leader of the Opposition is a very broad one. He is talking about fat and unconscionable spending, without being more specific, which is exactly what the Minister of Finance is being now. He is talking to committee members. As for family trusts, the problem, as suggested by the Finance critic for the Bloc Quebecois, was referred to the committee that is looking into the matter right now, to see if family trusts are paying the taxes they should be paying. We will act on the committee's recommendations as soon as the committee has finished its work.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to reducing the deficit, the government is still turning a deaf ear to the various suggestions it receives from all over, including the Official Opposition. The government's only recipe is massive cuts in social programs, at the expense of the poorest people and the unemployed. To do this dirty work, the Minister of Finance is counting on his colleague in Human Resources Development.

• (1420)

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to admit that his government is going the wrong way by attacking the poorest people and the middle class with cuts to social programs, when he should first reduce his spending, end waste and duplication and fight tax evasion?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member would take the time to read the paper presented by the Minister of Human Resources Development he would see that what we are doing is taking some of the money available, not to give it to frequent claimants and so on, but we want to give them the training they need so that they will be able to have a job and have the dignity of working.

Canadians do not want the people of Canada who are unfortunately unemployed to remain on welfare or unemployment insurance. What they want is a government that will use this money to create jobs so they will have the dignity of working. That is exactly what this government will do for them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, they are putting a purple colour on the Conservatives' blue book, which says that we are in the red. Does the government's inaction in the past year and its inability to attack the deficit not confirm that the federal structure is too cumbersome, paralysed, paralysing and incapable of the downsizing required to reduce the debt crisis?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have faced up to our responsibilities. We were the only political party that put in writing in a red book exactly how we would achieve our objective. The financial community thinks that it is a realistic objective; a deficit of 3 per cent of the gross national product is the level required in Europe for all countries in the European Community to qualify for the new European currency, the ecu.

Right now, I think that not one European country has been able to achieve this level, but we will get there in the third year of our mandate, as we promised in writing in our red book. If you want a copy, I can send you one; I have it here.

[*English*]

The Speaker: I am sure all hon. members will agree that we should not be using any props as we go through.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, evidence is mounting that the cabinet is divided on the urgency and importance of reducing the deficit and the debt and this is going to cripple the government's deficit reducing efforts.

Some ministers such as the finance minister appear to recognize and demand more serious and substantive spending reductions. Other ministers such as the Deputy Prime Minister only reluctantly agree to mild spending reduction. The silence from the Prime Minister is deafening.

Will the Prime Minister show some leadership by stating right now whether he supports the Deputy Prime Minister and her free spending colleagues or whether he supports the finance minister in his deficit reduction efforts?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I support the red book.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking commitment from the Prime Minister and the government, not equivocation.

The cabinet and the Prime Minister's resolve to substantially reduce spending is still in doubt. Yesterday I directed a question to the finance minister on this subject but it was the Deputy Prime Minister who intervened. At one time they were both standing until the Deputy Prime Minister stared down the finance minister. I note also that the Canadian dollar dropped yesterday. I do not know if there was any connection.

I ask the Prime Minister, whose position on deficit reduction is the government's position: the Deputy Prime Minister's position or the finance minister's position?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is so easy to receive questions from the Reform Party that everybody wants to get up to have the privilege to reply.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): I will read from the red book. Any responsible government must have as its goal the elimination of the deficit. This is our goal.

• (1425)

Given the current state of the economy a realistic interim target for the Liberal government is to seek to reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of gross domestic product by the end of its third year in office and we will do it.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the money markets believe that the cabinet is divided and many Canadians do too. If the cabinet does not get its act together we are going to need another aisle in this House with the hard headed Liberals and Reformers on one side and the soft headed Liberals and the Bloc members on the other.

The other evident division in the cabinet is between those who think that tax increases are still possible and advisable and those who know that they are not.

Will the Prime Minister give an unequivocal guarantee that tax increases are not an option for deficit reduction?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of very nice members of Parliament but they want to be re–elected and they do not want to be seen with the Reform Party. That is a very good reason to keep our team together.

We are preparing the next budget at this time. It is the first time since I have been a member of Parliament, and it has been quite a few years, that there are prebudget consultations with the Canadian public. The Minister of Finance tabled documents yesterday. He is tabling more documents today and everybody will be able to have input. There will be a budget and what will be in the budget will be written after we have listened. If we are consulting it is better not to make up our minds before the end of the consultation. We do not want to laugh at people that way.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the extremely difficult fiscal background described by the Minister of Finance yesterday, we learn that the Canadian Army is presently taking part in an international missile firing competition in Florida.

Canadian F–18s are expected to launch missiles that cost up to $400,000 each. We are also told that over 60 members of the Canadian Forces—pilots, technicians, controllers—are taking part in this competition called Operation William Tell.

In the present context where the government is about to cut billions of dollars at the expense of the poorest of the poor and the middle class, does the Minister of National Defence not agree that he should immediately put a stop to this shameful waste?

[*English*]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member displays his ignorance about the role of the armed forces. That was obviously seen in the manifesto of the Bloc Quebecois in the last election when it called for a 25 per cent cut in defence expenditures and then objected to cuts when they occurred.

With respect to the William Tell exercise this is a normal exercise by the Canadian air force and it involves the firing of live missiles which cannot be done in Canada and can be done under the auspices of a bilateral training agreement we have with the United States. This is nothing abnormal, it is done quite frequently.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, let us put the question to the Prime Minister; he seems to have a lot to say on this matter. How can the Prime Minister of Canada tolerate such squandering at a time when our country is literally on the brink of bankruptcy, according to his Minister of Finance? Should he not be acting to stop the squandering allowed by his defence minister, with his tacit consent?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have commitments to other countries. And Canada stands to gain from European forces coming to train in Canada on a regular basis as part of these military exchange programs between allies. There is, as a matter of fact, some controversy about this in Labrador.

So, we have more foreign military training in Canada than Canadians training abroad. This cannot be a purely unilateral affair. We must co–operate with the other forces, and that is precisely what the Minister of National Defense is doing. In the case in point, he is co–operating with the Americans, but when the Belgians, the Germans or other forces come and train in Canada, in one province or the other, we all like to see them spending money in Canada. It helps the Canadian economy.

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister presented a policy paper that in many respects, to be fair, is supportable. One of the minister's points was that increased productivity was key to economic growth. Yet just the day before the Deputy Prime Minister released a report calling for billions of dollars of new gasoline green taxes.

Would the Prime Minister state the position of the government in promoting productivity? Does the government advocate raising taxes or lowering taxes?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I never released any such report.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister knows that every time Canadians go to fill up their gas tanks with $25 worth of gas, it costs $12.50 in federal and provincial taxes. Yet through her rather uncharacteristic silence she has implied that even higher gasoline and carbon taxes are possible; she has implied that.

My question is for the Minister of the Environment. So that it is very clear to Canadians, will the Minister of the Environment demonstrate her commitment to improving the productivity, as was stated in the paper yesterday, of Canadian business by rejecting any kind of proposed tax grab in the carbon industry?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just told the whole House that I never released any such report.

If the member wants to be true to the people of Canada, why does he not tell the truth and admit in the House that the Minister of the Environment in no way released any such report. Stop setting up strawmen so you can try to burn them down.

The Speaker: I ask my colleagues to please direct their remarks to the Chair.

[*Translation*]

HIBERNIA PROJECT

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance announced in his economic statement that the government intends to end subsidies for megaprojects. While the government slashes social programs, it will sink over $250 million into the Hibernia project this year alone.

If the Prime Minister wants to be taken seriously, are we to understand that his government has now committed itself to not sinking the additional hundreds of millions of dollars required by the Hibernia project?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, several million dollars have already been spent on this project, which will be completed within two or three years. Ending the project now would make us lose all the money already invested. If we had to do it all over again, perhaps we should not have gone ahead. However, stopping now would be an enormous loss. We must complete this project because, when it starta producing oil and natural gas in three or four years, we will be able to recover if not all at least a large part of the money invested so far. We would be very ill–advised to stop now, as these investments will start paying off in two or three years.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a short memory. He should remember that his party supported the Hibernia project when they were in opposition.

How can the Prime Minister refuse to make a commitment not to invest any more public funds in this very risky venture, when there is no evidence that this project will ever be profitable?

• (1435)

[*English*]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a minute ago I explained something very simple to the member. There was a lot of investment in that and some of these projects have not produced the results anticipated. It happens like that many times.

At the moment we have invested millions of dollars in that project. The project is scheduled to start producing oil in three years and will be an available resource to be sold abroad or for Canadians to use in Canada.

It would be stupid to stop the project at this time because we would lose the benefits that would come from it. I must tell the hon. member that a lot of the work on the project is being done in Quebec at the moment.

HEALTH CARE FORUM

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the health minister has sent out invitations to the provincial health ministers to her health care forum. There has been no response. The Prime Minister invited the premiers to the same forum and received the same answer.

Just to be sure I called the health ministers. Guess what? They are really not coming.

When will the health minister get it that the most important players do not want any part of this $12 million boondoggle?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were committed in the red book to having a forum of that nature. We kept our word. When we introduced the project members of the opposition said that we had to invite some people from the provinces.

The minister negotiated with them. At the beginning they asked to have several representatives. We said that was fine. After that they wanted to have as many as ten. We said that was fine. Some said some premiers would like to be there, that we should let them come. We said yes, yes and yes. If they do not come we are back to square one.

We began with no invitations. We have now invited them and they are not coming. We will just do what we said we would do in the red book, that is consult with the people and maintain good medicare in Canada.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the provinces pay 48 per cent of health care bills. Private sources pay 28 per cent and the junior partner, the federal government, pays 23 per cent. Why would the major payer accept being a minor player?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we have medicare in Canada today it is because there was a federal government that took the initiative to have medicare. The fathers and mothers of the program want to keep it.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL FORUM ON HEALTH

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, in a last–ditch effort to convince the provinces to participate in the National Forum on Health, the Prime Minister has written to his provincial counterparts inviting them to attend on a consultative basis. The Minister of Health sent a similar invitation to her provincial counterparts but never received any answers.

How can the government persist in trying to hold its National Forum on Health when it is so obvious that the provinces do not wish to participate in that forum in its present form?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a consultation exercise involving experts as well as other stakeholders. We asked the provinces to make suggestions and we welcomed their proposals. The forum is not a decision–making body. Its purpose is to look at the issue and make recommendations. This exercise is not binding on the federal government nor on the provinces. There are other initiatives involving the provinces, such as the meeting of federal and provincial health ministers.

Again, this is not a federal–provincial program: it is a consultation exercise to get ideas from Canadians. I will not make any decisions; I will simply preside and listen. I invited these people to discuss the issue. I will not be making speeches. I will take note of suggestions made. We will try to take those into account to ensure that health–related costs in Canada do not become prohibitive and to maintain a free health care program for all Canadians.

• (1440)

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when the government is looking for ways to eliminate wasting, does the Prime Minister realize that, in the absence of the provinces, the National Forum on Health will be a totally futile exercise which will cost over $12 million to Canadian taxpayers?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the support of all intermediary organizations involved, including the Canadian Hospital Association, the Canadian Medical Association and others, because they realize that in order to have a national plan, we must establish national standards. Also, what works in one province could be used successfully by another. It is our role to find the best possible solutions and discuss them with the provinces. It will then be up to them to adopt or reject these solutions. This is how we intend to proceed.

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[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Last Friday when VIA Rail announced that it was cutting another 478 jobs, half of them being in Montreal, it stated that it would be done without a cut in service.

Would the minister please explain how VIA can cut 478 jobs and not reduce service to the public? Why is VIA still pursuing a downsizing policy introduced by the Conservative government in 1993?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, VIA is approaching the problems it is facing in the same way as the government. We have problems in operating a service in the country that loses over $300 million a year and is

supported by taxpayers. The cuts that were announced by and large were about 50:50 as between administrative positions and operating positions.

The hon. member would know, because he has a very definite interest in it, that we are trying to do everything we can to maintain levels of service across the country. It is true that we have made cuts to VIA with respect to personnel. There have been no cuts or even requests put before us for eliminating any of the routes.

We still have another area to look at, that is what happens with the ongoing labour negotiations at VIA. The commitment of the government is to try to maintain services coast to coast with VIA but also to protect the owner of VIA who happens to be the Canadian taxpayer.

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Public Accounts of Canada were tabled today. The Minister of Finance included in his 1994 deficit prediction half a billion dollars for the resource allowance tax fiasco. We now find that one of the reasons the 1994 deficit is lower than the minister's original prediction is that the cost of that tax boondoggle was added to the previous year's deficit.

When will the government come clean with the Canadian public and make real, and I mean real, cuts to the deficit rather than use smoke and mirrors to make us think that progress is being made?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to answer the question because we have made real cuts. We made real cuts in our budget of February. We took $5 of spending cuts for every dollar in taxes. They were real cuts and we will meet our deficit target.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should debate real cuts. The government did not stop there. It changed the 1993 accounts to make the 1994 accounts look good. The government reduced the 1993 deficit by $569 million. It reduced the 1995 projected deficit by $200 million due to accounting changes, and there is not one penny of savings to the Canadian taxpayer.

What is the reduction in the 1994 deficit that will be dumped on the Canadian taxpayer's lap in coming years by accounting changes that are supposed to be deficit reductions?

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it rather interesting the Reform Party again and again quotes Auditor General's reports. Again and again it brings these things up and calls them mere accounting changes. These are accounting changes ordered by the Auditor General.

• (1445)

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jean–Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

While visiting the riding of Saint–Jean, the Quebec Premier announced that Ottawa and Quebec were back to square one regarding the Collège militaire de Saint–Jean, since the agreement in principle between Ottawa and the previous government had not been followed by the operating agreement which was supposed to be signed no later than August 31, 1994.

Is the minister going to confirm that the operating agreement, which was supposed to be concluded no later than August 31, has in fact never been signed and that he must start negotiating with the new Quebec government all over again?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we reached an agreement with the Quebec government. It is dated July 19. It is signed by Mr. Chagnon, the then education minister, by myself and by Daniel Johnson.

This general agreement is still in force. This agreement benefits people in the area by keeping the Collège de Saint–Jean open with a military presence and students coming from the Quebec education system. It would be a great pity if the Quebec government were to indicate now that it does not want to abide by the terms of the general agreement, but I do hope that it will not do so.

Some matters were still to be settled, such as the list of equipment the federal government was to hand over to the provincial government. Obviously, these are still open to discussion. But as far as the agreement is concerned, it is in place and it benefits the area.

Mr. Jean–Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, if I understand correctly, there are still a few contentious issues left. The Bloc would like to make a suggestion. Given the fact that it is increasingly obvious that Kingston College will not be able to accommodate all student officers, is the government going to finally cancel its illogical decision to close the Collège militaire de Saint–Jean?

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

[*English*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as reported in the media, a previous Solicitor General authorized Grant Bristow to attend neo–Nazi rallies and meetings in Germany. However, CSIS and the previous administration did not believe it was necessary to inform the German government of Bristow's attendance.

Has the Solicitor General been provided with an explanation of why the Germans were not informed, and has he accepted this explanation?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter, as the hon. member says, that relates to the previous government.

I have sought assurances that the appropriate directives will be followed if any similar occasion arose. In any event, I am also informed that this is a matter which will be commented on by the Security Intelligence Review Committee in the report it is preparing.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am a little concerned that all of this is all inclusive in the SIRC report. They may not get that report out before the end of the year.

However, I am pleased that the minister has assured us that this sort of thing will not happen again. I ask if he has given the Germans an indication of Grant Bristow's involvement and a report of the activities.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, neither myself nor CSIS has confirmed that Grant Bristow is an individual who is involved in these matters. The matters in question, as reported last night, relate to events that happened several years ago.

If I am contacted by the German authorities I will be happy to give them assurances that will be appropriate in the circumstances.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment.

In 1987 the Brundtland commission concluded that the wilderness areas in the world today must at least triple if we are to protect plant and animal species and preserve biodiversity on this planet. What action is Canada taking to increase our protected wilderness areas and what role is Canada playing in the global protection of wilderness areas?

• (1450)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question and point out that the latest report of Statistics Canada said that 9 per cent of Canada's land was set aside as wilderness. It is short of our goal but certainly moving in the right direction.

We intend in the next few weeks to enact the Canadian biodiversity strategy. We will use this strategy, along with our strategy on expanding wilderness areas, to make sure that Canada is among the first signatories not only to the biodiversity strategy but also among the countries that actually put the strategy in place, working together with the provinces as we will do at the CCME meeting in November.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COAST GUARD COLLEGE IN SYDNEY

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport which he did not know about in advance.

Students at the Coast Guard College in Sydney are automatically members of the federal public service and have many benefits including room and board, tuition, textbooks and an allowance of $200 a month. This college competes directly with other educational institutions, including the marine institute in Rimouski.

How can the minister justify spending nearly $10 million a year to maintain the college in Sydney, when the marine institute in Rimouski and other institutions in other provinces offer the same services? Is this not an example of needless and costly duplication?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make a point of looking into the situation to which the hon. member refers, but I am sure, given the long history of the Coast Guard College in Sydney and the institute in Rimouski, that offering such services to students in both institutions is nothing new. Probably it was done that way when the Leader of the Opposition was in the government.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, how can the government justify maintaining a college like the one in Sydney, when it used cost efficiency as the reason for closing the military college in Saint–Jean, the only French language college of its kind in Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the approach that the hon. member is taking in linking the activities of the coast guard facilities at Sydney with a facility in Quebec and other facilities across the country is

typical of the kind of approach that the Bloc Quebecois has taken in the House.

We are trying to give the best possible service we can to people that need them. One thing for sure is that what is being done today is very similar to what was being done when the duplicitous leader of the Bloc Quebecois was a member of government.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. minister perhaps to withdraw the word "duplicitous". It is a little bit strong in the circumstances.

Mr. Young: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw that word and replace it with one that perhaps the Leader of the Opposition understands: double talking.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

* * *

WEST COAST FISHERY

Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of oceans.

In the fall of 1992 the Ministry of Justice dropped 213 charges against poachers on the west coast, one of whom was caught with 30,000 sockeye salmon. When the minister's Liberal friends examined the aboriginal fishing strategy at his request last spring, they conveniently forgot to mention this embarrassment to a favourite program not only of this government but also of the Mulroney government.

Why should we expect a different standard from the current catch of DFO insiders appointed to examine this minister's handling of the 1994 salmon disaster on the west coast?

• (1455)

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. If he were serious about seeing constructive improvement in the management of the salmon resource in British Columbia, rather than getting up and asking questions and impugning the reputation of somebody like the Hon. John Fraser, former Speaker of the House of Commons, who chairs the panel that he has called the panel of Liberal insiders, he might do what the president of the Fisheries Council of British Columbia and what the president of the Union of Fishermen of British Columbia did at lunch time today. They sat and had a constructive meeting with me to get something positive done, not just to throw out allegations.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the former Speaker of the House is hardly independent. He is now an appointee of the government as ambassador for the environment.

The 35,000 member B.C. Wildlife Federation and the 12,000 member B.C. Fishermen's Survival Coalition have joined me in calling for an independent judicial inquiry.

When will the minister acknowledge the growing support for this and act?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is questions like these that test the so–called commitment of the leader of the Reform Party to give due recognition to the honour and integrity of people who have served long and well in the public good of the country. That kind of attack on the former Speaker of the House of Commons is unwarranted and I shall look to see Mr. Manning repudiate it right away.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Yesterday, the minister made light of an unacceptable, insidious and inflammatory statement made by an employee of the Canadian embassy in Japan, namely the academic relations officer. This employee accused Hydro–Quebec, on the basis of an ad that this provincial Crown Corporation had nothing to do with, of fuelling racial tensions between Quebecers and the Mohawks.

Does the minister not realize that, by refusing to call this employee to order, he is in fact condoning a glaring breach of ethics and lack of judgment?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after this question was put to me in this House yesterday, I asked an official of my department to make an inquiry. Naturally, as the alleged incident took place in Japan, I have not received an answer yet, but as soon as I have, I will gladly follow up on the hon. member's question.

* * *

[*English*]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

During his speech on the proposed amendments to Bill C–22 the minister stated that the Pearson consortium was seeking $445 million in damages through the courts. In fact that is his answer to virtually every question we ask.

However court documents clearly indicate no amount has been claimed, only the right to have damages settled by an arbitration tribunal in accordance with the provisions of the airport contract.

Can the minister tell the House why he is continually misstating the facts? Is it because he is trying to scare the public into

supporting an immoral, illegal and unconstitutional cover–up of Liberal election strategy gone bad?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did not get the true face of Reform last week but we are getting it today.

In the documents presented to the court the claim is for some $172 million but there are third party claims as well. What I said to the hon. member, and what I say to the people of Canada, is that the total amount of claims that have been submitted to Mr. Wright, who represents the Government of Canada in this matter is $445 million that the deficit cutting Reform Party is prepared to put at risk just to satisfy its little political games.

* * *

• (1500)

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Persons responsible for criminal atrocities may attempt to gain entry to Canada following an exodus of military police and paramilitary personnel from Haiti. In particular, the attachés and the tontons macoutes have been implicated in human rights violations and murders against the Haitian people.

What is the government doing to ensure that these human rights abusers are prevented from gaining entry into Canada?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his very sensitive question and say two things.

First, those individuals who commit acts against humanity are inadmissible under the Immigration Act. This includes individuals who have been involved with de facto regimes in Haiti since the coups of September 1991.

Second, individuals wanting to visit Canada from Haiti or to make application as landed immigrants need to have security checks. In that regard a list is being compiled of all persons who have been close to all de facto regimes, including individuals who may have perpetrated acts against humanity, so that our officials and our offices may be advised that such individuals are inadmissible.

We are taking every possible precaution to protect society against those who have contributed to acts against humanity.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Madam Speaker, before question period I opposed the bill. After question period, realizing we went another $8 million into debt, I oppose it even more. Now it is $8.5 million and climbing.

The bill proposes to allow the minister to provide financial assistance in the form of grants, contributions and endowments to any person. If that is not an invitation for every special interest group to bend the ear of the minister and grab tax dollars, I do not know what is.

The problem with that is quite simply that we have no tax dollars to spare. We are spending 39 cents of every tax dollar to fund the interest on our debt, and the government wants to spend some of the remaining 61 cents to satisfy special interests. It sounds like a red book Liberal idea to me.

The bill proposes to allow the minister to establish a Canadian council composed of seven to twelve part time members, including a chairperson, one or two vice–chairs and not more than nine other members to be appointed and hold office during the pleasure of the governor in council.

If that is not an ideal position for hacks, special interests and friends of the government to feed at the tax trough, I do not know what is. At a time when the government will not reduce our deficit spending or debt, the government wants to spend more tax dollars on cronies. The patronage continues.

• (1505)

The bill proposes that the head office location of the Canadian council be set by the minister. Are there any bets the chosen location has no relation to the bill but has significant political meaning to the government?

The bill offers the government further excuses to give its political cronies, hacks and high donation buddies ample funds from the public trough and easily allows any special interest group that can successfully lobby the government its turn at the trough.

The bill does not take into consideration the fiscal and financial state of the treasury. The manner in which this tax and spend government will tax Canadians to spend their hard earned

dollars on political favours and to further increase the feeding frenzy of political hacks and cronies for which the government is famous will know no bounds if the bill is passed into legislation.

At a time when the government readily admits essential services desired by Canadians will be reduced, how can it justify further expenditures of tax dollars on the funding of hacks, special interest groups and friends of the minister?

Canadians must now ask whether they support the continuing waste of tax dollars being presented in the bill. I know what grassroot Canadians will say. It would be a resounding no. It is too bad grassroot Canadians could not get constituent representation with members of the government, because the bill would never be tabled for consideration if they would bother finding out. The government prides itself on making the tough decisions without having to ask its constituents for their input. The government has already said it knows what is best for Canada.

With bills like this one Canadians know the government only knows what is best for its friends who will feed at the trough well established by this kind of bill.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the bill describes the central role that the Department of Canadian Heritage will be called to play in the life of Canada and Canadians.

The legislation creates a department which will have responsibilities in the areas of national parks, historic sites, cultural development, amateur sports, multiculturalism and official languages. All those areas have clear links to our identity as Canadians.

I will speak today specifically about the official languages responsibilities of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the English and French languages and the people who speak them that have shaped Canada and helped define its identity. Surely Canada's linguistic duality has its origins in the very nature of the country.

The official languages policies put forward by the Government of Canada since the 1970s are the reflection of a generous and creative vision of Canada. It is a Canada where English and French speaking citizens can feel at home wherever they choose to live. It is a vision of Canada where vital English speaking and French speaking minority language communities can contribute to the economic, social, cultural and scientific life of the country.

In order to translate this vision into reality, federal institutions have become bilingual. It is the institutions that have become bilingual. The government co–operates with the provinces to ensure that our linguistic duality is reflected in the education system and other services in the areas of justice and health.

The government has recognized that it has a role in enhancing the vitality and development of official language communities from coast to coast to coast, both by supporting the development of their institutions and by supporting their efforts to have their rights respected. It has also worked to promote the recognition and the use of two official languages with a wide range of organizations within Canadian society.

The official languages programs of the Department of Canadian Heritage are designed to provide opportunities for Canadians to appreciate and profit from our rich linguistic heritage and to communicate with and participate in federal institutions.

• (1510)

The Government of Canada believes that the great majority of Canadians share these goals. We all know that the Canada of tomorrow is being built in the classrooms of today. Few would doubt the importance of education to any community and of support for minority language education. The federal government works toward the full participation of both language groups in all aspects of Canadian society.

[*Translation*]

These programs do much more than support the vital contribution of official language minority communities. They allow them to contribute to our country's economic growth. For example, recent progress in education for francophone minorities has been a big help in reducing the illiteracy and school drop–out rates, thus raising the post–secondary attendance rate.

The 1991 census revealed that the number of francophones outside Quebec went up slightly in absolute numbers. Nearly 1 million French speaking Canadians, or about 14 per cent of Canadian francophones, live outside Quebec. They are found in all regions of the country and account for about a third of the population of New Brunswick. The largest community in terms of numbers is in Ontario, where almost 1 million francophones live.

Even in my own province of Manitoba, there is a significant number of francophones and a vibrant community. Minority language education is a good indicator of these communities' viability. There are some 660 French language primary and secondary public schools outside Quebec. By ratifying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, the federal and provincial governments made commitments to official language communities.

Section 23 of the Charter gives minorities the right to be educated in their own language and to manage their own schools, as just happened in Manitoba. In the Mahé decision, the Supreme Court said that this section is "the cornerstone of Canada's commitment to bilingualism and biculturalism be-

cause of the essential role of education in maintaining and developing linguistic and cultural vitality".

By allowing parents to fully participate in the operations of their school boards and ensuring that together they can turn their schools into truly francophone living environments, we also discourage dropping out and give a head start to several generations of our very young children. That is why the federal government must continue to help the provinces and territories fulfil their constitutional obligations to their official language minorities.

As with any government policy, this policy, its objectives and its implementation may be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Even here in the House of Commons, we hear comments that reflect a misunderstanding of the objectives of the federal policy on official languages. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify certain facts about supposedly imposed bilingualism.

The 1969 Official Languages Act stated that French and English had equal status in all Canadian parliamentary and government institutions. It was revised later to take into account the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

As a result of this policy everyone has the right to use English and French in Parliament and Parliament must enact its laws in English and in French. Everyone has the right to appear and proceed in the official language of choice before any federal court and any criminal court. The public has the right to communicate with and receive services from the institutions of Parliament and the federal government in either of the two official languages.

English speaking and French speaking Canadians have equal opportunities for employment and advancement in federal institutions. The composition of federal institutions must reflect the presence of the two official languages communities in Canada.

• (1515)

The federal government is bilingual so that the citizens do not have to be. Every Canadian has the right to remain unilingual. Universal bilingualism has never ever been the goal of the policy. The B and B commission stated:

> A bilingual country is a country where the principal public institutions must provide services in two languages to citizens, the vast majority of whom may very well be unilingual.

The key concept in all of this is that it is the choice of individual Canadians. So much for the supposed enforced bilingualism.

This policy is one that not only reflects what Canada was, what Canada is and what Canada can be. It is an open policy, a policy that reaches out and encourages people to participate in the official language of their choice. In doing so it does not exclude other groups from participating fully in Canadian life. That is what sets it apart.

[*Translation*]

I could speak for a long time but I understand that I am coming to the end of my speech. It is unfortunate because I had so much to say. However, I would like to close simply by asking all members of the House of Commons to look with their eyes, their minds and their hearts open at this policy encouraging all Canadians to get involved.

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, B.Q.): Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to make a comment on Bill C–53.

With the establishment of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the government only accentuates existing differences. Once again, the federal government ignores the cultural distinctiveness of Quebec by attempting to promote a hypothetical Canadian identity. The minister's mandate is at odds with Quebec's fundamental interests. The Liberal government openly denies the distinct and specific character of Quebec. Moreover, it seeks to reinforce even more the centralizing power of the federal government, at the expense of provincial jurisdiction.

Ottawa will make decisions affecting Quebecers' culture, based on its own priorities. One can imagine what bright future awaits our province. Already, the allocation of smaller budgets is an unfair treatment. Indeed, the discrepancy in the budgets for Radio–Canada and CBC is a blatant example of federal bilingualism. The budget of the English network is more than double that of the French one, this—and make no mistake about that—for an equivalent number of viewers. We are not talking about population but about the number of people who watch television.

For the same public interest program, the English network spends $58,000, compared to $34,000 for the French one, in spite of the fact that the number of viewers is the same. This discrepancy is a blatant example of so–called federal bilingualism. When the Liberal government says white it means black. The Liberals talk about bilingualism but they do not provide the same means to French–speaking and English speaking groups. I could go on and on.

• (1520)

Considering that the cultural future of a nation is based on its language, we can see that the efforts to promote a Canadian identity will ignore Quebec's own cultural identity.

But there is more. This bill does nothing to correct the government's inconsistency regarding the sharing of departmental responsibilities. On the contrary, it accentuates the existing discrepancies. Why is that? Is it to slow down the process? Is it to increase costs? Maybe. It becomes difficult to understand the inconsistencies of the Liberal government. Are

the Liberals creating an administrative monster over which the minister will have no control?

This inconsistency on the part of the Liberal government was also demonstrated with the information highway. Responsibility for policy lies with the Department of Industry, while the Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for content—in other words, culture.

Both departments share similar responsibilities but differ in their approach to procedures and content. Actually, one is concerned with the framework, while the other concentrates on content. The future seems pretty clear–cut. The Minister of Industry will approach culture in a way that promotes the interests of large corporations and users, at the expense of the creators. Since the Minister of Industry will be responsible for programs and policies, this does not leave much room to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who is to reinforce cultural and social values.

Hon. members must realize that our cultural future is at stake. Both departments will be on a parallel course, without any consultation between the two. To build something you need co–ordination.

The House will recall the lack of consultation when the Advisory council on the Information Highway was established. When appointing the committee, the Minister of Industry failed to include members from the cultural community. The Bloc believes, and we are not alone in this, that culture lies at the very heart of the information highway, and the Bloc Quebecois also believes that jurisdiction over culture and communications is a provincial matter.

Today, Ottawa makes decisions unilaterally. Quebec has been excluded from major decisions, where Canadian cultural interests are crowding out Quebec's distinct identity. Apparently, good government means denying a distinct identity. This has been borne out by the Liberal government. In spite of repeated requests, it has failed to amend its procedures with respect to copyright and intellectual property. The government ignores the major contribution made by authors, creators, performing artists and other parties in Quebec that make this province a living force.

One wonders who, will get his views on copyright across, the Minister of Industry or the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Will it be the Minister of Industry, who prefers the straight copyright system that benefits large corporations, or will the Minister of Canadian Heritage manage to convince his colleague to opt for a copyright system with neighbouring rights. Under this system, author, creator, performing artists and producers all enjoy rights with respect to the future use to be made of their work.

For once, the Liberals will have to get their act together.

• (1525)

In this connection, it is a serious mistake to give the Minister of Industry ultimate responsibility for copyright policy. This area should be the responsibility of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who would then have a mandate to propose policies to Cabinet and to table bills accordingly.

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who often says he is powerless to act, have enough political clout this time around to persuade his colleague to avoid total disaster on such an urgent and important matter? Canadian creators have been waiting for a long time.

Last Sunday on TV, the ADISQ Gala was a good example of the work done by Quebec artists to disseminate Quebec culture throughout the province, across Canada, in the United States and Europe. There are no ifs and buts about it: this bill should be revised. In its present form, it contains too many aspects that are inconsistent or poorly defined.

Therefore, the Bloc Quebecois will support the motion moved by the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata.

[*English*]

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C–53, the bill to create the Department of Canadian Heritage.

This bill is designed to give legal status to the amalgamation of five previous organizations: the Secretary of State, the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, the Department of Fitness and Amateur Sport, the Parks Canada component of Environment Canada and the cultural broadcasting and heritage components of the Department of Communications.

This new department has functioned well over the past year and reflects the government's commitment toward more efficient and effective government. The Department of Canadian Heritage lays the foundation for the promotion of Canadian cultural heritage and identity which are important sources of social and economic enrichment.

I wish to speak at this time on what I feel to be one of the most important aspects of this legislation, the preservation of Canada's national heritage.

As Canadians we value our freedom, our clean environment, the breathtaking beauty of our natural scenery and the hard work of those men and women who helped make this country what it is today. With this in mind the proposed legislation intends to preserve Canada's rich past and to stimulate a profound concern for ensuring the survival of historic places, artefacts and structures.

Inasmuch as these areas and sites represent the very essence of our identity as Canadians, so is the concern that our historic legacy continues to be maintained and that we are motivated to protect our natural resources and commemorate our historic places.

The vast expanse of Canada's environment presents an interesting array of terrestrial and marine ecosystems: the Arctic tundra, the western mountains, the prairies, the Precambrian Shield, the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific coasts. The environment also includes places and landscapes associated with our human heritage. These historic places, which represent thousands of years of human history and encompass places of work and worship, commerce and culture, evoke all our aspirations and all our values.

For more than a century the Government of Canada has been involved in protecting Canada's outstanding national areas and in commemorating significant aspects of Canadian history. This extensive experience has enabled Canada to be recognized internationally as a world leader in the management of heritage.

Parks Canada as an integral part of the Department of Canadian Heritage is committed to establishing an extensive and comprehensive network of protected heritage areas that fully represent Canada's natural and cultural heritage.

• (1530)

Canada's national parks system began in 1885 when 26 square kilometres around mineral hot springs near Banff Station, Alberta were set aside for public use. The Rocky Mountain Park Act of 1887 defined the first parks as public park and pleasure grounds for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Canada.

In 1930 the National Parks Act dedicated the national parks to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment and made provisions for their sustained enjoyment for future generations.

In 1917 Fort Anne in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, was set aside as a historic site, followed in 1919 by the establishment of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. These two significant events set the ground for Canada's system of national historic sites.

Following the second world war the Historic Sites and Monuments Act of 1953 reflected the strong sense of national purpose that was found in Canada. The act provided statutory authority for the designation of natural historic sites as well as a legislative basis for acquiring and contributing directly to the care and preservation of these sites.

As Canadians we appreciate the beauty of the natural environment and the richness of our history. Canadians share this heritage with each other and welcome others to value, respect and learn about it. We celebrate the rich heritage through national historic sites, national parks, park preserves, heritage railway stations, historic canals, marine conservation areas, heritage rivers and federal heritage buildings as well as historical markers.

These national symbols contribute to our Canadian identity in numerous ways and it is for this reason that I eagerly await the enactment of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

With this legislation Canadians can be assured of the future preservation of Canada's illustrious past.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C–53 today. This bill establishes the Department of Canadian Heritage and amends and repeals certain other acts. This bill also makes multiculturalism and the official languages the responsibility of the new department. That is the topic of my address today.

Let me start by repeating what we have already heard from this side of the House. The Reform Party supports the rights of citizens and private groups to preserve their cultural heritage but the Reform Party wants them to do so using their own funds. The Reform Party is opposed to using taxpayers' money to fund multiculturalism.

I am opposed to Bill C–53 because it entrenches multiculturalism, bilingualism and the financing of special interest groups. I have no problem with different ethnic or linguistic groups keeping their culture; I am all for it. As the trade critic for the Reform Party I believe this kind of diversity is one of Canada's strengths in this great country.

New immigrants and second and third generation Canadians help Canada display an outward looking approach to business and trade practices. They do so by maintaining linguistic, cultural and family ties with other countries. Besides speaking English and French, Canadians speak many aboriginal languages, German, Ukrainian, Mandarin, Arabic, and Norwegian, the language of my wife's ancestors.

That is great. I have no problems with this and I have no problem with different groups maintaining organizations to preserve their language and culture. I do not think that government should get involved in the process.

In my riding of Peace River there is a strong Sons of Norway organization which has been in place for 75 years and I have some colleagues who know quite a bit about that. How did it survive before multiculturalism? It did not need federal government grants to survive. It did it on its own initiative.

My riding has a strong French population in the Falher area which has been there since about 1912. These people kept their language alive on their own before there were any federal moneys available to them and they did so by their own hard work.

My riding has a German society and a Ukrainian group. All of these organizations were doing fine before the federal government started emptying its piggy bank.

• (1535)

My riding also has a Filipino association, an East Indian cultural society and a Scottish society. I suspect that all of these groups will survive very well on their own initiative and according to their own needs when we abandon this very divisive policy we have in place.

This whole multiculturalism process, and some would say not a process but rather a mess, started just over 20 years ago with the royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism. Many witnesses appearing before the commission appeared because they wanted to protest the notion of two founding peoples and two nations. They were right.

We in the Reform Party also reject this notion. Canada is a very different country today than it was in 1867. Our new Canada would be a country of 10 equal provinces all with the same opportunities and rights, not one built on two founding peoples.

After all, a country built on two founding peoples in 1867 did not even recognize that the very first people here, the aboriginal people, certainly should have fit into that category. It was misguided from the very beginning. Before the English and French came to this country Indians and Eskimos were the first people here. We have seen several waves of immigration since.

We were all immigrants to this country at one time or another, but we do not need the federal government to promote our culture and languages. We can do it very well on our own.

At the time of the royal commission on bilingualism and biculturalism, roughly 44 per cent of the population could claim to be of British descent; 29 per cent could claim to be of French descent; another 27 came from other ethnic backgrounds, German, Italian, Ukrainian, Dutch, Polish, native Indian, Chinese, Jewish or East Indian.

People who sprang from stock other than English and French objected to the notion that these two were the most important groups in Canada. They made the point that Canada is a mosaic of people from many different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Prime Minister Trudeau announced the official multiculturalism policy in 1971. Many people felt it was meant to diffuse the concerns about official bilingualism in areas where there was absolutely no need for a second language.

Multiculturalism started with a budget of $3.5 million. The budget has since grown to $39 million. Of this almost $15 million is spent on community support; $5.5 million goes to heritage cultures; and $6.5 million goes to race relations. Many proponents of multiculturalism today point to race relations, the last item, as being a worthy area of funding. I would agree.

Racism is a problem in Canada today and there is a role for the federal government to play here. Racism is not a multicultural issue. Race relations is the domain of the human rights commissioner. It is so stated in the mandate of the Human Rights Commission.

The Canadian government should not pay people to be different. This leads to balkanization and divisiveness. Instead of dissolving racism, multicultural funding emphasizes and hardens it. Instead of diminishing separatist strategies, multicultural funding further creates and encourages people to be different.

I know it is not politically correct to state that I am against public funding for multiculturalism but a lot of people in Canada feel this way and they expect their representatives to express their views publicly. These people are not racists or bigots. They think that government has no role to play in funding special interest groups and I totally agree with them. Culture cannot be dictated or controlled by the state. Therefore, I am opposing Bill C–53 proposed here today.

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to rise today in the House to speak on Bill C–53, an act creating the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The purpose of the bill is to effect the establishment of the Department of Canadian Heritage in statute and thereby amend and repeal certain other acts.

The proclamation of the Department of Canadian Heritage Act will be the culmination of a process that began more than a year ago when the department of the day decided to proceed with a wide ranging reorganization of federal government departments. Passage of the bill will fulfil a number of technical yet nonetheless important requirements.

• (1540)

First, it allows for the appointment of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and outlines the jurisdictions within which he will exercise his powers and perform his duties and responsibilities. The bill has been drafted so as to promote the minister with the flexibility that will be needed to carry out these responsibilities both now and in the future.

The legislation will also permit the government to assure the status of the Canadian heritage employees and to formalize their transition to a new department. The entire process is consistent with the government's commitment to its employees and respects the principles of existing workforce adjustment policy.

In short, the bill will give the department the legitimate basis it requires to assume the rightful share of the responsibility for implementing the mandate given to the government by the people of Canada.

Broadly speaking, the Canadian heritage minister will work for the betterment of our country in matters relating to Canadian identity and values, cultural development, heritage and areas of natural and historical significance for the nation.

Much has been said about the diversity and complexity of the new department that Bill C–53 will start. Certainly it reflects the richness of the activities and the fact that the new department comprises programs from the former and existing departments, namely the Secretary of State, Communications Canada, Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Environment Canada and Fitness and Amateur Sport.

It is easy for some to claim that the department's program areas are disparate and ill matched but this is a superficial assessment. A closer examination will reveal that the department's principal sectors have much in common. Chiefly, they will work together in support of its primary objective which is to enhance our sense of Canadian identity and to encourage the contribution of all segments of society to the growth and vitality of Canadian culture.

Canadians know that this government is committed to fiscal responsibility in all areas of federal endeavour. They can be assured that Bill C–53 is consistent with that over–arching objective and therefore with the comprehensive review of the federal government's objectives now under way.

For those who value the bottom line, they will take comfort in the knowledge that for 1993–94 the Canadian heritage portfolio appropriations total $2.97 billion, a reduction from the previous year by some $76.1 million. In addition to these actual savings in money, there will be other longer term efficiencies realized through the regrouping of areas of responsibilities from the various departments through strengthening the linkages between program areas and through the elimination of duplication.

The government appreciates that there are some concerns about the decision to divide the responsibility for broadcasting and telecommunications between Canadian heritage and Industry Canada. There are many valid reasons for so doing. The inclusion of telecommunications in the Department of Industry's portfolio recognizes the increasing role of telecommunications as an important economic generator in the Canadian economy.

On the other hand, broadcasting is more closely related with the identity and cultural Canadian content mandate of Canadian heritage. Strong co–ordination and liaison exists between the departments to ensure that effective management of these two sectors are compatible and will work out well.

In light of responsibilities and the program areas gathered within the Department of Canadian Heritage, the government believes that the passage of Bill C–53 will have far reaching and enduring positive benefits for all Canadians. We are all confident that a detailed examination of the bill by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage will clearly show this to be the case.

• (1545)

As a society, culture is very important. We are made up of a diverse people. We have two founding nations. We have diversity with the First Nations. Culture is an expression of the Canadian identity. It connects us with our past and projects to our future. It makes for a better life and allows people to express themselves. Therefore I am glad to be here and to participate in this discussion.

It is very important that we use new ideas, innovative approaches, cost saving techniques, yet respect the rights of the workers and see that we have some mechanism to make sure they can fit within the department or be trained for something new.

I am pleased to speak on behalf of this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, B.Q.): Madam Speaker, Bill C–53 is aimed at establishing a department which would have the following duties, as stated in clause 5, and I quote:

> [—] initiate, recommend, coordinate, implement and promote national policies, projects and programs with respect to Canadian identity and values, cultural development, heritage [—]

This bill is unacceptable because it definitely infringes upon an area of responsibility that which must remain under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. It fails to recognize the distinctiveness of Quebec society and provides none of the guarantees required to protect the francophone and Acadian communities in Canada.

René Lévesque, the former Premier of Quebec, used to describe Quebec society as two nations within the same country. This means we are in fact dealing with two majorities, two complete and separate societies trying to get along within a common framework. The fact that we were made into a minority from a numerical point of view does not change a thing. Just as a civilized society will never force a smaller man to feel inferior to a larger one, civilized relations between nations demand that nations consider and treat each other as equals in law and in fact.

What matters today and for the future it that we realize every day more clearly on both sides that this answer has had its day but now a drastic revision of the bill or a completely new bill is urgently required.

The people of Quebec must preserve their collective personality and, to do so, they need unfettered powers, particularly in the areas of cultural rights and telecommunications.

This bill enables the federal government to interfere with cultural issues, because it has the power to make expenditures without the consent of the provinces. This bill fails to recognize the distinctiveness of Quebec society. Quebec is prevented from setting its own priorities, as the federal government sets the budget and makes decisions regarding the distribution of federal

assistance without taking into consideration the basic needs of Quebecers.

A similar line of reasoning culminated in the 1976 white paper by Dr. Camille Laurin—who was again reelected in the riding of Bourget—and became the Quebec policy on cultural development. During its first mandate, the Lévesque government demonstrated that Quebec could support its own cultural development. In a context of political and economic subordination, the cultural life of a people is weakened.

On October 12, in Paris, the federal Minister of Foreign Affairs said that culture will become one of the priorities of the Canadian foreign policy. The daily *Le Devoir*, in its edition of October 13, 1994, mentioned the meddling of the federal government: «Cultural relations will be, along with political and economic affairs, one of three pillars of the Canadian foreign policy, that the joint committee of the House of Commons and the Senate has been mandated to review».

• (1550)

The cultural services of the Canadian embassy in Paris will benefit greatly from this change of direction. In this case, Ottawa is making a complete turn around. We know that Conservatives had decided to sell the large building the embassy is using on the Esplanade des Invalides, in Paris. The Liberals have now decided to give the building a new lease on life. The other federal institutions currently leasing offices in Paris, like Telefilm Canada and NFB, will move out of their present accommodations and into this building.

This is only a first step. Next year, the building, probably worth $30 million, will be renovated from top to bottom. The improvements will cost approximately $2 million.

This recent example shows that the federal government is trying to dilute Quebec culture in a pan–Canadian cultural identity based on bilingualism and multiculturalism.

In the past, every Quebec government, even the Liberals, claimed exclusive power over cultural matters. Why such useless overlapping? Overlapping jurisdiction in the management of cultural programs automatically leads to confusion and dissatisfaction.

In 1992, Mrs. Liza Frulla, the Quebec Minister of Cultural Affairs in the former Liberal government, said this to the Standing Committee on Culture: "Federal programs are developed in an essentially Canadian perspective. Quebec must constantly be on guard to ensure that it gets and keeps its fair share. The same is true of federal legislation and regulations. The CRTC ruling on French song quotas in broadcasting and ongoing negotiations regarding the federal bill on the status of the artist are cases in point".

During this period of recession, Canadian taxpayers must pay tremendous amounts of money to maintain this overlapping jurisdiction over cultural matters. The Bloc Quebecois is committed to honouring Quebec's cultural priorities.

First, the Bloc Quebecois will make sure that federal actions are consistent with the main orientations of Quebec culture. Second, the Bloc Quebecois will also demand that Quebec receive its fair share of federal spending on the major cultural institutions, such as the museums, the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Third, the Bloc Quebecois will also make sure that cuts at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation do not have a negative impact on the French network and, in particular, on Quebec artists. Fourth, the Bloc Quebecois will also ensure that the Quebec cultural milieu receives its fair share of grants from federally subsidized organizations, such as the Canada Council and Telefilm Canada, as well as program resource envelopes.

The arts, culture, heritage and communications must be the four cornerstones of Quebec's cultural policy. The ultimate goal of this policy must be to ensure the development of Quebec's cultural and social identity through the introduction of conditions conducive to artistic creation. Our goal must be the distribution of creators' works, access by individuals to culture, the growth of cultural industries, the preservation of our heritage, and finally the development of communications.

On March 14, 1994, *La Presse* reported that a recent Gallup poll asking Canadians their opinion of bilingualism found that a small majority of them, 54 per cent, thought that official bilingualism had been a failure in Canada.

I will conclude with René Lévesque's thoughts on what it means to be a Quebecer. In his view it means, above all else, and indeed on occasion to the exclusion of all else, that we have an attachment to this particular corner of the world, the only one where we can be fully ourselves, and that we know in our hearts that Quebec is truly the only place we can call home.

Being ourselves, according to the former premier of Quebec, consists essentially in maintaining and developing a personality that has lasted for three and a half centuries.

• (1555)

We cannot enforce this vital difference. That has not been possible for some time now.

For all these reasons, I support the motion by my hon. colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata proposing the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "Bill C–53, An Act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other Acts, be not now read a second time [—]"

[*English*]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to take part in the debate on the bill to create the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The proposed legislation is a technical measure that officially recognizes a departmental structure that combines official languages, Canadian studies, native programs and state ceremonials from the former Department of Secretary of State of Canada. It combines arts, heritage, cultural and broadcasting responsibilities from the Department of Communications. It brings in multiculturalism programs from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, amateur sports from the Department of Health and Welfare Canada and Parks Canada from the Department of the Environment.

At this juncture in our nation's history, with forces that are trying to dismantle this entity we call Canada, and with technology changing the borders of the world, combined with the increasing diversity of our population at the same time that dramatic changes are occurring within mature economies throughout the world, I feel it more important than ever to have a department such as Canadian heritage.

The department, although only a year old, has already begun to face up to the dramatic changes that Canadians are facing. The Secretary of State for Multiculturalism has already recognized the daunting task of nation building in a culturally diverse nation, reconciling that cultural diversity with national identity and the overwhelming need to maintain national unity.

Another important aspect of the new department is development of both cultural and heritage property. The Minister of Canadian Heritage recognizes the importance of new technologies and the burgeoning information highway. The minister also understands that this information explosion will have important ramifications for Canadian artists.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is of the utmost significance to Canadians. Its programs are inextricably linked to our everyday lives and their relevance, be it cultural or economic, is felt by each and every one of us.

I believe that the new department embodies the democratic principles that are inherently Canadian. Canada is a nation forged on the principles of respect for and use of its two major languages, of respect for cultural diversity, of respect for the traditions and contributions of its aboriginal citizens and the fundamental underlying respect for basic human rights and values.

Another major sector of the department which should not be forgotten is Parks Canada. Parks Canada commemorates, protects and presents, both directly and indirectly, places which are significant examples of Canada's cultural and natural heritage in ways that encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment.

The economic activity in tourism generated by the department's operations are of significance to many local economies throughout the nation. Our parks service has been at the forefront of efforts for innovative partnership arrangements with private and not for profit enterprises in carrying out its mandated responsibilities.

In closing, the Department of Canadian Heritage encompasses elements that set us apart from the rest of the world with wide ranging concepts that are truly Canadian: cultural development, official languages, multiculturalism, and human rights.

With these principles in mind, I eagerly anticipate the enactment of this legislation.

• (1600)

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts.

On October 18, 1994, as we are about to celebrate or lament the first anniversary of the election, because that was when the Liberal government came to power, we have to take a look and say: "What is this Liberal government trying to do?" Here we are 12 months after the election, the first time that the Liberals have been in power after nine years. We would have thought that they were bursting at the seams with new ideas, new policies and new philosophies to get this country back on track, bring the deficit under control, create jobs in this country and we find that we have another of a long list of reorganizations that was started by the previous Prime Minister who led a party that is no longer even represented in this House. We can only assume how well the Canadian people endorsed the idea.

Let me just quote Bill C–46, reorganization of the Department of Industry, Science and Technology to change its name to the Department of Industry; Bill C–47, reorganization of the Department of External Affairs into the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Bill C–48, reorganization of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to the Department of Forestry and Department of Natural Resources; Bill C–49, reorganization of the Department of Agriculture into the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food; Bill C–52, reorganization of the Department of Public Works into the Department of Public Works and Government Services; and now we have Bill C–53; a long list but not I am afraid an impressive list from a government that in its first year we would have thought would bring forward some serious policy.

As I mentioned these are strictly holdovers from the previous government. I would like to ask the government of the day, the Prime Minister of the day and all these ministers of the day when we are really going to get down to the business of running this country. The next election is going to be looming long before the 1997 date that we had anticipated if they keep up this speed.

The hon. Minister of Finance as we speak is talking about his new paper, creating a healthy fiscal climate and economic and fiscal update. Yet all the other ministers can talk about is reorganization and renaming their departments.

We really do want to attack this gross budget deficit that we have and the horrendous debt that we have accrued. I read in the transitional part of the bill, clause 9(1), that nothing in this act shall be construed as affecting the status of an employee who immediately before the coming into force of this subsection occupied in essence any other position in all these other departments that are being renamed.

We have gone through all this for nothing, just simply nothing. There is no effort, attempt, or serious recognition by these departments. If they are going to reorganize surely this would be the time when they would seriously review everything that is being done by their departments.

The Minister of Human Resources Development tabled a document a couple of weeks ago telling us how he was going to review all the programs by the department under his control. What did we end up with? It was hardly even rated a discussion paper as Canadians still wait for the government to produce serious policy on how it is going to handle the reorganization of the major programs that we give to Canadians. As we speak, as I mentioned, the Minister of Finance has given us another fluffy warm statement that contains nothing, just nothing, about what he is going to do to accomplish his timid objective of bringing the debt down to $25 billion by 1996–1997. I have to admit I am at a loss that this government cannot do more.

• (1605)

The previous speaker talked about the great and wonderful things this department is doing. One of them of course is (a) under clause 2, the promotion of a greater understanding of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and related values. The Minister of Justice under his Bill C–41 wants to bring hate crimes or sections of our community that many people find abhorrent. We are not going to protect them with additional rights because the Minister of Justice wants to bring in these.

I am questioning why the Minister of Canadian Heritage is also responsible for doing the same thing. How many civil servants are thinking and working and spending our taxpayers' dollars trying to bring forth policies that Canadian taxpayers do not want?

Next is (b), multiculturalism. We in the Reform Party say that a Canadian is a Canadian and is equal from coast to coast. With this policy of multiculturalism the government feeds and channels large amounts of money to individual groups in our society to keep us separate and apart, yet at the same time hoping we will all come together. I find this mind boggling. If we can offer any advice to this government then surely it would be to abolish this whole idea of multiculturalism and start talking about Canadians being equal from coast to coast. Everybody is the same.

It goes on to the arts including the cultural aspects. These are nothing new and surely we could review and save many millions of dollars.

The public accounts were tabled this morning. I have not had time to go through them. I will. I have not had the time. I have had only had a few hours and there is a large amount of money, $165 billion, spent by this government last year. We will be going through that. We will find there are many instances where this government is wasting taxpayers' money ad infinitum. We can quite easily tell the Minister of Finance where he could cut.

I remember several months ago in this House we raised the point that the Department of Heritage gave a $10 million grant—I beg your pardon, it was a smaller grant—to a conference in Vancouver that was racist. Because of the fact that we raised the issue the minister of heritage withdrew the grant.

We are paying these ministers to do the job and I do not think they are doing the job. They bring no policy. They bring no fresh ideas. Therefore I find that this whole idea of reorganization to accomplish nothing is totally abhorrent and a waste of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this debate today on Bill C–53 to create the Department of Canadian Heritage.

[*Translation*]

I must say that I certainly do not agree with what I have heard the Bloc Quebecois members say earlier today. It may come as no surprise to you, but allegations were made to the effect that, by amalgamating three or four departments into a single one, the federal government was attacking provincial powers. That is nonsense! As if it made a difference to have one minister accountable for three or four departments instead of one Secretary of State and different ministers, in terms of attacking these powers. That is absurd! And the people of Canada, particularly those living in Quebec who have heard these remarks made by Bloc Quebecois members, must know the truth. They must be told that what these members said is not true. I have to use parliamentary language even if I disagree with my colleagues opposite.

• (1610)

[*English*]

I have also heard the Reform Party say that it is wrong to group those ministries together in an effort to save taxpayers' dollars. I really do not understand the logic of the Reform Party on this one. Of course that is true of most things Reformers.

The Prime Minister reduced the size of cabinet. I remember there were as many as 44 ministers in the last cabinet. There were so many of them that the area outside the west door looked like a used car lot with all the limousines there. Our Prime Minister cleaned that up. When he was sworn into office he named 22 ministers. He cut it down to size. When you cut it down to size you have to unite the departments under one minister in an effort to save money. That is what the Prime Minister did.

The people in the Reform Party pretend to be frugal. I know that sometimes when you pretend to be frugal there are allowances that make it otherwise. Shall I say that sometimes the suit is a little different from the reality in that particular party.

The fact still remains that the Prime Minister produced very positive initiatives.

[*Translation*]

We have cut spending. We have cancelled projects, although we have not yet been able to get rid of the aircraft bought by Mr. Mulroney, the former Prime Minister. We have implemented the Gagliano plan to cut costs here in the House of Commons. And the list goes on. Just today, as we speak, the Minister of Finance is indicating ways by which further savings could be made.

[*English*]

There are the people across the way who say that this is an attack on provincial autonomy or some such thing. That is the usual diatribe as indicated very eloquently by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister in her usual forthrightness and eloquence. She indicates of course that this is complete and utter nonsense. How correct she is. We do need a Department of Canadian Heritage.

I want to tell members something. Last week I had a meeting in my riding with a group of constituents in an effort to preserve what is known as the Sir John Johnson manor home. Sir John Johnson is one of the pioneers of this country. His body is buried in the eastern townships of Quebec. He was the leader of the United Empire Loyalists who came to Upper Canada from the Mohawk Valley of New York in 1784. He brought with him the community known as the United Empire Loyalist refugees. Remember the word refugees. That is what they were known as then.

Today the Department of Heritage owns that building, the building of one of the founders of this country. You certainly could call Sir John Johnson the founder of Ontario without contradiction. After all he established a colony there in 1784. He personally owned lands in that area. The John Johnson manor home belongs to the Department of Canadian Heritage through what used to be known as Environment Canada Parks Service. That has been amalgamated into that department.

We had a meeting the other day with officials of that department, recognizing the budgetary constraints, to see what we could do to bring the community together with Heritage Canada to save that structure. What do we get from people in the people across the way? People in the Reform Party say that a national treasure like that should presumably be disposed of and the people in the Bloc Quebecois say there is no role at all for the federal government to preserve national heritage and significant sites.

I see them nodding in approval as if there were no such things as founders of Canada. They have a lot to learn. I suggest they spend some time in my constituency, or in their own, speaking to constituents who know better, who know the truth. They know that the national historic sites belong to all of us as Canadians. I feel there is a role for the Government of Canada in this kind of thing.

• (1615)

At any rate, the people of Canada through their government already own these assets.

[*Translation*]

And the same holds true for Fort Frontenac and other structures elsewhere in Ontario and Canada, monuments and historical sites that belong to the people of this country through the Department of Canadian Heritage.

I cannot understand and never will understand this attitude of the hon. members opposite, the Reform Party extremists who advocate getting rid of everything because the people of Canada are not entitled to their heritage, their buildings, their monuments, as well as those from the Bloc Quebecois who claim that Canada no longer exists as we speak.

No, I disagree with both positions held across the way. I for one am very attached to the history and heritage of our country. As the member of Parliament for Glengarry, this high place of Canadian history, I must at least be an amateur historian. That is part of the heritage of my riding.

[*English*]

It is the heritage of the great people of that area. I see Canadians of Scottish origin who came to Glengarry, and the mix they have had with the French Canadians who came shortly afterwards, and also the Irish who came in the 1840s and 1850s. Those three groups together created the area which I now have the honour and privilege to represent.

The parliamentary secretary just said very eloquently: "That is what Canada is all about". She is right.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, B.Q.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this bill to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

On reading the bill, I felt that I sensed Pierre Elliott Trudeau's ghost reading over my shoulder. This bill contains everything that has characterized Canada's federal system, especially since the Trudeau years. First of all, Quebec's identity is diluted. At the same time, an effort is made to create a culture and a heritage that exist nowhere but in the minds of those who created this artificial federal country, Canada.

The bill says that the Department of Canadian Heritage was created to instill in Canadians a deep feeling of identity and belonging based on bilingualism and multiculturalism. Well, there is quite a long way to go.

Here are a few statistics on bilingualism, because you might have lovely images, high-sounding speeches, but there is nothing like reality to help you understand. Statistics Canada's figures, which should not be challenged by the government or other interested parties, show the assimilation rate of francophones in Newfoundland was 24.7 per cent in 1986 and 55.3 per cent in 1991. What a success! In Prince Edward Island, it was 42.6 per cent in 1986 and 47.6 per cent in 1991, an increase of 5 per cent. These are signs that bilingualism, at least the model that has been proposed, has not worked very well.

I shall give another example. In Nova Scotia, the assimilation rate was 31.8 per cent in 1986 and 41.1 per cent in 1991, an increase of 9.3 per cent. At that rate, in the time it takes to create the Department of Canadian Heritage, there will be no French-speaking minority left in the rest of Canada.

The second element is multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, which is as difficult to pronounce as it is to understand, is a product of the thinking of the Trudeau years.

• (1620)

To support this statement, I will quote Claude Corbeau, the rector at the University of Quebec in Montreal, who does not boast about being a Quebec separatist. In his policy report, he said that "multiculturalism may marginalize Quebec's identity". This is a rector at a Quebec university who popularized a certain image of Quebec's culture and reality.

His reasoning is not so hard to understand. Let us look at the areas that will come under the purview of Canadian Heritage. This is duplication country. On that there can be no compromise from Quebec. These are not minor sectors; they are of vital importance to Quebec.

The arts, heritage, culture, broadcasting are all in there. These sectors are not purely economic. It is a matter of survival. In broadcasting, for example, Quebec even created Radio-Québec, not yesterday but in the 1940s under Duplessis. Since then, we had to fight for every inch, while the Supreme Court, which always leans on the same side, kept telling us that we had no control over this important cultural element.

Culture gives us another good example of duplication, as we have two stakeholders in cultural matters in one country. We heard earlier the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell tell us about the Canadian people and therein lies the problem. As long as we do not recognize that the Canadian Confederation was founded by at least two peoples and by the Natives who were here before us, as long as we do not recognize the equal value and contribution of these founding peoples, we are developing what I would call an utopia, the utopia of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Try to find another country in the world where you have to qualify the word "heritage" by adding "Canadian".

Have you heard about the department of Norwegian or Swedish heritage? A simple, normal, natural country would not feel the need to add anything to "department of heritage" as it should be understood that it is that country's heritage. The problem is that, in Canada, people never realized that there are in fact two countries.

There is another provision explaining the department's role. It says that the department is to develop and offer programs which support a strong sense of identity among Canadians. But you cannot force a sense of identity on people. Let me give you a few examples which show why Quebec cannot really identify with the rest of the country.

During the war, when the referendum on conscription was held, 96 per cent of voters in my riding of Kamouraska opposed that measure. That response pretty well reflected the overall results for French-speaking people in Quebec. In spite of that strong opposition, the federal government went ahead and imposed conscription. You will have to talk about Canadian heritage for a long time and show pictures of those who died overseas before you can convince us, considering that we did not even want to go to war. This is not to say that we overlook the contribution made by veterans, but the fact is that this episode deeply affected people.

There is another episode which also deeply affected people. In this case, it is the Liberals and in particular the current Prime Minister who are responsible. I am referring to the 1982 unilateral patriation of the Constitution.

The government can say what it wants about a department established to promote a strong sense of identity among Canadians, it can try to force it upon us, but this will not work. As long as we are not accepted for who we are and as long as our

signature does not appear on the Constitution, the government cannot expect us to promote Canadian heritage.

Let me give you one last example which is of particular interest to me. In the seventies, the community of Forillon was expropriated to create a federal park. Today, that park is a good tourist attraction for the region, but I can tell you that back in the seventies, those who were forced to move did not develop a strong sense of Canadian identity, nor would they have seen the need to establish a department with such a mandate.

There are plenty of sectors which relate to the French reality in Quebec and in North America.

• (1625)

We cannot be forced to accept that as a model for all of Canada. Quebec has its own identity, which must be recognized by Quebekers, by Canadians and by our society as a whole because of our decent contribution to it.

To conclude, we are against the establishment of a Canadian Heritage Department because this would be a constant negation of the exclusive jurisdiction needed by Quebec to ensure its own cultural, economic and social development. In order for Quebec to contribute to the richness of North American life, its needs must be met. As long as the Canadian government does not recognize and acknowledge this reality, francophones in North America will continue to insist on ensuring their survival.

Today, the proposed Canadian Heritage Department is yet another proof for Quebecers that the only way to ensure their development is to have their own country.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this bill to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

This is a technical piece of legislation that formalizes the structure and the sharing of departmental responsibilities implemented when our government took over.

However, as several of the previous speakers pointed out, this bill refers to fundamental areas over which, within the federal government, the minister will have jurisdiction. These areas include, for example, culture, national identity, official languages, national parks, multiculturalism, etc. During the few minutes I have, I want to address one of these areas, the issue of culture.

Some of our colleagues opposite are questioning the legitimacy of the role played by the Canadian government where our culture and our cultural development are concerned. By arguing that the federal role is not legitimate, they are questioning the bill's rationale. Unlike them, I believe that this role is crucial and has been tremendously beneficial to our country and all the regions, especially Quebec.

Culture is not an exclusive jurisdiction; it belongs to everyone. In this sense, and despite all the constitutional exegesis put forward by the Official Opposition, the Act of 1867 does not give one level of government more jurisdiction over culture than the other.

Cultural development concerns the provinces; it concerns the federal government; it concerns all municipalities, professional groups, the creators themselves of course, as well as the cultural businesses, the volunteers and the private sector. Finally, culture is also a question of individual choice, because if each and every one of us is the product of a specified cultural environment, the creation of a work of art, just like the decision to appreciate this work of art, to read it, to listen to it, to watch it, always results, in fact, from an individual choice.

I sincerely believe that, in order to offer a vast, fair and wide array of choices, we need a large number of cultural development officers and governments which play their roles. The goal of the federal government in this area is to ensure that the Canadian artists, creators and cultural businesses can work and that Canadian citizens have access to their productions.

One of the great ironies of this debate in which the opposition forces us to engage is that some people feel that we have to apologize for having public policy objectives that are so normal—to use an adjective of which the opposition is very fond—for there is nothing in these objectives that is unacceptable or threatening to anybody, especially not to the province of Quebec.

It is also ridiculous that we should have to defend ourselves against allegations that we are ignoring the cultural distinctiveness of Quebec or of other regions in our country. Ottawa plots Quebec's cultural demise? This could have come from the *Union nationale* in the Duplessis years. By the way, Duplessis had nothing but contempt for culture.

• (1630)

The federal government, an agent of cultural standardization imposed by a ruling group against the wishes of the powerless? These sound like the cries of a people oppressed by one of those totalitarian regimes recently condemned by history. The Department of Canadian Heritage, a machine used to create an official culture? If it were true, we would all be trembling, starting with the creators of this country who do not seem to see this as a serious threat. If we look closely at this issue, how can we sum up the federal government's intervention in cultural matters over the few decades in which it has played an active role in this area?

The fact is that several generations of creators and performers from Quebec have produced and presented their work to the public through institutions created, managed or funded by the federal government. Let us just mention Radio–Canada, the Canada Council, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, the National Arts Centre or the department whose minister is

responsible for these institutions before the House, namely the Department of Canadian Heritage.

As far as I know, half a century of efforts by those institutions, of support and assistance programs for artists, publishers, museums, producers and the sound recording industry did not hinder the profound originality of artists in Quebec, on the contrary. Those efforts nurtured and developed their creativity, and their works gained exposure not only in Quebec, but also in the rest of Canada and abroad. In short, those programs and institutions have been important contributing factors in the cultural vitality of Quebec, and all Canada can be proud of that.

The works of the likes of Michel Tremblay, Jacques Godbout and Denys Arcand did not lose any of their Quebecois identity for that. It is absurd, sad and distressing that our colleagues across the way cannot understand that what is done in Quebec can also be considered Canadian.

Of course, the federal government must look after Canada–wide, interprovincial and international aspects, but that responsibility complements those of other levels of government. In reality, except in sectors where it has a clear constitutional jurisdiction, like copyright, federal action is limited to cultural products with an interprovincial or international scope like broadcasting. The federal government is also active in the promotion and sharing of cultural treasures outside provincial or national boundaries.

For art lovers, the names of Emily Carr, Alex Colville, Tom Thomson, Geneviève Cadieux and Jean–Paul Lemieux bring to mind landmark works that gained international recognition. Should we be satisfied with saying that one belongs strictly to British Columbia, the second only to Nova Scotia, the third to Ontario alone and the last two to Quebec? They are also Canadian artists.

That is why Canada created the National Gallery and supports a country–wide network of museums and museum–related institutions. That is why Canada encourages artists to attend schools of higher learning like the National Theatre School of Canada and that is why Canada supports artists who get to perform across Canada and abroad and who even reach international fame.

• (1635)

In a world–wide marketplace where artistic recognition as well as economic profitability is often decided abroad, the Canadian government has a mission to accomplish. The international free trade negotiations gave us a good example of the role played by our country and of the complementarity between this role and that of other levels of government.

When it negotiated the cultural exemption in the free trade agreements with the United States and Mexico, Canada not only assumed its responsibility but also maintained the responsibilities of the provinces towards their own artists and cultural industries.

Therefore, I would say that the Department of Canadian Heritage is a basic institution if we are to carry on with our cultural development which has given such excellent results until now and which should be sustained by the federal government and the provinces. If we do not provide ourselves with the necessary tools to carry on this mission, we are virtually abandoning a responsibility which has proven to be a most profitable one for Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The Honourable Member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve (Mr. Ménard)—Defence Industry Conversion.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my opposition to Bill C–53. I do so for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the inclusion of a royal recommendation.

This provision allows the government to spend money implementing the bill. If the bill is meant to streamline government operations, why is there a need to spend money in order to save money? How much will this cost and will it really save tax dollars? We do not have the answers to these important questions. These are vital matters for future debate.

I have chosen today to focus my remarks specifically on how the bill relates to official languages. I would like to preface my comments by clearly stating that the Reform Party in no way discourages individual bilingualism. Unfortunately the bill will legislatively entrench something we do not believe in. I am speaking of the holus–bolus financing of any group which claims to have as its mandate the furthering of official languages in Canada.

While we support the efforts of these groups, we believe they should be self–financing. With health care, unemployment and welfare programs in jeopardy due to a lack of funds, how can we continue to spend millions promoting something as divisive to Canadians as official languages?

This year alone the Ministry of Canadian Heritage is poised to give away over $31 million of hard earned taxpayers' money to these special interest groups. Not only are many of the grants of questionable value, the real travesty is that there is no way of determining how the money is used.

The government appointed watchdog of official languages programs and policies is the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages, which meeting I just left to attend this one. However that committee has openly stated that its mandate does not include spending. In fact the committee has twice voted down motions which would have resulted in comprehensive studies on how much money, such as these grants, is actually being used.

This brings me to section 88 of the Official Languages Act which will be amended by this bill. This section refers Ministry of Canadian Heritage reports, including spending estimates, to the standing joint committee for review. As I have already stated, this committee has neither the will nor the intestinal fortitude to conduct any meaningful review.

• (1640)

I make this statement not out of any sense of malice toward the committee but because of what I experienced during my time in it.

For example, when I proposed a motion to study all official languages' spending, I was greeted with scorn and distrust. To quote one of the hon. Liberal members, "This motion"—meaning Ringma's motion—"is inflammatory and illegal and it calls national unity into question. The member should be ashamed of acting like this and trying to divide the country". What nonsense.

I have sat on this committee since its formation under the auspices of the 35th Parliament. It has only issued one brief report to Parliament, which was more of a summary than a report, and it has not submitted even one recommendation to the House. In fact, my research shows it did not issue a single recommendation during its last two years under the 34th Parliament.

Given these facts, I have to ask how we can even consider legislatively entrenching such an important duty to a committee that is really more of a lapdog than a watchdog.

Another area of concern is the ministry's mandate for official languages as spelled out in the bill we are discussing. The mandate calls for the advancement of the equality of status and use of English and French. Under this mandate the ministry will spend $245 million this year on official languages in education. The constitutions of 1867 and 1982 clearly state that education is a provincial responsibility. Why then is this ministry spending a quarter of a billion dollars in this area of provincial jurisdiction?

Similarly, the ministry will spend $65 million to promote official languages. Again I have to ask: Why? When programs like old age pension, unemployment insurance, welfare and health are under constant attack due to a lack of funding, why is the government placing such a high priority on spending in areas where it has no jurisdiction?

The government has shown it cannot even handle the areas where it has responsibilities. Why on earth is it looking for ways to spend money it does not have in areas where it does not belong?

The biennial assembly, or convention if you will, of the Reform Party which was held here in Ottawa a few days ago passed a resolution calling for the repeal of the Official Languages Act. At the same time, it passed another resolution which would give responsibility for language and culture to the provinces. We believe this arrangement would be practical and would get the federal government out of the business of promoting languages.

The federal government has a responsibility for language equality clearly expressed in the Constitution, in section 133 of the BNA act and in sections 16 through 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Let the central government exercise its responsibilities under the Constitution. Let the provinces and special interest groups do whatever promotion of whatever language they want without a subsidy from Ottawa.

Reform supports freedom of speech, not comprehensive language legislation. Reform recognizes that the linguistic reality in Canada is that French is predominant in Quebec and English is predominant elsewhere. We support the philosophy of territorial bilingualism which will recognize this reality.

• (1645)

Reform believes all Canadians are equal and oppose funding of special interest groups which are claiming distinct status. As I said, we endorse individual bilingualism and extend this to languages other than French or English in recognition of the fact that over 12 million Canadians are of an origin which is neither French nor English. These other languages also give Canada strength and character.

Other than the constitution, if Canada needs other language policies these should be decided upon by the people as a whole and not by an elite here in Ottawa.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this bill confirms the structure of the Department of Canadian Heritage and brings together the various components that promote our national identity. My colleagues who have already taken part in this debate have well established the importance of this grouping to the new Department of Canadian Heritage.

Personally, I think that it will be a useful tool that will allow us to face the new realities and new challenges of the Canadian society. One of these major realities is the multicultural nature of Canada which is evolving very quickly.

According to the 1991 census, no less than 42 per cent of Canadians say that at least one of their parents is neither French nor English. In fact, in all major urban centres in

the western part of Montreal, for example, a majority of the population is neither French nor English. It is expected that, by the year 2000, the percentage of Canadians from visible minorities will go from 13 to 18 per cent.

Some even maintain that this percentage could reach up to 50 per cent in Toronto. This rapid growth of Canadian diversity raises deep challenges that our society will have to face very quickly.

There is no question that Canada is a land of welcome and that our country provides a peace and a security that are seldom seen elsewhere.

Finally, we recognize that Canada is a country of openness and opportunity which millions and millions of people all over the world only dream about. We have the chance to live in this country and we are fully committed to its continued economic and social development.

We must avoid conflicts and maintain social harmony. That can only be achieved by defining wise policies based on the equality of every Canadian. Better still, we must ensure that all Canadians, whatever their origin or religion, can participate and fully contribute to the life in our society. We must make more efforts to develop policies that are well adjusted to Canadian diversity.

I believe that all the members in this House understand why Canada is a country that foreigners wished they lived in. Sometimes, some people do not seem to understand how we all benefit from the numerous cultures that the people who chose to live here bring with them. Too often, we understand multiculturalism in terms of ethnic food, and the folkloric dances and customs of the various ethno–cultural communities.

There is much more than that. Thousands and thousands of immigrants have developed the resources of this country. They have colonized vast territories and they have helped to build our cities.

• (1650)

Most Canadian regions have inherited the characteristics of various cultural groups. This diversity gave a unique character to the Canadian identity and to our culture. Canadian multiculturalism has two main characteristics. It encourages Canadian citizens to contribute actively to our society in either of our official languages.

Multiculturalism also encourages us to eliminate the barriers to a full and equal participation. Teaching of heritage languages, supporting artists in ethno–cultural communities and the promoting of transcultural activities are initiatives that help develop cultural harmony in our country. We acknowledge the fact that the roots of every citizen play an important part in his or her identity.

In Canada, no one is forced to forget his culture to be welcome. This is what makes Canadians a unique people. While acknowledging that our roots constitute an important part of our identity, Canadian multiculturalism is calling on us to commit ourselves to Canada. It respects the cultural identity of every citizen, it encourages creativity and intercultural exchanges.

Multiculturalism helps us to become aware of our duties but also of our responsibilities towards society. The multiculturalism program will now become very logically a part of the Department of Canadian Heritage. I must pay tribute to my colleague, the hon. Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and member for Mount Royal, for the outstanding job she is doing, building bridges between the ethno–cultural communities and the rest of the Canadian society.

I admit that we are all taken aback at one time or another when we see how quickly the face of this country is changing. All too often, we claim to be open to multiculturalism in Canada, but not next door, not in our backyards. That is why so much remains to be done to make all Canadians aware of the advantages and benefits of multiculturalism.

One major benefit we derive from our diversity is that it acts as a valuable asset in our trade relations on the global market. The chairman of the Royal Bank of Canada explained just recently that our future as a nation depended on our capacity to channel this wealth arising from our diversity to improve our competitiveness internationally.

Canadian businesses must open up new channels of trade. This is certainly easier and faster to achieve by drawing from our cultural communities a manpower that knows the languages, ways and customs of target countries. In the end, that is how our business leaders develop local resources and assests to get ahead of their foreign competition.

My point is that we must continually ask ourselves about the kind of country we are building. We must be confident and serene enough to shape our national identity according to our reality and our needs. In that sense, the establishment of the new Department of Canadian Heritage opens up such fascinating prospects.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond–Guiral (Laval Centre, B.Q.): Madam Speaker, on October 3, the member for Rimouski—Témiscouata tabled an amendment to Bill C–53. This bill is ambitious, because the purpose of this big shake–up is to shamelessly take control of what is called Canadian culture in this country. It is not surprising that, with this amendment, the Bloc Quebecois seeks to return this bill to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

In other words, what the Official Opposition is saying to the House is this: Members of Parliament, show political maturity and demand that the government do its homework again. In his speech on October 3, the minister gave us the following definition to think over: "Heritage is the set of signs that enable us to recognize ourselves as individuals who belong to a group or

even a country. Heritage is closely linked to questions of individual and national identity, which is why it can have such far–reaching and important influence".

• (1655)

While the traditional definitions of heritage as found in the dictionary refer essentially to a specific past which we recognize as our roots, the minister speaks of the set of signs by which Canadians would define themselves as belonging to the same reality. Some questions come spontaneously to mind. What do you think Quebecers, even federalists, will choose as the sign of what they are and what they want to be: the maple leaf or the fleur–de–lis?

Who can say out loud that our national anthem, which was written by Basile Routhier, generates the same sense of belonging from sea to sea as *La Marseillaise* in France or *God save the Queen* in England? And what about the Rockies, the Mounted Police and our coins bearing the effigy of the Queen?

The minister's plan, you will readily admit it, goes way beyond these heritage symbols. Suffice to quote here very briefly the minister: "We hope to rally the mighty forces of multiculturalism behind a cultural identity that is uniquely Canadian".

Since he only referred in his speech to the French Canadian culture when he talked about the official languages and the TV5 network, how could we not infer that we must absolutely bring back not only the Quebec culture but the aboriginal culture as well in the ideal and so–called safe melting pot of multiculturalism, in this world where the American culture is prevailing everywhere?

Madam Speaker, you will easily understand that, given all of this, it would be suicidal for the Official Opposition to support Bill C–53.

In spite of the minister's noble intentions, how can the Canadian Parliament not be concerned that today's culture, our writers, our artists, what I call our heritage in the making, are considered to be an industry in the same way as steel, shoes and chickens?

As for the review of the Copyright Act, for example, who will eventually have the last word? The Minister of Industry or the Minister of Canadian Heritage? We can safely assume that the Department of Industry, which already has this power, will retain it, since nothing in Bill C–53 clearly allocates responsibilities to either department.

Here is another example which should be cause for alarm in this House. With the emergence of the information highway, the speed of communication is approaching Mach 2. Is it reasonable to limit the stakes to marketing fibre optics? This is however, the conclusion we must reach since once again the Minister of Industry will be the project manager. But it also means that we are refusing to recognize that the major revolution brought about by the information highway is bound to rapidly and profoundly change the global culture.

It is often said that war is too serious a matter to be left up to generals; could it be that culture is too serious a matter to be left up to businessmen? Quebec culture is too precious to be left up to the goodwill of the federal government. The State of Quebec must have exclusive jurisdiction over Quebec culture.

For the past 30 years, the federal government, using its powerful spending authority, has shamelessly interfered with Quebec culture. Its objective was clearly to weaken Quebec culture. It has resulted in overlapping and duplication and created a dependence on the federal manna on the part of our creative minds.

In 1991, the total budget of the Quebec government for cultural institutions amounted to $426 million whereas that of Ottawa was $2.8 billion.

• (1700)

I wonder whether I understood what the minister meant when he said that both official languages "are inextricably linked to Canadian identity and culture. For this reason it is vital to promote them and broaden their sphere of influence". Am I naive in thinking that Radio–Canada's budget is sizeable enough to make a major contribution to the survival of francophone communities? Is it naive to think that when a number of the French network's stations were closed down recently in the regions, this was a clear indication of the strong position of French in these regions, a position so strong that these stations were no longer needed?

I am not naive, and few Quebecers are, as we can see in the following extract from the conclusion of the Arpin report: "Harmonizing action by both levels of government has never been easy". The federal government has always refused to recognize Quebec's leading role in cultural matters.

In 1992, Mrs. Frulla–Hébert, at the time Minister of Culture in the Bourassa government, went even further, saying there was little or no consultation on programs by the federal government with Quebec. Genuine co–operation was practically nonexistent, and when it did occur it was often at Quebec's request.

Recently, UQAM president Claude Corbo criticized the tendency of federal policies to downplay and ignore Quebec's identity. I hardly think Bill C–53 would change his mind.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage referred to Bill C–53 as the flag ship of Canadian identity. Metaphors are often not very apt, and this one is no exception. The cargo does not seem to be

properly stowed, and the ship may not be able to weather the storms ahead.

Any admiral worth his salt does not go out to sea with a ship that is poorly equipped. In concluding, I would therefore like to offer the Minister of Canadian Heritage some thoughts by Marcel Rioux, whom he must have met, considering his abiding interest in things cultural: "Why, at the slightest spark of life, do we go on hoping and manage to resist the pessimism and cynicism that lies at the root of so many foolish and unthinking decisions? To me, it is an act of faith in all those who built this country, and that is why I keep on hoping against hope".

[*English*]

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, N.D.P.): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I join the debate today. Bill C–53 is an important bill because it establishes a very important department, the Department of Canadian Heritage. Yet I am afraid I will have to vote against the motion and the bill in front of us.

May I hasten to add for entirely different reasons than the reasons I have heard from both opposition parties today that I cannot accept the arguments put forward by members of the Bloc. There is a need in Quebec and in other parts of Canada for a cultural presence by the federal government. I think the first people to recognize that would be the artists in Quebec.

The artists in Quebec would abhor just having to depend upon the Quebec government. Just having to depend upon one source of support and assistance in the arts is not in the interests of the artists. All too often they have found in terms of past governments, and I suspect the present government as well, that the political agenda of the provincial government is at variance with the artistic interests of the artists.

Artists in Quebec also want to have the federal government, the Canada Council, the National Film Board, the SRC, all the federal cultural institutions. They also want them. I am not surprised by the objections raised by the Reform Party though I am saddened by them. Surely they also must recognize that cultural institutions are really what define the people in a nation.

• (1705)

Our cultural institutions help define what Canada is. They allow us to be able to see and hear and listen to other Canadians without the intervention of the government. Surely the Reform members are not so naive to assume that if you just leave it to market forces Canadian culture would be totally swamped by American culture. The economics would dictate that. Surely it is a naive belief in saying the federal government should get out of this area. They will do as much damage as what the Bloc is doing to the well–being and the maintenance of this country. Once you destroy the cultural identity you have destroyed this country. In this way the Bloc and the Reform are indeed in cahoots and working well together in that.

May I quote quite an excellent article that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on May 8, 1994, by Michael Valpy. "Why, indeed, maintain a multibillion dollar military establishment—when what is under attack in Canada is largely militarily indefensible; the alien control of our commerce, our resources, our jobs, our entertainment, publishing and other forms of communications". Mr. Valpy was discussing a paper that was written by University of Toronto political scientist Franklyn Griffiths. He quotes Mr. Griffiths and this is the quote I wish to put on the record: "The state of our cultural life", he writes, "is now of greater importance than the state of our armed forces in determining our ability to make choices for ourselves in a world where military challenges to our country have diminished relative to non–military or civil dangers".

Again, I wish to agree with Valpy's thesis which is that the attack on Canada as a nation is really more in terms of non–military areas like our cultural sense of identity and sense of who we are.

I oppose this bill because this government's record in this area has been dismal. We have a weak minister and a weak department. It was referred to by members of the Bloc when they expressed their concern about issues like copyright and as well questions concerning the information highway, whether it is the ministry of industry or the ministry of heritage that is really in control.

I suspect it is the ministry of industry rather than the ministry of Canadian heritage. We have a weak department and a weak minister. The Canadian cultural institutions and values are not being well protected.

The other reason why I would have to oppose this bill is that the government as well as the previous government when it signed the FTA and the NAFTA continued to refuse to release the documents both on the FTA and the NAFTA on cultural discussions. We really do not know yet what is allowed and what is not allowed under the free trade agreement and under the NAFTA. How can we operate in terms of defining, strengthening and protecting Canadian cultural institutions when the public and as well those cultural institutions do not know what has been given away? How can we continue?

Historically in this House all political parties have supported the notion that the federal government has a role to play in our cultural institutions. That is why Conservatives started the CBC as well as Liberals, generally supported by New Democrats or the CCF, even the Social Credit Party when it had members in this House.

There was a recognition by those who are part of the English culture part of Canada, standing so close to the American border with its dynamic and very powerful cultural industries, that

unless we had an interventionist government, unless we followed something other than just market forces, our cultural identity as a country would be swamped.

• (1710)

There is a belief that all political parties in this House have traditionally agreed to, that as Canadians we have some identity, some values as Canadians that are unique, that are important and that are worth preserving. This is our contribution to the civilization of the human race.

It is worth the money we invest there. Without that investment, the Canadian cultural identity would disappear and then one has to once again ask oneself: "What do we have as a country?" We might as well then join the United States.

There is another important reason that I wish to mention in my remarks in terms of the importance of Canadian cultural industry. It creates jobs, many jobs. There are more jobs in the cultural sector than in fishery or in forestry. It is also a source of foreign earnings.

I hear members of the Reform Party talk about our taxpayers. Yes, indeed, taxpayers' dollars are involved but artists also create tax revenue. There was a study that was done in Toronto in the spring of 1993 which showed that the cutbacks in the Canada Council in fact decreased government revenues greater than the cutbacks.

They went through numerous performing companies after the cutbacks of their support by the Canada Council. They determined how many musicians were laid off, how many productions did not occur. Those performers, musicians, artists, actors and actresses were no longer working, were taking UI or welfare and were no longer paying taxes.

There was the loss of tax revenues from the loss of admission tickets. They found in this study that the government lost more money through revenue loss than had it continued to support the arts the way they it had formerly done.

I am also concerned, very much so, with our deficit. There is a need as well for wise spending and for trimming government expenditures. Let us do it with intelligence because in some areas when one cuts one will create more harm and there will be a greater loss of revenue than the money one will save from the cuts in those areas.

In conclusion I wish to restate that it is with sadness that I cannot support Bill C–53 because of the reasons that I have stated in my speech.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak today on Bill C–53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage.

I want to use this opportunity to talk about what it means to be Canadian. In 1993 when the Right Hon. Kim Campbell announced the reorganization of her government, the big selling point was the reduction of federal departments from 32 to 23 and the elimination of all minister of state positions.

She further justified the new structure by selling it as a significant step toward streamlining government. This was going to give Canadians a leaner, more accessible government. Multiculturalism was placed under her new Department of Canadian Heritage together with a mishmash of other programs and responsibilities.

Recognizing the level of public support for reducing the size of federal bureaucracy, the new Liberal government kept most of her changes and multiculturalism remained quietly buried in a new superministry of Canadian heritage.

This Liberal government failed to inform the Canadian people that the public perception of a government commitment to downsizing is unfounded. We have fewer ministers than we had under the previous government but now we have nine secretaries of state in addition to the full fledged ministers.

One of these new secretaries of state has a portfolio solely devoted to multiculturalism and the status of women.

• (1715)

The only major difference between a secretary of state and a minister is the name. Secretaries of state are not allowed to sit in cabinet and must report through the minister, but they have offices, staff and responsibilities for policy development in the departments to which they are assigned. They also receive an extra $35,000 a year salary and a car allowance.

This is not downsizing. What about the Canadian heritage department itself? Will taxpayers save any money through this restructuring and reorganization? Apparently not. When announcing the official establishment of this new department, top bureaucrats made it very clear that there would be no layoffs. Civil servants are being shuffled between new ministries but their jobs are secure, even if the future of some of the programs is not.

The number of employees in the multicultural program will remain at approximately 6,000, the same as 1992–93 levels. Multiculturalism now falls under another department but it is possible to compare current funding to that of previous years. In 1992–93, $39.8 million was spent on multicultural programs. Last fiscal year it was $36.9 million, and this year's forecast is $38.8 million. This does not include some of the spinoff programs that fall under the government's multicultural agenda.

For example, although the proposed Canadian race relations foundation is not functioning yet, the federal government

earmarked $24 million for it. This is hardly what I would call a stellar performance in cost reduction or downsizing.

Why do we have the multicultural policy we do? Why do we spend money to support special interest groups to maintain or rediscover their differences, rather than for the promotion of our shared symbols and positive Canadian qualities?

Immigrants have come to Canada for countless reasons over the years. For many it represented a place of safety to rebuild lives shattered by wars. For others it was a land of opportunity; if they worked hard they could become financially secure, send their children off to university and express their will within a democratic society.

These people came to Canada to become Canadians. They willingly left their country of birth and chose Canada as their new home. They came here to build a new life and a new reality for themselves and their children. To them, Canada symbolized hope. It was not just a place where they could become rich. It represented freedom from oppression or tyranny, from hunger or civil strife.

It was a land that, for the most part, accepted them as newcomers and tolerated their differences until they learned more about their chosen country and its culture.

Refugees come to our shores for many of the same reasons. Because Canada is isolated from refugee generating countries by vast oceans and by the United States, refugees must make a conscious decision that this is the country they want to move to. They must make extensive plans and pool their resources just to get here to claim refugee status. I believe they choose Canada for the same reasons that immigrants have in the past; an opportunity to get ahead in a country they are proud to be part of, a country that respects human rights and freedoms, a country where they will not have to live in fear.

Although immigrants and refugees left their homes to find the Canadian dream, what do newcomers to Canada find today? They discover a government that promotes cultural diversity, that tells them it is more important to maintain the identity they left behind than it is to become a Canadian. How many years is it before they are truly considered a Canadian? With our multicultural policy, how many generations will it take before people start thinking of themselves as Canadians rather than as outsiders? How can we eliminate racism or ghettoization if we perpetuate hyphenated Canadianism? How much time will it take for this government to understand that being a Canadian to a Canadian is more important than where you or your ancestors came from?

Everyone should be proud of their roots but they should also be proud to be a Canadian. We should be working toward the creation of a single national identity that we can all live with. Being Canadian is more than holding down a job, it is people pulling together for a common purpose and a common goal. This country is built on the efforts of people who came from all over the world to help create a nation they are proud to call home.

Throughout our history immigrants have worked hard to help forge the country we see today. They started out as immigrants but they built it as Canadians, for Canadians.

• (1720)

We are among the most tolerant people in the world. Regrettably, we have also had black periods in our history during which certain groups were not respected for their contribution or were denied access to our institutions and to some fundamental human rights.

We have grown a great deal over the past several decades. We have abolished institutionalized discrimination and promote respect for human rights at home and abroad. We must remain vigilant to ensure equality of opportunity for all Canadians but we must not let the pendulum swing so far toward accommodating special interests that we lose sight of who we are.

By promoting all cultures we will end up with none. What glue will hold our nation together?

As the make–up of our population changes, our national culture will naturally evolve to reflect that diversity. It is not something government can legislate or control. When government steps in, as it has, to encourage differences between people rather than fostering unity by encouraging common Canadian values other segments of our society will feel threatened because they will perceive their cultural values to be under siege.

When the cultural make–up of our population has changed to the point that our institutions no longer reflect the Canadian identity then there will be overwhelming public support and pressure for those changes to occur.

Government cannot dictate culture and government cannot control its expression. The government's role should be to clarify our similarities, not aggravate our differences. Cultural change occurs over generations but a nation must have a touchstone for its national identity, a reference point that immigrants from other countries can refer to.

We leave them floundering, having to rely on our multicultural policy of celebrating diversity as a guide to what it is to be a Canadian.

Canada has a distinct identity. We can all feel it. We know it is there but most Canadians cannot articulate it. When asked what it is to be a Canadian, many people used to respond that it is not being an American. We are more than a negative. We have our own positive sense of national identity and it must be communicated to all newcomers to this land.

To me being Canadian is many things. Being Canadian is truly believing in our inherent right to freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, the right to assemble and to demonstrate peacefully, freedom of the press, tolerance for differences and respect for human rights and democratic institutions. These are some of the common values I believe make us Canadians.

There is also an expectation held by the majority of Canadians that we will continue to support and, if necessary, defend our individual and collective rights to these freedoms.

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the members of the Bloc and the members of the Reform Party, particularly on their views on multiculturalism. It is obvious they do not have a clue what multiculturalism means and what it is all about.

I want to tell them a little bit about what multiculturalism is. Multiculturalism is a vision of Canada. One of the things that is really lacking on that side is a vision of Canada. It has no real vision of Canada. It does not understand that multiculturalism is valuing our cultural diversity and how important it is to value our cultural diversity.

As someone who came to Canada as a young boy at the age of six, I know a lot about multiculturalism. I know a lot about some of the barriers that immigrants face when they come here. Our family came here in 1906. If some people would read the history of what happened in British Columbia they would understand that at that time we did not have a policy of multiculturalism and there were laws that discriminated against certain groups. If we talk about the *Komagata Maru*, I ask everyone to read about that or the exclusion act. All of those things will give members a better idea of why multiculturalism is so important.

One of the Reform members said that everybody is the same. Everybody is not the same. I have three children and they have different needs. They are not the same. For some reason the Reform Party thinks if we treat everyone the same we are treating them equally.

• (1725)

People have different demands. People have different needs, just as the aboriginal community has different needs. As a society we have to recognize that. We have to make sure that they participate.

The Reform Party members are the same people who took the lead to campaign against Sikhs in the RCMP even though it was against the charter of human rights. The legal courts have shown that. Do members think they will change their policy even though the courts have ruled it is against the charter in a recent decision?

The Reform Party members actively have a policy which discriminates. I say that they do not understand what multiculturalism is. It is about bridging, about communication. That shows how little they know because they are not interested in listening when somebody has a different view.

Multiculturalism is about communication between different cultures. It is about bridging, about participating, about including Canadians. That is what multiculturalism is.

For members who want to talk about treating people equally, in their convention they had a resolution that says that immigrants should not get any social benefits for the first five years, but they want them to pay the same taxes. They do not want to give them a break on the taxes. They do not want to give them any social benefits for the first five years. Is that treating people equally? That is not treating people equally. That is about dividing Canadians. That is what we do not want. We want to include Canadians, not divide them. That is what the Liberal Party is all about and what this Liberal government is all about.

I am very proud of my culture and heritage and I believe it is very important that people know about their roots. If you do not know your roots you do not know where to go. I have learned that it is very important.

There are many business people in the Reform Party and they should understand how important multiculturalism is in this global economy. In the province of British Columbia people recognize that. The recent government has said in the schools it wants to be able to teach Mandarin, Cantonese and Punjabi where the needs are. That is important for the global economy and for us from an economic point of view to have growth in jobs. We cannot work in isolation. That is why it is so important.

In my own riding there is an area called the Punjabi market where many Indo–Canadians have their shops. The other day I opened a convention at the Pan Pacific and a tourist from the U.S. said: "I have heard about the Punjabi market. I would like to go down there and do some shopping". That is how important it is from an economic point of view to have that cultural diversity.

In the area of arts and culture the members of the Reform Party think that we can cut all the funding for arts and culture and then when we have the money all of a sudden all the artists and the infrastructure will come back; that sure, we can cut all the funding for arts and culture and five years from now it will be very simple to all of a sudden fund it again and all the art and culture will flourish. Life is not that simple. Art and culture are very important to this country and it is very important to maintain them.

I was on a trip to Europe this summer and when you visit a museum like the Louvre or a city like Edinburgh you really understand how art and culture are very important. I hope members of the Reform Party will also look at that with an open

and broad mind, not in a narrow focus. I am sure they will understand a lot better.

Multiculturalism is ensuring that all Canadians participate fully in Canadian life. Recently when I was vice–chairman of B.C. Hydro it adopted a vision that its employees should reflect the community it serves. That is what multiculturalism is all about. It is about equal opportunity. I will not go any further because my time is running out.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACT

The House resumed from October 17 consideration of Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other acts, as reported (without amendment) from the committee; and of Motion No. 1.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being 5:30 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on Mr. Easter's motion at report stage of Bill C–49. Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division):

(*Division No. 86*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Althouse
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Blaikie
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien
Bryden
Canuel
Chatters
Crête
Daviault
de Jong
Deshaies
Dubé
Dumas
Easter
Fillion
Frazer
Gauthier (Roberval)
Gouk
Guimond
Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jacob
Johnston
Lalonde
Langlois
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Marchand
Mayfield
McLaughlin
Morrison
Nunez
Penson
Ablonczy
Asselin
Benoit
Bernier (Gaspé)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Bélisle
Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond–Guiral
Debien
de Savoye
Dromisky
Duceppe
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Grubel
Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)
Harris
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner
Jennings
Kerpan
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Leroux (Shefford)
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Ménard
Paré
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Ramsay
Ringma
Rocheleau
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Speaker
Steckle
Strahl
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Venne
Williams—103
Pomerleau
Riis
Robinson
Schmidt
Silye
Solomon
St–Laurent
Stinson
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
White (Fraser Valley West)

NAYS

Members

Alcock
Anawak
Arseneault
Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes
Bellemare
Bethel
Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bélair
Campbell
Cauchon
Chan
Clancy
Collins
Copps
Culbert
Dingwall
Duhamel
English
Flis
Fry
Gagliano
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Godfrey
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)
Hopkins
Ianno
Jackson
Keyes
Kirkby
Lastewka
Lee
MacAulay
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Malhi
Marchi
Massé
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
O'Reilly
Parrish
Payne
Peters
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Robichaud
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Sheridan
Speller
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Zed—133
Allmand
Anderson
Assad
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Berger
Bodnar
Boudria
Brushett
Calder
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crawford
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dupuy
Fewchuk
Fontana
Gaffney
Gallaway
Gerrard
Graham
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hubbard
Irwin
Jordan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
Loney
MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marleau
McCormick
McKinnon
McWhinney
Milliken
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pillitteri
Reed
Ringuette–Maltais
Rompkey
Shepherd
Simmons
St. Denis
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Tobin
Ur
Verran
Walker
Whelan
Young

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Adams
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bevilacqua
Collenette
Guay
Lefebvre
Mercier
Vanclief

Bachand
Bertrand
Bouchard
Goodale
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lincoln
Sauvageau
Wells

● (1800)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the motion negatived.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY ACT

The House resumed from October 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-46, an act to establish the Department of Industry and to amend and repeal certain other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; of the amendment; and the amendment to the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*), the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment to the amendment of Mr. McClelland at the second reading stage of Bill C-46.

(The House divided on the amendment, to the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 87*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Duncan
Forseth
Gouk
Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)
Harris
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner
Johnston
Manning
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Ramsay
Schmidt
Silye
Speaker
Strahl
White (Fraser Valley West)

Ablonczy
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Chatters
Epp
Frazer
Grubel
Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jennings
Kerpan
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Penson
Ringma
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Stinson
Thompson
Williams—48

NAYS

Members

Alcock
Althouse
Anderson
Assad
Asselin
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes
Bellehumeur
Berger
Bernier (Gaspé)
Blaikie
Bonin
Brien
Brushett
Bélair
Calder
Canuel
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Clancy
Collins
Copps
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
de Savoye
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dubé
Duhamel
Dupuy
English
Fillion
Fontana
Gaffney
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gallaway
Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Guimond
Harper (Churchill)
Hopkins
Ianno
Jackson
Jordan
Kirkby
Lalonde
Langlois
Laurin
Lebel
Lee
Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier
MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marchi
Massé
McGuire
McLaughlin
McWhinney
Milliken
Minna
Murphy
Ménard
Nunez
Pagtakhan
Paré
Payne
Peters
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pomerleau
Reed
Richardson

Allmand
Anawak
Arseneault
Assadourian
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bethel
Bodnar
Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Bélisle
Campbell
Caron
Cauchon
Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crawford
Culbert
Daviault
de Jong
Deshaies
Dingwall
Dromisky
Duceppe
Dumas
Easter
Fewchuk
Flis
Fry
Gagliano
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Gerrard
Godin
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvard
Hubbard
Irwin
Jacob
Keyes
Knutson
Landry
Lastewka
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loney
MacAulay
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Malhi
Marchand
Marleau
McCormick
McKinnon
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
O'Reilly
Parrish
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Plamondon
Proud
Regan
Riis

Ringuette–Maltais
Robinson
Rompkey
Shepherd
Simmons
Speller
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Valeri
Verran
Wappel
Wood
Zed—189

Robichaud
Rocheleau
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Sheridan
Solomon
St–Laurent
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Tobin
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Ur
Venne
Volpe
Whelan
Young

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Adams
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bevilacqua
Collenette
Guay
Lefebvre
Mercier
Vanclief

Bachand
Bertrand
Bouchard
Goodale
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lincoln
Sauvageau
Wells

● (1815)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the amendment to the amendment negatived.

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT

The House resumed from October 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C–48, an act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*), the House will now proceed with the taking of the deferred division on the amendment of Mr. Canuel at the second reading stage of Bill C–48.

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

(*Division No. 88*)

YEAS

Members

Asselin
Bergeron
Brien
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond–Guiral
Debien
Deshaies
Duceppe
Fillion
Gauthier (Roberval)
Guimond
Lalonde
Langlois
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Ménard
Paré

Bellehumeur
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bélisle
Caron
Crête
Daviault
de Savoye
Dubé
Dumas
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Jacob
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Leroux (Shefford)
Marchand
Nunez
Picard (Drummond)

Plamondon
Rocheleau
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Venne—45

Pomerleau
St–Laurent
Tremblay (Rosemont)

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Alcock
Althouse
Anderson
Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes
Bellemare
Berger
Blaikie
Bonin
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Calder
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chatters
Clancy
Collins
Copps
Culbert
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Duhamel
Dupuy
English
Fewchuk
Fontana
Frazer
Gaffney
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine)
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Guarnieri
Hanrahan
Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner
Hubbard
Irwin
Jennings
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Malhi
Manning
Marleau
Massé
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McGuire
McLaughlin
McWhinney
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Morrison
Murray
O'Reilly
Parrish
Payne
Peric
Peterson
Pillitteri
Ramsay
Regan

Ablonczy
Allmand
Anawak
Assad
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Benoit
Bethel
Bodnar
Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Brushett
Bélair
Campbell
Cauchon
Chan
Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crawford
de Jong
Dingwall
Dromisky
Duncan
Easter
Epp
Flis
Forseth
Fry
Gagliano
Gallaway
Gerrard
Gouk
Gray (Windsor West)
Grubel
Hanger
Harb
Harper (Churchill)
Harris
Harvard
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hopkins
Ianno
Jackson
Johnston
Kerpan
Kirkby
Lastewka
Loney
MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marchi
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield
McCormick
McKinnon
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Meredith
Milliken
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
Pagtakhan
Patry
Penson
Peters
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Reed
Richardson

Riis
Ringuette-Maltais
Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Silye
Solberg
Speaker
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Stinson
Szabo
Terrana
Tobin
Ur
Verran
Wappel
White (Fraser Valley West)
Wood
Zed—189

Ringma
Robichaud
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Sheridan
Simmons
Solomon
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Strahl
Telegdi
Thompson
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Williams
Young

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Adams
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bevilacqua
Collenette
Guay
Lefebvre
Mercier
Vanclief

Bachand
Bertrand
Bouchard
Goodale
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lincoln
Sauvageau
Wells

• (1820)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I declare the amendment negatived.

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to proceed immediately with the main motion on second reading of Bill C–48 and that you would find unanimous consent to apply the result of the vote just taken, in other words the vote on the amendment, in reverse to the main motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 89*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Alcock
Althouse
Anderson
Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes
Bellemare
Berger
Blaikie
Bonin
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Calder
Catterall

Ablonczy
Allmand
Anawak
Assad
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Benoit
Bethel
Bodnar
Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Brushett
Bélair
Campbell
Cauchon

Chamberlain
Chatters
Clancy
Collins
Copps
Culbert
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Duhamel
Dupuy
English
Fewchuk
Fontana
Frazer
Gaffney
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Guarnieri
Hanrahan
Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner
Hubbard
Irwin
Jennings
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Malhi
Manning
Marleau
Massé
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McGuire
McLaughlin
McWhinney
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Morrison
Murray
O'Reilly
Parrish
Payne
Peric
Peterson
Pillitteri
Ramsay
Regan
Riis
Ringuette-Maltais
Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Silye
Solberg
Speaker
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Stinson
Szabo
Terrana
Tobin
Ur
Verran
Wappel
White (Fraser Valley West)
Wood
Zed—189

Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crawford
de Jong
Dingwall
Dromisky
Duncan
Easter
Epp
Flis
Forseth
Fry
Gagliano
Gallaway
Gerrard
Gouk
Gray (Windsor West)
Grubel
Hanger
Harb
Harper (Churchill)
Harris
Harvard
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hopkins
Ianno
Jackson
Johnston
Kerpan
Kirkby
Lastewka
Loney
MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marchi
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield
McCormick
McKinnon
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Meredith
Milliken
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
Pagtakhan
Patry
Penson
Peters
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Reed
Richardson
Ringma
Robichaud
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Sheridan
Simmons
Solomon
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Strahl
Telegdi
Thompson
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Williams
Young

NAYS

Members

Asselin	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Brien	Bélisle
Canuel	Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Dalphond-Guiral	Daviault
Debien	de Savoye
Deshaies	Dubé
Duceppe	Dumas
Fillion	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier (Roberval)	Godin
Guimond	Jacob
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Marchand
Ménard	Nunez
Paré	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Rocheleau	St-Laurent
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne—45	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Adams	Bachand
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bouchard
Collenette	Goodale
Guay	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lefebvre	Lincoln
Mercier	Sauvageau
Vanclief	Wells

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Therefore the motion of Ms. McLellan is agreed to.

(Bill read the second time and referred to committee.)

* * *

• (1825)

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed from October 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment of Mr. Marchand at second reading of Bill C–52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to apply the result of the vote at report stage on the amendment to Bill C–49 to this vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Do we have unanimous consent?

Mr. Lee: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I would be delighted to participate in the unanimous consent for the most recent division.

I was absent from my seat and I would ask that as the votes are being applied my vote be applied with the government caucus.

Ms. Meredith: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I was also absent for the vote on Bill C–49 and I would appreciate if my vote would be recorded on Bill C–52 as supporting it.

Mrs. Cowling: Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained; I was not able to be here. However I would have voted with the government had I been here.

Mr. Bryden: Madam Speaker, I would like my vote to be recorded as being with the government on this amendment, if I may.

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We had an agreement with the government whip that we would apply to this vote the same as we voted on Bill C–49 and the last member of Parliament who just rose to say he wanted to vote with the government voted opposite to the government on Bill C–49.

Mr. Easter: Madam Speaker, I just want to be sure that this vote is opposite to the report stage motion, or is it the same as the report stage motion and not the recorded amendment?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. This motion is opposite to the amendment of the hon. member for Malpeque on Bill C–49.

Mr. Easter: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I would wish that my vote be applied in the reverse to what it was on the amendment to Bill C–49, in other words with the government.

• (1830)

Mr. Dromisky: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I wish to vote with the government on this motion.

Mr. Steckle: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I also wish to cast my vote on the side of the government on the motion itself.

Mr. Peterson: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like my vote to be applied—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

[*Translation*]

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

Government Orders

(Division No. 90)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Althouse
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Blaikie
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien
Bélisle
Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
de Savoye
Dubé
Dumas
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Grubel
Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)
Harris
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner
Jennings
Kerpan
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Leroux (Shefford)
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith
Morrison
Nunez
Penson
Plamondon
Ramsay
Ringma
Rocheleau
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Speaker
Stinson
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
White (Fraser Valley West)

Ablonczy
Asselin
Benoit
Bernier (Gaspé)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Canuel
Chatters
Crête
Daviault
de Jong
Deshaies
Duceppe
Duncan
Fillion
Frazer
Gauthier (Roberval)
Gouk
Guimond
Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jacob
Johnston
Lalonde
Langlois
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Marchand
Mayfield
McLaughlin
Mills (Red Deer)
Ménard
Paré
Picard (Drummond)
Pomerleau
Riis
Robinson
Schmidt
Silye
Solomon
St-Laurent
Strahl
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Venne
Williams—100

Cohen
Comuzzi
Cowling
Culbert
Dingwall
Dromisky
Dupuy
English
Flis
Fry
Gagliano
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Godfrey
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)
Hopkins
Ianno
Jackson
Keyes
Kirkby
Lastewka
Lee
MacAulay
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Malhi
Marchi
Massé
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
O'Reilly
Parrish
Payne
Peters
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Robichaud
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Sheridan
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Tobin
Ur
Verran
Walker
Whelan
Young

Collins
Copps
Crawford
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Duhamel
Easter
Fewchuk
Fontana
Gaffney
Gallaway
Gerrard
Graham
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hubbard
Irwin
Jordan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
Loney
MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marleau
McCormick
McKinnon
McWhinney
Milliken
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pillitteri
Reed
Ringuette-Maltais
Rompkey
Shepherd
Simmons
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Zed—138

NAYS

Members

Alcock
Anawak
Arseneault
Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes
Bellemare
Bethel
Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Calder
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)

Allmand
Anderson
Assad
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Berger
Bodnar
Boudria
Brushett
Bélair
Campbell
Cauchon
Chan
Clancy

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Adams
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bevilacqua
Collenette
Guay
Lefebvre
Mercier
Vanclief

Bachand
Bertrand
Bouchard
Goodale
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lincoln
Sauvageau
Wells

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The amendment is therefore negatived.

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent that the vote on Bill C–46 be applied in reverse to the bill that we are discussing now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, we agree but there might be some on the government side who might want to change their minds.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(*Division No. 91*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock
Althouse
Anderson
Assad
Asselin
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes
Bellehumeur
Berger
Bernier (Gaspé)
Blaikie
Bonin
Brien
Brushett
Bélair
Calder
Canuel
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Clancy
Collins
Copps
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
de Savoye
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dubé
Duhamel
Dupuy
English
Fillion
Fontana
Gaffney
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gallaway
Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Guimond
Harper (Churchill)
Hopkins
Ianno
Allmand
Anawak
Arseneault
Assadourian
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bethel
Bodnar
Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Bélisle
Campbell
Caron
Cauchon
Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Cohen
Comuzzi
Crawford
Culbert
Daviault
de Jong
Deshaies
Dingwall
Dromisky
Duceppe
Dumas
Easter
Fewchuk
Flis
Fry
Gagliano
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Gerrard
Godin
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvard
Hubbard
Irwin
Jackson
Jordan
Kirkby
Lalonde
Langlois
Laurin
Lebel
Lee
Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier
MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marchi
Massé
McGuire
McLaughlin
McWhinney
Milliken
Minna
Murphy
Ménard
Nunez
Pagtakhan
Paré
Payne
Peters
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pomerleau
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette-Maltais
Robinson
Rompkey
Shepherd
Simmons
Speller
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Valeri
Verran
Wappel
Wood
Zed—189
Jacob
Keyes
Knutson
Landry
Lastewka
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loney
MacAulay
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Malhi
Marchand
Marleau
McCormick
McKinnon
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
O'Reilly
Parrish
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Plamondon
Proud
Regan
Riis
Robichaud
Rocheleau
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Sheridan
Solomon
St-Laurent
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Tobin
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Ur
Venne
Volpe
Whelan
Young

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Duncan
Forseth
Gouk
Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)
Harris
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner
Johnston
Manning
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Ramsay
Schmidt
Silye
Speaker
Strahl
White (Fraser Valley West)
Ablonczy
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Bridgman
Chatters
Epp
Frazer
Grubel
Hanrahan
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jennings
Kerpan
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Penson
Ringma
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Stinson
Thompson
Williams—48

Private Members' Business

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Adams	Bachand
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bouchard
Collenette	Goodale
Guay	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lefebvre	Lincoln
Mercier	Sauvageau
Vanclief	Wells

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Accordingly I declare the motion adopted.

(Bill read the second time and referred to committee.)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

REMEMBRANCE DAY ACT

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth, Lib.) moved that Bill C–251, an act to provide that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday in public service collective agreements, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I know the hour is late and we have just been through a number of votes but I am hoping that the members who are still here, or those that are watching from their offices or on their way to their offices, could take a few minutes to pay some attention to the bill presently before the House.

• (1835)

This is actually the second time that I have brought the bill forward. I presented the bill in the last Parliament as Bill C–289. The title of the bill is the Remembrance Day Act.

One of the problems we have had in the past in dealing with Remembrance Day is that the farther we get from the time that we have actually had a conflict where loss of life has taken place, the more likely it is that we will forget the sacrifices that were made by the many men and now women of the Canadian Armed Forces in the pursuit of liberty and freedom for people all around the globe.

Remembrance Day goes back quite far. It used to be called Armistice Day and it was celebrated at Thanksgiving. Then around 1931, it became Remembrance Day. Everybody in the country believes that Remembrance Day is a holiday and I guess by definition that is what it is.

What exactly holiday means is quite another thing. Does holiday mean, as I used to think it meant, that it is a day set aside and nobody, unless they are deemed to be an essential employee, goes to work? Does holiday mean that it is time to go to the beach or to take a few hours off and relax?

The Remembrance Day holiday is quite different. It is different than any other holiday on the books. It is different because it is not meant as a time for people to take time off. It is meant as a time of solemn remembrance of those who fought for liberty, for freedom, for those who have given up their lives in pursuit of these very noble goals.

Every member in this Chamber represents veterans. In Canada today there are over 700,000 veterans, many of whom were wounded, many of whom have lost very good friends. They saw their best friend die in front of them far away in a foreign land with no shoulder to cry on. It was done in the pursuit of that tangible called freedom.

It seems the further we get away from the date of a conflict where lives are lost, we forget. It is far too easy for me as a 39–year–old and certainly for my children who are three, eight and ten to forget how important that contribution has been for us.

I introduced Bill C–289 in the last Parliament. The importance of that bill at the time was to make sure that at least in the area that we control as a government in the agreements that are entered into under the Public Service Staff Relations Act, we ensure that we honour the memory of those who have given their lives and of the veterans who are still are out there, many of whom have been wounded.

There are people like my father, Sharkey, as they called him because he was a good boxer in his day, who was shot twice. He fought in the Italian campaign after the liberation of Holland, and lost many of his friends. The bill will ensure that my children see the example set by the federal government in ensuring that every collective agreement that is entered into by the Government of Canada, that this holiday, this special time of remembrance, is not traded away.

Members are going to ask: "Is that not the way it is?" Yes, that is the way it is. The reason I introduced the bill two years ago and the reason I reintroduced it is that there seems to be a possibility—and if it is a possibility, it is a probability—the federal government negotiators through Treasury Board—it is no different even though the government has changed—with the same mandate who hammer out collective agreements may change the holiday. I support the collective bargaining process.

However there may come a time, because it always happens, that the federal government through its Treasury Board negotiators and a union of the Public Service of Canada through its negotiators will decide to trade away Remembrance Day for another holiday. It darned near happened two years ago at Canada Post.

That is when this came to my attention. My father who is a veteran, president of the Cape Breton Highlanders Association,

called me and said: "What am I reading in the paper? They are trying to trade Remembrance Day away, maybe for an extra benefit, maybe for a little bit more hospital coverage". That was never the purpose of the holiday in the first place.

• (1840)

I introduced the bill and it received an unusual amount of support, so much so that the Conservative government, even though Treasury Board told Tory members not to support it, rose above partisanship and supported the bill in sufficient numbers that even a lowly Liberal backbench opposition member's private member's motion passed at second reading.

It was one of the proudest days I have had as a member of Parliament. It showed that this place can work. If the principles are noble, the motives of members will be above reproach and they will support the right things. Unfortunately it did not get through committee.

Therefore I introduce it again today in honour of the 60,000 men who died serving our country in the first world war and all those who died during the second world war. Over 1.1 million Canadians served proudly, people like my father. During the Korean war over 300 Canadians gave their lives and hundreds, perhaps over 1,000, more were wounded. We must not forget those who served in the Persian gulf—thank goodness there was no loss of life—and our peacekeepers who are out there in some of the worst conditions in the world. They are down in the hell on earth that is Rwanda. They serve us proudly in Bosnia, where some have been injured and killed while serving our country abroad.

I reintroduce the bill and I seek support from members. This bill will not encumber Treasury Board. That is bogus. I heard that argument from Treasury Board officials. Tomorrow I will try to get some assurance from the minister that before decisions are made about what does and does not encumber Treasury Board that they at least consult with the members who put the bills forward.

The bill does nothing more than seek to entrench in law the current practice and that is to make sure that Remembrance Day is a holiday in federal collective agreements. It does not do anything to the business community. It does not do anything to collective agreements under the labour code. It simply says that for agreements entered into by the federal government with its own employees, under the Public Service Staff Relations Act, that unless one is a designated employee whose services are essential, one shall have Remembrance Day as a day of solemn remembrance for those men and now women who have been injured or killed defending peace, liberty and life abroad for our country, and that day will always be in federal public sector agreements as a day of solemn remembrance.

I ask the members who are prepared to speak to keep that in mind. When we last raised this in the House I could not believe the response from nearly every legion in Canada. The president of the Royal Canadian Legion came to see me. Letters were sent in. Veterans from the second world war feel as they are getting older that it is far too easy for their grandchildren and maybe their great grandchildren to forget the sacrifices that many of them have made.

I am seeking the support of the House to debate this bill. It will tell the veterans across Canada that the contribution that they made for this country and also what they gave up, is not going to be forgotten by the Parliament of Canada. It is a very small thing to do. Remembrance Day must always be held as a solemn day of remembrance for those who have gone before us in serving their country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on behalf of the Official Opposition in this debate on the bill that would include Remembrance Day as a holiday in public service collective agreements.

This is not the first time that the member for Dartmouth has proposed such a thing. Indeed, he presented a similar bill in the previous Parliament. Unfortunately for him, the Conservative government arranged to defeat his bill when it was considered in committee. That was on February 18, 1993.

That bill, like the one before us, was intended to prevent the government from putting the Remembrance Day holiday on the negotiating table with the unions. It was feared that this holiday would be traded for an extra day after the Boxing Day holiday.

• (1845)

Some guarantee had to be provided to enshrine this sacred holiday in our collective memory. This is the day when we remember the ultimate sacrifice made by those who went to war and enabled us to enjoy again the most precious gift: peace.

This initiative reflects numerous decisions made over the years to that effect. This holiday is already in the official list of holidays included in section 166 of the Canada Labour Code, part III. It is also included in the Public Service Terms and Conditions of Employment Regulations. Every collective agreement signed by the Public Service Alliance of Canada with Treasury Board includes Remembrance Day in the list of holidays.

Already in 1921, a day of commemoration was established in the Armistice Day Act, which said, and I quote: "Throughout Canada in each and every year—the eleventh day of November—being the day in 1918 in which the great war was triumphantly concluded by an armistice, shall be a legal holiday and shall be kept and observed as such under the name of Armistice Day".

In 1931, another act specified that this legal holiday would be called "Remembrance Day" and would be observed on November 11. In the Holidays Act, chapter H–5, Revised Status of Canada, 1985, Remembrance Day is the second holiday mentioned, right after Canada Day.

One might wonder why have a bill to protect a holiday which already seems to be formally recognized. The purpose of this legislation is to eliminate the risk that this holiday might be used as a bargaining tool and be replaced by an additional day elsewhere in the calendar, a measure which would be at odds with the purpose of Remembrance Day, which is meant to be a day of commemoration and respect.

The fact is that such a substitution is a possibility. There is a provision in section 195 of the Canada Labour Code which says that "Any other holiday may be substituted for a general holiday". Consequently, this substitution is a right which can be exercised or claimed. According to section 195, the parties to a collective agreement can notify in writing the Minister of Human Resources Development that a specified day has been designated as a holiday in lieu of a specified general holiday. Under the same section of the Canada Labour Code, where no employees of an employer are represented by a trade union or where a class of employees is not provided for under a collective agreement with regard to general holidays, the Minister may approve the substitution of a designated holiday, at the request of the employer, if satisfied that a majority of the employees or class of employees concur with the application.

This goes to show that such provisions do exist and continue to exist, unaltered, without excluding holidays like Remembrance Day. We therefore take this opportunity to caution the sponsor of this bill. This piece of legislation would give a clear indication to the government. It would send a clear message to labour, but it would not eliminate the present loopholes that allow the substitution of general holidays and are likely to continue to allow it after this bill is passed.

• (1850)

We know how important the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month is since 1918. It is important not only for the veterans for whom this day represents the quintessence of their existence, for the soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in order to restore the world peace we now know, for the civil servants and the workers, but also for the children, the future generations who need tools to remember all the lessons passed down to them, from the most marvellous to the most tragic. We must protect the Remembrance Day to preserve our collective memories, pay tribute to the past and accept responsibility for the future.

I am convinced that the government as well as the unions and the citizens realize the importance of the Remembrance Day, a day to pay tribute to our veterans, to remember the horrible lessons the war has taught us, and to pass on a message to future generations.

In brief, we support this bill in principle. We hope that the Remembrance Day will never be abolished, moved or replaced and that, in order to achieve this goal, all current federal labour legislation will be modified accordingly.

[*English*]

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to speak on this motion. I, too, have lost relatives, in fact close relatives, due to these tragic wars. It has always been in my heart to make certain that these memories are not forgotten.

We have before us Bill C–251 to provide that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday in public service collective agreements. This bill asks that Parliament negotiate on behalf of the public service.

Parliament should never be involved in negotiating contracts for the public service or any other union. Bargaining is the role of union officials, union employees and union bargaining teams, not members of the House of Parliament. It is my understanding that the public service has already bargained for its workers to observe Remembrance Day as a holiday. Why then is this bill before Parliament?

It seems that under the current negotiated contracts that workers deemed essential for the public safety or public interest must work on Remembrance Day but do not receive extra remuneration. Essentially this bill will provide extra payment for those deemed essential or required to work for the public safety.

Let us think for a moment why it is that we pause at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month to remember: Lest we forget the sons and the daughters of Canadians in the time of the country's greatest need who chose to travel to foreign lands and defend this country against tyranny and dictatorship. Lest we forget many of the sons and daughters who did not return to the arms of their loved ones following the long, long journey to fight for democracy and freedom, yet they ensured that the same highest qualities remained in our government. Lest we forget thousands upon thousands of Canadians who offered up the ultimate sacrifice, their lives, so that we at home could remain free to choose how we should live our lives.

I have heard tales of the carnage of war. I have listened to veterans of the wars talk about their time over there. Not too often do these men and women talk about the battles over there. They talk about the times that bring fond memories, the detailed preparations for battle, the training for battle, or the nights of quiet reflection remembering home.

The reason those who faced the horrors of battle do not talk of seeing friends or comrades in arms who entered the fray but did not return is because of the pain that such recollections would bring.

Those of us who have not experienced total war do not really understand the cost in human lives and human memories that such conflicts inflict. Those veterans of such times recall the horror, and believe me, none I know of say that those times were filled with glory.

• (1855)

Veterans ask us all to remember those who gave their lives for our freedom because they want Canadians to recall the total price that war brings. Veterans want those living today to remember total war costs. The cost is lives.

No one in this House would dare ask Canadians to not honour the memory of those who offered the supreme sacrifice, their young lives, so that we today can stand on Remembrance Day to thank and remember them.

By not supporting this bill, I do not make light of the sacrifice. None of those who died sought death. They were seeking to give life to this country and in doing so they died.

I cannot support this bill, not because I do not believe we should not remember them but because I believe this House should not diminish the freedom of workers and management to choose on what terms they will agree to work together.

As for the portion of this bill that will make it mandatory for those required to work on Remembrance Day to receive extra remuneration, I say this. If those we are remembering could freely choose to give the ultimate sacrifice so Canadians can be free, surely Canadian workers can freely choose to work on Remembrance Day without complaining about extra money.

Our young of years gone by were prepared to travel across the sea, live in mudholes and dwell in the cold and damp to preserve our freedom. They chose to do that. Surely it is not too much to ask those required for public safety or essential services in these times of peace to do so without thinking of their paycheques.

Members of this House must never allow the memory of our young men and women who died so we may be free to diminish in this land. We must honour them so we will continually recall the price we must pay when we involve this country and our young in war. Surely we can remember them without a bill that essentially removes a freedom they fought for, the freedom to negotiate working conditions. Surely those who are needed to labour on Remembrance Day can do so without demanding extra pay.

Our young of the past died so we could be free. Our young of the present can pause at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month to remember those who died and why we must remember that war has a price.

Surely that price is more than time and a half on a paycheque and that price is more than removing one freedom from those who fought and died for our many freedoms.

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–251 has in this House a history which today I would suggest we have a chance to rewrite, not in the sense of being revisionist historians but rewrite perhaps out of a sense of duty.

On May 20 of last year this bill died in this Chamber—it was known as C–289 at that time—because of many factors, the principal of which was somewhat of a disagreement among and between parties and interest groups. That is, I would suggest, tragic because an act of remembrance is not a political or partisan fact.

We have seen in this same House in the past several months debates concerning the role of Canada in its military and peacekeeping. Although we as a country are not necessarily one of the major military leaders globally, we have garnered much respect internationally because of the extreme competence of our personnel and their effectiveness on these missions.

I really should ask the question: Why have we for many years been sending soldiers and our armed forces everywhere in the world? I think the response is quite simple. It is simply because in this country there is a belief that we Canadians should try to look for and from time to time make peace.

I believe that Canadians share a common set of beliefs, attitudes and values and that one of these elementary or core principles is our role as makers of peace on this globe. Surely I do not need to tell those present in this place of the hundreds of thousands of lives lost in this century.

• (1900)

These were lives that were freely given because we as a country believed that it was a basic value shared in this country and the importance of our place in the world order. Of course, those who contributed the most are not here to ask us as a national collective to remember them.

Next year, 1995, will mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II and one would expect and undoubtedly there will be many national and international ceremonies to mark the end of the war. One obvious conclusion to be seen at these ceremonies is the fragility, the aging process, of those who were directly involved.

Wars or armed conflicts always operate on two distinct levels. On an individual basis it has a profound effect on those who

were directly involved. Today the veterans of World War II in this country are on average in their seventies and are declining rapidly in number. That unfortunately is a simple fact of life.

There is a second level to this. Wars have affected and moulded national identities and impressed, which is surely the case in this country, and reinforced the attitudes and values in our dealings with other sovereign states.

In Canada there is no doubt a realization that we as a country became an international entity and acquired a national conscience and identity because of our role in the major conflicts in the first half of this century; conflicts in which, unfortunately, the youth of this country fueled our endeavours. Today we do virtually nothing as a country or on a national basis to recognize the importance of the sacrifices made.

I know that this bill has reached the point of national consensus from a provincial perspective. There are a number of individuals in this country who are vitally interested in this bill.

One principal proponents of this bill is a lady by the name of Mrs. Wilma McNeil, to whom I spoke this afternoon. She has written to all ten premiers. The responses have been unanimous in support.

It is interesting to note and to put on the record here today that at least one premier in this country believed and put it in writing to her that he thought it was some sort of a holiday already. He did not realize the lack of the role of the federal government in this day.

Mrs. McNeil has also waged an information war to advise veterans organizations in this country about this bill. These groups, the core of which represent those who survived the war, have unanimously endorsed this bill.

Finally, I am speaking here today in support of this because I think it is an opportunity for the government and for members of Parliament to recognize the importance of this, not only on an individual basis because that will fade with time, but we as a national collective, as a country, recognize that this represents a day which has great importance to the national attitude and belief and, most important, the national values of this country.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in addressing Bill C–251, members will recall that this same bill was introduced by the same member three years ago. It was designated a votable item at that time and it passed first and second reading and was referred to committee. The committee voted against the bill four to three, even after appearances from the army, navy and air force veterans and the Treasury Board. After that the bill was returned to the House and eventually dropped from the order paper.

It seems that the subject of this bill has already been carefully considered and the substance of it rejected by the House. With so many other priorities in the House of Commons and so many other good private members' bills that have never seen the light of day, I am perhaps not all that surprised to see that this bill has come back to the House.

Why would the committee choose this particular bill and this particular topic unless it somehow intends to choose bills that have been rehashed or bills of little import, unless it intends to make the business of Private Members' Business even less relevant than it is already?

• (1905)

Perhaps the committee choosing these bills is trying to deflect the political troubles that inevitably arise when this House considers weighty topics that are truly relevant to the issues of the day.

We must not avoid talking about the things that Canadians are talking about. The direction of this government should be put into reverse by tackling the tough issues first instead of putting off the repairs until tomorrow, wall papering over the cracks and ignoring the holes in the ceiling of Canada's national House.

On to Remembrance Day in this particular bill, it appears to me that this bill really is redundant because in many ways the matter is already entrenched in federal legislation. Canada's labour code lists Remembrance Day as a general holiday. It is also included in the regulations attached to the Financial Administration Act and the Federal Holidays Act lists it as one of three national holidays.

If Remembrance Day were the subject of much dispute it might be different. If hundreds of thousands of public servants were not already receiving Remembrance Day as a holiday I might be more inclined to agree that the heavy hand of legislation must be applied to this matter.

This is not the case and on the contrary allow me to quote from article 12 of the master agreement between the federal government and the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada a union representing about 31,000 federal employees: "The following days shall be designated paid holidays for employees: New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, the Sovereign's birthday, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day". The list goes on.

This is a voluntary agreement arrived at in a consensual manner between 31,000 federal public servants and the Government of Canada. The master agreement already designates Remembrance Day as a paid holiday.

There is even a more sweeping document that says the same thing. It is the master agreement between the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the government representing another total of 170,000 federal public servants. It too designates Remembrance Day as a paid holiday.

It is clear that I must oppose this legislation for a number of reasons. The first reason is that it is not necessary. Treasury Board tells me that a grand total of 382,000 federal employees already stay home on November 11, receiving time and a half pay, giving them the opportunity to consider the tremendous price that was once paid by so many courageous Canadians.

This bill must also be opposed because from a Reform Party point of view we believe there should be a minimal involvement by the state in these types of matters. The state should not be legislating on matters that can be negotiated voluntarily between parties. This of course has been a problem with Canadian governments for far too long.

The government needs to become involved where there are clear practices of obvious abuse but we can see from the master agreements I have quoted from that the government has been very generous to give the day off even when many private sector workers do not receive Remembrance Day as a holiday.

Do you know the costs to the taxpayer of this part of the agreement, Mr. Speaker? The Treasury Board estimates it at $50 million to $75 million for this one day's pay.

We have already paid a big price for Remembrance Day observances. Obviously there is no need whatsoever for government involvement in this case.

That leads naturally to the second reason for my opposition to Bill C–251. Why should the federal public service have another holiday entrenched in law when the private sector does not? If the member for Dartmouth really thought that Remembrance Day was important enough to be included in collective agreements why stop at the public sector? Why not extend this bill to include the private sector?

Perhaps he does not realize what he is doing, that he is unwittingly offering a special privilege to the public sector toward enlarging the benefits and powers enjoyed by governments and government workers.

I would ask the member also to consider an unfortunate side effect to this bill which is to unconsciously deepen the wedge between private and public sectors. While the private sector has already weathered the storms of recession, while it has experienced massive layoffs and is now leaner than ever before, the member for Dartmouth would entrench public service benefits even more deeply than they are already. In essence he would further secure the isolation of public servants from our devastating fiscal problems, problems that may one day bring this government crashing down.

We have a public service that is respected worldwide. Our public service is the equal of any and as much as we might like to shield our public servants from decades of indulgent spending by federal governments, the chickens are proverbially coming home to roost.

• (1910)

Yesterday the finance minister could do nothing but crow about the debt and deficit and warn that government services and programs and yes, even jobs, must tumble in the coming months. This is the third reason I oppose the bill. It is not financially possible to guarantee the benefits that public servants have now, much less offer them more security and more insulation and isolation from what is happening in the real world.

The final reason for my opposition to this piece of legislation is more broadly philosophical. A collective agreement is by definition an agreement between two parties. This implies a process of negotiation in which items are traded back and forth until both sides agree on an acceptable package of items they can both live with. It is a process of mutual compromise.

When the government begins to legislate more and more elements of collective agreements it puts both parties at a distinct disadvantage because it reduces the number of possible compromises that can be made by either party. This makes agreements harder to negotiate. It is sort of like trying to sell a car with a precondition that the buyer must be willing to pick the car up in another city. It makes the sale much harder to negotiate when some of the terms are set beforehand.

I would remind members that the president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada has mentioned that it might be possible that all holidays will be subject to negotiation between parties in the months ahead. I wonder if even the union representing our federal workers would support this type of legislation.

My opposition to this legislation has nothing to do with Remembrance Day. It has nothing to do with the respect and gratitude I feel for those who sacrificed so much to bring me and my generation peace and prosperity. I guess I would be called one of the baby boomer generation and I have never experienced the agonies of war. However, I am not that far removed, even from World War II.

My father joined the air force during the war. Allow me to read from a book written about my father entitled *A Canadian Story*: "On October 26, 1943 he went to the number six recruitment centre in Winnipeg to enlist and when he arrived he was informed that he could indeed sign up but that anyone under the age of 18 had to have his parents' permission. Bill", my father's name, "took the necessary form, walked outside the building, forged his mother's signature and went back in".

My dad was just a 17–year old kid but he was willing to do just about anything to do his part for the country. He served with the air force for two years even here in Ottawa: "On October 9, 1945 Bill was discharged from the air force. His two years in the

service of the king was similar to that of many other young men. He had volunteered to serve his country when it needed him, as did millions of others".

I am not untouched by the war and I am not untouched by the sacrifice of people like my father. In the end, he only had to spend two years of his life in this cause, but he was willing to lay down his entire life if that is what his country asked of him. I can only hope that if, God forbid, the necessity arises again, I would be willing to do as much to serve my own country.

Remembrance Day is a vital reminder of the price Canadians paid for the things we hold dear and let us hope that Canadians in both the private and public sectors, in homes and in businesses, in their personal and public statements will remember the sacrifices made by our ancestors.

Legislating additional public service holidays is both unwise and unnecessary in order that they may be remembered.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C–251, this piece of legislation.

I want to commend my colleague for having brought it forth. I want to correct a couple of things. First of all, this is now a recognized holiday in the collective agreement. It can float. That is the issue. The point about an extra $50 million to $70 million is totally erroneous. One could counteract by pointing out that if it is worth that much in a collective agreement it could be traded off.

What my colleague is seeking to do is make absolutely certain that it is a holiday on that day. Why is that? It is because of the sacrifice of the soldiers and their families and their supporters. Because of their sacrifice, we want to set this day aside to make absolutely certain that we remember what they contributed to this nation, the freedom that we have today, the greatest gift apart from health that anyone could possibly have. Because of their sacrifice we have one of the finest, if not the finest, nations in the world. We started with a real head start because this is a wonderful country, but when we think of what they have contributed to the very fabric of the nation surely we can set a day aside throughout the nation to remember what they have contributed.

• (1915)

Unfortunately we take what we have for granted. I remember going to church services where the pastor indicated that we take our good health for granted until we start losing it. Then we suddenly we start to remember how important it is.

We take our freedoms for granted. We take the greatness of the country for granted. We take this wonderful, magnificent country of ours too much for granted. We have to stop and reflect, to think, and to say thank you. That is what we want to say. We want to say thank you to our soldiers. We want to say thank you to their families. We want to say thank you to those who supported them. That is what this is all about.

We want to set a day aside to remember the wars, remember the destructiveness of wars, and remember that war should be passé. We want to remember those who died. We want to remember those who were wounded. We want to remember those who came back but who have passed on. We want to make sure that we do not forget their sacrifice, their tremendous contribution to the country, this free country.

[*Translation*]

My hon. colleague wishes to have this day set aside in memory of the sacrifices made by our soldiers, their families and those who supported them. We want to remember the wars. We want to remember those who died on the battlefields. We want to remember those who were wounded and those who came back, but have since passed on. We want to remember their contribution to our country, to what is probably the most beautiful and perhaps the best country in the world. We want to remember that they gave us a country where we can live in freedom.

[*English*]

That is really all I really wanted to say. This is an important initiative. This is an initiative that we should all be supporting. This is not an initiative that should be somehow shunted aside because of supposed costs. There are no costs. We simply ask that we set a day aside that is consistent throughout Canada so that we can remember those who served.

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill C–251 this evening in the House. The bill will ensure that Remembrance Day is respected by public servants in the way that it was intended. For this reason I fully support the hon. member's bill and would like to commend him on bringing it forward.

Remembrance Day is much more than a holiday or a day off during the longer days of fall. It was introduced into our country as a day to do just that: to remember, to remember those who gave their lives so that we the people who stand before you today, Mr. Speaker, would be able to enjoy the freedoms we now have. It is to remember those who fought, those who made the supreme sacrifice with their lives, and those who sacrificed here at home during the two world wars and in Korea. It is to remember, simply so that we will not forget the sacrifices that touched so many Canadian families.

Children growing up today have no recollection of the sufferings that took place during those times of strife. To them it is another story in our history books. The recognition of Remembrance Day sparks questions in these children and in turn they will become informed. In this way the sacrifices and the

tragedies will never be forgotten, for it is when we forget that history repeats itself.

Remembrance Day has always been and should always be recognized on November 11. As it now stands the day can be used as a bargaining chip to obtain an extra day off at some other time of the year. Remembrance Day was not intended to be part of a lengthened festive season. It is a time to be solemn, to remember, to respect, and not to rejoice.

• (1920)

Of course there are exceptions in the bill for those people who provide services that are essential to public safety or interest. These people will naturally have to work on this day and will be compensated appropriately. However in general Canadians should not be required to work. The country must hold on to those things that are most important to our history, not put them aside as if they belong to another era. We must teach our children it is important to respect those who died, fought and sacrificed so that we would be able to stand in front of the House today to debate the issue.

In my constituency of Carleton—Charlotte there are many veterans and many families of veterans who gave their all, in many cases loved ones who gave their lives, so that we might enjoy our Canadian freedoms. I shudder to think what might have happened to our world without their sacrifices.

I urge all members of the House to think of future generations and what will happen if we are allowed to forget.

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to participate in the debate and to pay tribute, as have past speakers who are either for or against the concept of Remembrance Day.

I had the opportunity to follow my father to Europe in the early 1950s when the Canadians went over and I saw the devastation in the countryside. I spent a lot of my younger life serving in the NATO forces. Nothing can teach like visiting a graveyard with the headstones of 5,000 to 10,000 soldiers. I refer to the second previous speaker who mentioned his father joining at 18 years of age. I went into Beny–sur–Mer and saw 19 and 20 year old sergeants; they hardly let them lead a section today. These young people gave their lives. I saw their graves for miles.

Nothing struck me more than when I went to Vimy Ridge and saw the massive battlefield and the Canadian monument which is part of Canada in France. Later I went to Verdun and saw on the hill, as far as the eye could see in the trees, the white markers where a million people had died in the first world war around Verdun, both German and French soldiers. The slaughter in those periods touched me deeply.

I hope we never have to see it again, but the remembrance of such an event was burnt deeply in my mind. As a consequence I hope we can teach in school about the history of wars. Although it can be a vicarious kind of experience for the teacher and the students, it can ask people to remember not to make the same mistakes of the past. We can imagine what it must feel like never to have returned.

Those are questions that are deep and piercing. Neither the teaching of history nor the experience of imagination come close to explaining the depth and intensity of the experiences of generations of Canadians who went through the first war, the second war and the Korean war. Some of them had such horrible experiences they will never talk about the war; they have a bond of silence concerning their experiences. Sometimes we can never get some people to stop talking about them, but that is the spectrum of the effect of those experiences on them.

• (1925)

That is why we gather as Canadians to remember and to give thanks in our hearts for the peace and freedom our forefathers brought to us from those wars. Never as Canadians have we ever sought to go to a war with unjust cause. We have never sought to go to war to take a piece of another country's land. We have always gone for an honourable and just cause. For that we should be proud.

Some older people know about the personal way of the sacrifices but they are fast leaving us. There are few working people who experienced the second world war. There are some who experienced the Korean war. There are no oral histories to be given in the future. There must be some tangible recognition of that sacrifice which gives people a moment to reflect.

One thing struck me. Every family had a right to select what would go on the headstones. I was 21 years old when I saw the headstone of a 21–year old corporal from the Winnipeg Rifles. It read: "To all the world he was a soldier. To me he was all the world".

It was a rather choking experience because I never really got too emotional about it. I got into it as a young guy, all gung–ho, ready to go and do my bit for my country and to gain some experience. That may have the motivating force for some of our soldiers. However that headstone struck me as very sentimental.

These kinds of things are very tangible. I wish someone would make a reasonable video to capture the spirit, the headstones, the actions that took place on D–Day, and all other events they experienced. They should keep it short and sweet because war is hell. We must keep that in perspective. We never want to step into it.

The older people remember the dark days of war. It left great impressions with them. In my father's family there were three boys. One joined the army. One joined the navy. One joined the air force. They all had different experiences but all came back with different attitudes. However one thing they had as a group was that they never wanted to go to war again. That was significant. However the cause being just can be presented in a way that may motivate people like them to go at it again.

I have seen the news coverage of D–Day re–enacted and the role that Canadians played in a proud way, giving up their lives. When I was there I represented my regiment, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada that landed at Beny–sur–Mer. I was serving with a fellow in the regiment who was had been there. He was a platoon commander. Of all 110 men in the company that went in, 19 survived. It is an awful to think about what we left on the beaches. We had with us some of the sergeants who had served in other companies at the same time. They kept our history alive by making an attempt at their objectives on D–Day, which as we know eventually broke the back of the Nazis and brought peace to the world for a short period of time until the Korean war.

I ask members to give due consideration to tangibly recognizing that sacrifice. The people in the employ of the government are perpetuating governmental institutions to some effect. That is why I stand today to support the bill.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to follow my hon. colleague from Stratford to speak in support of this bill.

Several years ago I had perhaps one of the greatest experiences that one could have as a member of Parliament. I had the honour to go with the Canadian delegation to the 75th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge in the company of 14 of the veterans of that battle, which was Canada's first. Many of us say it was perhaps the battle that forged our country. All of the veterans were over the age of 90.

I remember one, a mere lad of 93, chasing one of his comrades age 95 around one of the monuments. I was astounded at the energy and the drive of these people at their great ages. I guess one had to have the constitution of a tank to survive in the trenches of 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918.

I saw some of the cemeteries that my hon. colleague talked about. I remember going through the largest Commonwealth cemetery. I cannot remember whether it was in France or Belgium. There were rows and rows of those little white headstones with maple leaves that said over and over again: "A Canadian soldier known only to God". I defy anyone not to be in tears after going through that.

I also briefly went with some veterans of World War II on this trip to Dieppe. I saw that fearsome and frightening beach where young Canadians fought and died in such great numbers.

Consequently, I would like to add my voice as the member for Halifax, the largest navy base in our country, a place where from all corners of Canada we remember with thanks and respect. I think that we should see Remembrance Day as a statutory holiday so that never, ever will we forget and so that the children and future generations will also know what Canadians have done to preserve their freedom and their heritage.

The Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the order paper.

It being 7.33 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.33 p.m.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 19, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

TELEVISION VIOLENCE

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond–Guiral (Laval–Centre. B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, following the tragic events in Norway, where a five–year–old girl was killed by two six–year–olds, the public is entitled to wonder if television violence does not lead to violent behaviour in young people.

Many are convinced that it does: 1.5 million people have signed Virginie Larivière's petition calling for an end to violence on television.

There is increasing agreement among medical experts as to the harmful influence of television violence on the behaviour of children.

In the face of the CRTC's inertia on this issue, what is the federal government waiting for to propose concrete and effective measures that address this serious problem, which is detrimental to the development of our children?

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a Torontonian applied to bring his bride from Guyana to Canada. His file was taken in Etobicoke; another was taken in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The files then went to Toronto. Then they went to Brampton. Then they went to Mississauga and back to Toronto.

There his file sat for over six months with no action. Now it has to go back to Trinidad with no action taken, but the medicals have expired and have to be done over. Then the file will have to come back for approval to Mississauga and then go back to Port of Spain.

With luck the case will be finalized in a few months. That is two years of passing the buck for a standard application. That is two years of heartbreak and loneliness and that is not unusual. I have spousal sponsorships on my desk that have taken four years.

The system is overwhelmed. This government says that family reunification is a priority but to make it work we must cut the numbers of extended family sponsorships, cut the backlog and make room for those who deserve priority.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House a glaring difference between reality and practice in the immigration sponsorship program.

Ideally under the terms of the program, someone who agrees to sponsor a family member also agrees to provide assistance, if necessary, for a 10–year period following their arrival. In reality, this agreement is of little worth as 62 per cent of all sponsored immigrants apply for social assistance within two years of their arrival in Canada. While undoubtedly some defaults are justifiable, in most cases sponsors simply do not live up to their agreements because they are not enforceable.

The credibility of the immigration sponsorship program must be restored. The creation of a mechanism which would be enforceable would give sponsored immigrants the security they need while at the same time protecting the Canadian taxpayer.

* * *

CANADIAN LABOUR MARKET AND PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre on its 10th anniversary today. Former Minister of Finance Hon. Marc Lalonde was instrumental in establishing this unique forum for dialogue and consensus building among Canada's business and labour communities.

Admittedly, business and labour have distinct and divergent agendas on many fronts. However, over these past 10 years the CLMPC has brought together leading labour and business organizations, such as the Business Council on National Issues, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, and the Canadian Federation of Labour. Together they have produced many significant consensus reports on important economic challenges facing Canada.

All of us wish to extend our thanks to the hundreds of business and labour leaders who have contributed so much to this worthwhile endeavour. We congratulate the CLMPC today.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his document released last week the Minister of Human Resources Development announced the objectives of the reform which included helping Canadians get and keep work by ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to compete with the best labour forces in the world.

[*Translation*]

The Parti Quebecois government shares this objective and sets it out clearly in its chapter on full employment: "If every member of society, on the basis of his abilities and determination, is able to find employment that meets his expectations, society as a whole stands to gain. In order for Quebecers and their economy to attain their full potential, there must exist a framework of policies that encourage people to lead a productive life".

It is perhaps surprising that the Quebec government shares our objective. I would therefore invite it, without delay, to take part in the consultations on the reform of social programs. This is part and parcel of the responsibilities of the good government it has promised us.

* * *

[*English*]

BREAST CANCER MONTH

Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to remind members of the House of Commons and all Canadians that October is Breast Cancer Month.

Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among Canadian women. Approximately 17,000 new breast cancer cases will be diagnosed this year and 5,400 women will die of the disease.

Health Canada, together with the Canadian Cancer Society, the National Cancer Institute of Canada, and provinces and territories is implementing a major initiative on breast cancer totalling $25 million over five years. Activities include support to provincial breast cancer screening activities, research, five breast cancer exchange projects and fostering high standards of care for breast cancer.

I would like to applaud the efforts of families, professionals, voluntary and self–help groups and others toward reducing the burden of this disease on Canadian women and their families.

This month proclaimed as Breast Cancer Month provides us all with opportunities to support breast cancer initiatives—

* * *

[*Translation*]

TERRORISM

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, approximately 20 people were killed and 40 wounded in a bombing this morning in Tel Aviv. The horror we have witnessed was appalling, and we wish to extend our deepest sympathies to the victims' families.

• (1405)

Just days after it was announced that the Nobel Peace Prize had been awarded to Israeli leaders and the leader of the PLO and two days after Israel and Jordan announced they had reached a comprehensive agreement, there is cause for considerable concern about the effect of this deadly attack on the ongoing peace negotiations.

We strongly condemn this attack. The enemies of peace must not win. According to the PLO leader, the best way to respond to the acts of such radicals is through the pursuit and intensification of the peace process. Let us hope that the peace process will continue.

* * *

[*English*]

TERRORISM

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party I offer my deepest condolences to the victims and their families of today's tragic bombing in Tel Aviv, Israel. While no words can do justice to the suffering of the families, we must speak out.

Terrorists who seek to destroy peace must not be allowed to win. Those who target innocent people to generate fear and hatred must be fought with every ounce of our energy and condemned by all civilized societies. In the end it is the voices of those who have struggled long and hard for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East who must triumph. Their victory will honour the lives of the victims and send a message to the world that violence need not be an endless cycle.

We are sickened by this criminal act and will not forget the victims of terrorism. I hope members of this House will pledge to fight on for their memory and the memory of those who have gone before them. The world community must never surrender to terrorists and we must never abandon our quest for peace.

GOVERNOR GENERAL AWARDS

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year the Governor General awards in commemoration of the Persons case are given to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution toward promoting the equality of women in Canada.

This year we honour five women who have gained distinction for their lifelong vision and dedication. They are: Shirley Carr of Niagara Falls, Ontario, who championed legislation that addressed women's rights in the workplace; Dr. Rose Charlie from Agassiz, British Columbia, who struggled for social justice for the women of Canada's First Nations; Alice Girard of Montreal, Quebec, who made a remarkable contribution to the public awareness of the nursing profession's role in health care; Morag O'Brien of Saint John's, Newfoundland, who was the backbone of her area's health care system for over 40 years; and finally, Dodi Robb of Toronto, Ontario, who dedicated her career to ensuring the inclusion of women's perspective in television programming.

I call upon this House to join me in saluting the courage of these five remarkable Canadian women.

* * *

THERESA STEVENSON

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring to the attention of the House a constituent of Souris—Moose Mountain of whom we are justly proud.

Theresa Stevenson is a member of the Cowesses Indian band. She will receive the Order of Canada today for her personal conviction to improve the condition of life of all people in her community by helping them to receive the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing and education, the necessities many of us take for granted.

Theresa is a woman of action. She is involved in providing hot meals to needy children, working as a literacy volunteer, assisting patrons to provide low cost housing, and much more.

Theresa lives by the credence: If you are honest, fair and work from the heart, you can do almost anything. Her humanitarian efforts are not reserved for her own people. She says: "God has made me colour blind. A person is a person and I will never close my door or my heart to a person in need".

We congratulate her.

[*Translation*]

ELECTION ACT

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, the government of Quebec has announced its intention to amend the Quebec Election Act to save time and money by eliminating steps that are not necessary and cost the taxpayers a great deal of money.

• (1410)

Ottawa could bring the federal deficit down and save tens of millions of dollars if it applied measures along the lines of those announced by the Quebec government. The federal government should consider seriously a real election law reform.

The government must eliminate influence peddling as well as financial backer pressure in the case of traditional federal parties. As my hon. colleague from Richelieu said, the government of Canada should revise all outdated electoral practices and review party financing so as to allow only individuals to contribute to the coffers of federal political parties.

* * *

[*English*]

PATRICK AND ELIZABETH

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tragedy has once again stricken the residents of St. John's West.

It is with great sorrow that I rise in this House to inform members of a tragic loss of life. On Thursday, October 13 the vessel *Patrick and Elizabeth* was lost off the coast of Newfoundland with all five crew aboard. A massive search failed to turn up any signs of survival.

I express our deep sympathy to those families mourning the loss of Captain Patrick Coady of St. John's, crew members Edward Barry, Gerald Goldsworthy, and Mark Traverse of the Placentia area, and Wayne Giles of Southern Harbour.

My deepest sympathy.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we also extend our sympathies and appreciate the member's statement.

When interest rates shot up after the release of the Liberal government's first budget, the red ink book, Reformers were the first to call for immediate action to keep the budget on its deficit reduction path. Yet the government refused to acknowledge that a problem even existed. The Prime Minister repeatedly stated that no additional cuts would be necessary for the government to reach its deficit reduction targets.

Over the last few weeks the C.D. Howe Institute, the Business Council on National Issues, and the Governor of the Bank of Canada have all said what we have been saying from day one: that the Liberal deficit reduction targets are billions of dollars off track. Yesterday's presentation of the finance minister only confirmed this scenario.

This government's unwillingness to reduce expenditures is threatening economic growth, hindering job creation and jeopardizing the nation's health care and social programs. The government cannot put off making hard decisions. The ticking of the debt clock is growing louder every day and now stands at $534,864—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, N.D.P.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Public Service Alliance of Canada pointed out the skyrocketing cost of contracting out. Far from being a way to save money, contracting out is actually way more expensive. A Manitoba example helps to illustrate the point.

As Local 704 of the Union of National Defence Employees argues, figuring the total cost of the base support budget and other costs into the allegedly hourly cost of doing a job currently done by DND employees at Camp Shiloh not only grossly misrepresents the cost but creates an artificially high ceiling that is easy for private contractors to come in under.

Contracting out is a scam designed for patronage. A government serious about saving money should cut back on contracting out. It should not cut back on employees who will do the job for a lot less than what the private sector now charges the government, thanks to the government's own misleading way of calculating the cost of doing it in house.

* * *

POST–SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, post–secondary education is a critical issue to the future of Canada.

The riding of Waterloo includes two of Canada's leading universities, the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, as well as a campus of Conestoga College. The concentration of post–secondary students in Waterloo riding is the highest in the country. These institutions have played a crucial role in my community and in Canada's economy.

The residents of Waterloo riding are proud of Canada's record of excellence in post–secondary education. However we also know that our education system must continue to develop in order to meet the challenges of the next century.

I am pleased the government is now reviewing its role in post–secondary education in an effort to improve the system. We need to ensure that our post–secondary institutions are affordable and accessible to our youth who must compete in the international marketplace. Only through a comprehensive discussion with students, professors, administrators and the general public can we properly strengthen our universities and colleges to effectively serve Canadians in the years ahead.

* * *

• (1415)

REFORM PARTY

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party came to Ottawa on a power trip last weekend for its first national convention east of the prairies.

Using a decoder, here is a translation of its policies. If you want to speak French, go to Gaspé. If you fear a break–in, get yourself a bazooka. If you catch a kid at the cookie jar, cane him. If you are a woman wanting equal pay, get lost. If you are an immigrant, pay the doctor cash in advance if you please.

God save us from such caring, national unity builders.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, in the last election campaign, a few days before the vote, the Prime Minister made a formal commitment not to increase taxes. He reiterated this same commitment in this House on September 20, when he said: "We do not plan to have any tax increases".

How can the Prime Minister reconcile his election commitment not to increase taxes with the statements made yesterday by his Minister of Finance, who said: "We made no promise with regard to taxes"?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not plan any tax increases. The Minister of Finance will table a budget and we think that there will be cuts. However, if people do not want us to make cuts, the alternative is to raise taxes.

We do not know exactly how much the economy will grow. We hope that it will give us the revenue we need, and I am pleased to report to the House that the Conference Board said today that confidence in Canada last month was the highest since 1979.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): As a historical aside, I was Minister of Finance at that time.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister tell us that he is counting on economic growth to make up the deficit, when his Minister of Finance said exactly the opposite yesterday, and I quote him from memory: "We can no longer count on economic growth alone to make up the deficit. Other measures will have to be taken"? How does he reconcile these two statements?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that the hon. member has a memory problem. We cut government spending in the last budget; it will be necessary to make further cuts in the next budget. That is what we are saying.

The Reform Party tells us that we are not cutting enough. Yesterday, you criticized us for not cutting enough, so we will perhaps listen to the opposition and make more cuts. Then they will stop complaining.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, you will agree that the majority of Canadians find it rather distressing for the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to merrily contradict each other on such an important issue.

If the Prime Minister is serious in the answer he just gave, could he, despite what his Minister of Finance said yesterday, make a formal commitment not to increase taxes for Canada's middle class?

• (1420)

[*English*]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are consulting the Canadian public at this time. Everybody knows that when we became the government we had $500 billion of debt that we have to carry. We have prepared a very serious plan. We said that we will reduce the deficit every year by so much and will be at $25 billion at the end of the third year of our mandate.

We said very clearly that we will achieve our goal and we will do it. This year growth is at 4 per cent which is helping a lot. We will probably have to make cuts too. Probably we will have to plug some holes that exist in the tax system. We always have some problems like that which can bring in more revenue to the government.

I have absolute confidence we can reach our goal. There is always abuse of the tax system. I have been around long enough to know that. It is the job of a good minister to plug these holes and I have complete confidence in my good Minister of Finance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Instead of getting spending under control, the Minister of Finance has clearly announced that he is not giving up the idea of raising taxes. His document proposes a review of tax expenditures that affect mainly middle-income people, such as education tax credits, RRSPs, credits for charitable donations, credits for seniors, credits for married people, compensation for work accident victims—it is all fair game.

After hitting the unemployed and the very poor hard, how can the Minister of Finance now consider taxing the middle class more when he makes no reference in his paper to the scandal of family trusts and of tax shelters which benefit rich Canadians?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the hon. member just did, really, as I did yesterday, was to read the public accounts. Now we know that he can read. We now ask him to take a closer look, to make choices and to tell us what he thinks should be done. We also asked the member many times to give us his suggestions about family trusts. We asked him to participate fully in the debate, but all we hear are political speeches, not constructive suggestions!

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we made some very specific suggestions to the Minister of Finance. And I even challenged him to apply them and to attack the problems that are out there: operating expenses and tax breaks for wealthy Canadians. That is where he must cut.

Under these circumstances, how can the Minister of Finance consider going after RRSPs when he refuses to touch family trusts and tax shelters? That is the question and it is outrageous that he is not doing it!

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last budget, we closed the $100,000 capital gains loophole. That was the biggest tax break. We closed a great many corporate tax loopholes. We will certainly follow through in the next budget. Until then, the hon. member and his colleagues can make suggestions. Instead of making partisan speeches and praying to heaven, why do they not act as responsible members of Parliament and join the committee to really improve the lot of Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister admitted that the spending cuts contained in his last budget were not sufficient to even meet his own modest deficit cutting target. He admitted that unless another $3 billion to $5 billion in savings is achieved in 1995-96 and another $6 billion to $9 billion in 1996-97 he will not meet his target.

My question is simple and direct and I hope to receive a simple and direct answer. Where does the minister expect to get that order of savings?

• (1425)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development— Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I set out yesterday, among the various scenarios, was a scenario based on a prudent assessment of what interest rates are going to be and of the necessity to arrive at savings of $9 billion cumulatively over a two–year period.

As to where that is going to come from, I set out very clearly a list of all government expenditures, a list of all spending and tax expenditures. We have set in place a process of consultation which is unique in Canadian economic history. It is very important that the process work.

I ask the leader of the Reform Party and his colleagues who sit on that committee to give us their suggestions, to join in drawing Canadians out as we have to, to make the trade–offs.

It is crucial, in the period into which we are going and the budget into which we are going, that we build bridges to Canadians so there is a national consensus of the need to face up to the problems at which we are looking.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister was told in the budget debate six months ago that his spending cuts were inadequate. He insisted that they were good enough. When interest rates went up, the minister was told by analysts, by officials in his department, by the money markets, that his deficit cutting was off track. He insisted he was on track.

The minister has repeatedly been advised over the last six months that his deficit control program is off track and how to fix it, but he has ignored that advice.

Why should Canadians believe that their advice would be listened to now?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Reform Party is engaging in a certain amount of revisionist history.

What took place in the House was members of the Reform Party consistently crying wolf and saying, within about two weeks after the budget, that we were going to miss our targets this year, that we should have a mini–budget in March, that we should have a mini–budget in April, May, June, July.

I do not know if they have ever run anything, but that is not the way a big institution works, certainly not the Government of Canada.

As we indicated yesterday, we are going to hit our deficit target this year for the first time in Canadian history.

If someone would like to talk about the last budget and how I feel, I am a little upset that the Prime Minister announced that business confidence was up. I was going to announce that. I am even more upset that the Prime Minister said that business confidence was higher when he was the finance minister than now—

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice): Same level.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): On the same level. I would like to tell the Prime Minister that not only is business confidence up but that real exports are up to record levels, 17.7 per cent higher than at this time last year.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Silye: Keep laughing while you go further in debt. Enjoy yourself now.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I love these Wednesdays.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the Liberal cabinet has not the foggiest notion of how to balance budgets and Canadians are paying the price for it.

Reformers in the House know that the Minister of Health cannot read a financial statement, that the Prime Minister does not know that jobs are created by deficit cutting and not public spending, and that the Minister of Human Resources Development has never balanced a budget in his entire political life.

How much more are Canadian taxpayers going to have to pay while high spending Liberals learn the elementary lessons of fiscal responsibility?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development –Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a slight correction. I believe the Minister of Health is an accountant. I have never said very much about accountants, but I think they can read balance sheets. In fact she is a very good accountant.

We have offered members of the Reform Party the opportunity time and time again to set out before us what they would do. We gave it to them in the prebudget debate and they did not take advantage of it. We gave it to them this summer and they did not take advantage of it. We have given it to them over the last two days. What we are saying is this: You now have a unique opportunity to lay in front of us what the Reform Party would do, and we are looking forward to the details. I was going to say one other thing before I was so rudely interrupted. Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you that manufacturing shipments are also up. We have just had the strongest six months growth since the start of the recession.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In his grey paper, the minister admits for the first time that he intends to make major additional cuts in the social program reform, on top of the $7.4 billion cuts announced in last spring's budget and which have largely been approved already.

Now that the Minister of Finance has confirmed that he will cut billions more at the expense of the poor and the middle class, the question is: How many billions?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made it very clear in the budget that, in 1996–97, transfers to provinces would be frozen to the 1993–94 level. This was also confirmed by the Minister of Human Resources Development in his document.

We said that a review of the UI program was in order and that it would be the second stage of the reforms undertaken. Again, this was confirmed by the Minister of Human Resources Development. Make no mistake about it: We will definitely have to cut in all government spending.

The Minister of Human Resources Development is holding consultations right across the country and the finance committee will conduct the same exercise. I do hope that members opposite will make suggestions. Indeed, instead of just yelling they should make useful suggestions.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, how can the minister announce additional cuts of billions of dollars in social programs without being more specific, when the consultation process on the social policy reform is barely getting underway?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suggested that the hon. member read not only the grey paper, but also the first document, which is mauve as you can see. She will see that the policy statement is very clear: we have to improve government finances in order to protect our social programs.

Obviously, we cannot let international markets tell us how to build our country. Again, it is to protect our social programs that we are undertaking a true structural reform and I hope that the hon. member will come before the committee to make suggestions. I will welcome them.

[*English*]

THE DEFICIT

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on February 23 of this year I asked the Minister of Finance to admit that if he provided realistic economic projections in his budget, as a result of that budget the deficit would not go below $30 billion in the third year and would remain close to 4 per cent of GDP. The minister replied: "The answer is quite the opposite. Absolutely we will attain the 3 per cent of GDP".

Yesterday the minister admitted that my original assumption was correct. Will he tell the House why he did not know what he was talking about when he presented his budget projections in February?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there obviously is a little confusion here. The member says that I did not know what I was talking about in the House yesterday. I was not in the House yesterday.

Perhaps these might help. The fact is—

• (1435)

The Speaker: Order. We would prefer that there not be any props.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): I wish they were props, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is that we have been unequivocal. The Prime Minister has stated it unequivocally. All the members of cabinet and all the members on this side and on that side of the House have stated it unequivocally. We are going to hit our target. If there should have been any doubt about it, there could not have been any doubt after yesterday with what this country is going through.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister missed the English translation. What I said was that the minister made precisely that statement about his February budget and he was wrong just as every finance minister with weak intermediate targets—Marc Lalonde, Michael Wilson, Don Mazankowski—have been wrong in the last 10 years on this very subject.

When will the Minister of Finance admit that a two stage approach to this problem will not work? Will he admit that it is not possible to jump over a wide chasm in two short leaps?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I obviously do not have the same familiarity with the Mazankowski and Wilson budgets that the member does because I did not work for them as he did.

I understand the member's analogy to jumping chasms. Let me simply say that may be the Reform Party's way, but in terms of chasms, we in the Liberal Party far prefer to build bridges.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HIBERNIA PROJECT

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

He acknowledged yesterday in the House that he has no idea whether or not the Hibernia megaproject will be profitable one day. He said, and I quote: "We must complete this project because[. . .] we will be able to recover if not all at least a large part of the money invested so far". The Prime Minister does not even dare talk about profits.

Considering that this statement is in direct conflict with the smug optimism of the Minister of Natural Resources, how can the Prime Minister say that he is managing public money soundly, when he is not even sure that we will be able to recoup the billions of dollars we are sinking into that project?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Let me assure the hon. member that this government believes that the Hibernia project is viable and that we anticipate a reasonable and fair rate of return on our investment as do all consortium members.

Let me suggest that the hon. member should appreciate that we in the Government of Canada define value in a number of different ways, only one of which is rate of return. I should remind the hon. member that many jobs have been created and many contracts have been let, many of those in the province of Quebec. Over half a billion dollars worth of benefits have gone to the province of Quebec.

We are building infrastructure. We are building a new source of energy security in this country. Therefore, I suggest that Hibernia on all counts is a valuable project for the long term prosperity of this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, the minister must be one of the very few who imagine we can make money on a barrel of oil. We are going to see the end of the oil before we see any profit. If you want to talk about Quebec, Madam Minister, let us talk about it!

The Speaker: I remind the hon. member that he should address his comments to the Chair.

Mr. Duceppe: If the Minister wishes to talk about Quebec, maybe she could explain to us why a shipyard was built from scratch in Newfoundland, where there was no expertise—as we can see today with the transfer of work to New Brunswick—while the shipyard in Lévis—Lauzon could have done the work instead of being threatened with closure.

The minister is telling us that she is having her arm twisted. As we know, the government withdrew from two other megaprojects, one in Regina and one in Lloydminster, in Saskatchewan.

Why continue to sink billions of dollars in Hibernia, when she actually acknowledges that it will never be profitable?

• (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me try and answer at least some of the hon. member's allegations.

There are many indicators at this point that we will receive a reasonable rate of return on our investment. I suggest the member look at a recent Wood Gundy report which indicates that we will enjoy a reasonable rate of return on our investment as will all consortium members.

Let me suggest to the hon. member that when he talks about shipyards that he is referring to a recent contractual issue involving Vinland shipyards and Saint John shipyards.

I think many in this country, including my colleagues from New Brunswick, would be somewhat surprised to hear that the hon. member does not believe that the Saint John shipyard, one of the finest shipyards in the world in terms of instrumentation and electrical abilities, is qualified to participate in this contract.

The Speaker: My colleagues, I appeal to you. If we could keep the questions short and the answers, it would be better for all of us.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, under the red ink book infrastructure plan, governments of Canada have borrowed over $4.7 billion in this $6 billion boondoggle and have created only 7,000 long term jobs.

Given the statement of the finance minister yesterday about everything being on the table when considering cuts to the deficit, will the Minister of Finance commit in this House today to axing the pork barrel program and saving taxpayers the last billion dollars?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I again want to remind the member about the projects that are going on in his riding which he did not object to.

Nevertheless, this program is creating not 7,000 but some 100,000 jobs. That is only the beginning because it is attracting additional private sector investment into many communities and that will create at least twice as many jobs at the end of the day.

The money that is used for the federal portion as has been said time and time again because it is in the red book—have a look, it is on reallocation—is a matter of setting priorities and spending smarter. That is what we doing with the money we are putting into it.

The Speaker: I want to thank you for keeping the questions short and the answers.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if the minister had taken the time to find out, he would have found out that I opposed the projects in my riding.

We hear about the red ink book, the lilac book and the green book. The only thing in common is that they are comic books.

The infrastucture program is up for review at the end of its second year. Given that the finance minister has admitted that the deficit kills jobs, will he kill the infrastructure program and create jobs?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear what the member thinks about some of the projects in his own riding that are putting people to work. He has never told me that. He certainly never told my office that.

This program is implementing what this government said it was going to do in providing a program that brings three orders of government together to get the economy moving. Provinces of all political stripes and municipalities of all political stripes applaud this program and are in fact joining together in a partnership that is helping to get Canadians back to work.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL FORUM ON HEALTH

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Clearly, without the participation of the provinces, the National Forum on Health will be just a lot of useless talk about health issues, and the Prime Minister admitted as much when he said, and I quote:

> The forum is not a decision-making body. Its purpose is to look at the issue and make recommendations. This exercise is not binding on the federal government nor on the provinces. . . I invited these people to discuss the issue.

• (1445)

Since the fact that the provinces will not attend makes the National Forum on Health an exercise in futility, will the Prime Minister cancel the forum and save $12 million in taxpayers' money, to show he is really serious about dealing with waste in government spending?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all participants, who represent the health care community in Canada, including all national associations, have applauded the government's initiative. The time has come to review a system that has served Canadians well so far. We must realize, however, that the system costs the Canadian economy more than 9 per cent of our gross domestic income. This is better than the United States, but not as efficient as systems in other countries.

We must find ways to work as cheaply and efficiently as we can to serve all Canadians, and we must have a dialogue with experts from all regions of the country. I think it will be a very useful exercise that will help us ensure that we can maintain adequate levels of health care for all Canadians across Canada, because health is everybody's business.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister refer, as he did yesterday, to establishing national standards, when health care is the exclusive purview of the provinces and at a time when his government, the federal government, is contributing less and less to health care financing?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I was an ordinary member of Parliament and we adopted medicare for all Canadians, the federal government's contribution in the health sector was practically nil at the time. We set up a national system of which Canadians can be proud. If the federal government at the time had not taken this initiative, we would not have a national health care plan that applies to all Canadians.

That is why we have a Canadian Parliament that sets standards for the benefit of all Canadians. Our system is the envy of other countries, because we treat our citizens well, whether we are talking about health care or other areas.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Bruce—Grey is very near to Lake Huron and we are susceptible to airborne particulates and pollutants from the state of Michigan.

Recently the state of Michigan applied to the EPA to lower the standards of emissions. Is the Minister of the Environment aware of the situation, and what she is doing to protest this step by the Michigan authorities?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this happens to be an issue that affects the health of literally hundreds of thousands of people in southwestern Ontario.

As a result of the initiatives of not only the member for Bruce—Grey but also the southwestern caucus and the minister from Windsor, we have been in touch with the EPA directly. The Department of Foreign Affairs has spoken directly to the State Department of the United States.

We are not satisfied with the EPA's proposal to move forward with the lowering of the standards that could potentially negatively affect the health of Canada. This is why I am very pleased to tell the House that on July 26, along with my counterpart in the United States, Carol Browner, I entered a dialogue to start looking at the issue of joint airsheds from a shared point of view.

Airborne problems do not carry passports. We are going to tackle the problem together and we are going to find a solution that respects the health of Canadians.

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GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says that Canadians can expect the deepest spending cuts in history, cuts that could total at least $6.3 billion in the next two years.

Is the minister willing to play a leadership role and make spending cuts in his own backyard, namely cuts to the federal office of regional development in Quebec, a program for which he is directly responsible?

• (1450)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of FORD–Q and very proud of the role FORD–Q plays within the province of Quebec.

FORD–Q, along with the other regional agencies and indeed with all of government, has already been subject to very severe fiscal discipline. No part of government is going to be exempt from a detailed examination of what it is doing.

The kind of thing we are doing on this side and on that side of the House is making government better. We are not only looking, as did other governments, at the 10 or 15 per cent of cutting that must be spent but we are making the 85 or 90 per cent that remains work well. That is certainly the case with FORD–Q.

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister says everything is on the table, which includes taxing RRSPs.

Will the minister commit to Canadians that he will make spending cuts including his own regional development program and not go after Canadian RRSPs?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member was not there yesterday. We made it very clear that our preference in this whole action is clearly on cutting spending. We said that very clearly.

We also said, in relation to the tag end of the question which is an original one, I must say, that I am not going to comment on individual suggestions because what I really want is for Canadians to focus on the tradeoffs. I hope the member and his party would rise to that challenge.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. In approximately three weeks, the Security Intelligence Review Committee will report to the Solicitor General on its inquiry into the Bristow and McInnis affairs as well as allegations of illegal activities. Surprisingly, after one month of inquiry, the review committee has not yet gone back to the main actor, Mr. Doug Lewis, who was then Solicitor General.

Does the Solicitor General find it normal that on the eve of the publication of a report which is supposed to reassure the people, the review committee has not yet questioned the former Solicitor General even though he is the main clue to this puzzle?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Security Intelligence Review Committee has been created by Parliament in legislation passed by it to be independent of CSIS, of the government and of the Solicitor General.

Therefore I do not think it is for me to comment on how the committee does its work. The committee can take note of the hon. member's question and I look forward to receiving its report at the earliest possible date.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, how can the Solicitor General expect the review committee to shed some light on the activities of CSIS when its five members are only working part–time and fail to meet with major witnesses?

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the Security Intelligence Review Committee has a full time staff and is capable of hiring additional staff to work full time on inquiries like this one.

I understand this is what has happened. People have been hired to work along with the full time staff. I suggest to the hon. member that he await the completion of its work before passing judgment. That is the fair thing to do.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, after yesterday's appearance of the former Solicitor General before the subcommittee on national security, it has become apparent that both the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and the Liberal Party of Canada have had access to CSIS information that mentions the Reform Party of Canada.

It appears that the party denied access to the information is the Reform Party whose rights have been abused. What steps is the Solicitor General prepared to take to stop this abuse of the democratic process?

• (1455)

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as far as I am aware political parties do not have access to information gathered by CSIS and the CSIS act is very clear on what that body can and cannot do.

I think the hon. member knows as well as I do that this information is not available to political parties, even though the allegations and questions relate to a period of time before this party formed the government.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is very apparent to me that solicitor generals do represent political parties. There is only one way—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to put her question, please.

Ms. Meredith: There is only one way to alleviate the concerns of Canadians about the information that CSIS holds on our party.

Is the Solicitor General prepared to provide the leader of the Reform Party with access to all information that CSIS may hold on our party?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not concede that CSIS holds information on the Reform Party, but I would be prepared to provide any and all information as I am entitled to do under the law passed by Parliament.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ron Fewchuk (Selkirk—Red River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

At the last meeting of the G–7, Canada was asked to take a leadership role in the international effort to restore the Ukrainian economy. After decades of economic and environmental mismanagement under the former Soviet regime, could the minister explain how Canada is investing in the future and fostering better ties with Ukraine?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his question.

I remind the House that last July in Naples the G–7 endorsed the proposal of the Prime Minister to host a conference on economic reform in Ukraine. The conference will take place in Winnipeg at the end of this month. It will be part of the state visit of the Ukrainian president who will be in Canada for a few days' visit.

It is good to remember that Canada is totally committed to assisting Ukraine in its development. We have already committed over $41 million to over 70 projects. We are very confident that Ukraine will be able, with the assistance of the G–7, to turn around and establish a market economy in that country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister of Canada. On more than one occasion, Mr. Protti, the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and his predecessor, Mr. Elcock, told members of this House that there is no special division within the Canadian Security Intelligence Service spying on the Quebec government and its democratic move toward sovereignty.

With everything that is being written in the newspapers these days, and in view of the imminence of a referendum in Quebec, can the Prime Minister rise in this House and solemnly affirm that there is no organization of the "French–problem" type keeping an eye on the sovereignist movement in Quebec or on any other democratically elected party in this House or in Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been in politics for a while now and I have never been advised of any spying activities. I am the leader of this government and the Reform Party is making accusations. Well,

we do not need spies to know what that party is saying. We need not know more to eliminate it. As for the Parti Quebecois and the Bloc Quebecois, who are unable to admit that they are separatists and call themselves sovereignists to try and confuse people, we do not need spies to know more about them.

* * *

[*English*]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on October 7, I sent to the Minister of Transport my solution for the Pearson airport contract problem. He has now had almost two weeks to consider the merits of my proposal.

Will the minister agree that the Pearson problem will not go away and that the proposal I sent him is the only fair and logical way to bring the matter to a just conclusion?

• (1500)

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you will understand my concern when you hear from whom the proposal came. The hon. member who asked the question has been quoted as saying that as far as he is concerned there is nothing wrong with the Pearson deal. Therefore anything he has to say about it certainly will be suspect in my mind.

What is very interesting with respect to the position of the Reform Party on this matter is that when we talk about the court system, I hear its members every day questioning the judicial system of the country. Yet when they want to protect their friends with a deal at Pearson they want us to go to court. Make up your mind.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, N.D.P.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, before the finance committee, he indicated that in his first round of prebudget consultations Canadians "told us they wanted clear targets to which they could hold the government accountable and we provided those targets. We provided those milestones." I applaud him for his leadership.

However, we have heard an awful lot about the target of deficits. Why did the minister not also include targets for employment? He is concerned about employment. We have been hearing only targets for deficit reduction. Why not targets for employment as well?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me say first of all that I welcome the question from the hon. member. It is really unfortunate that it only appears to be from this side of the House that one ever hears the voice of compassion or understanding and I am delighted to hear it coming from that side of the House and from that member.

The member is quite right to point out the great distinction between yesterday's document and the document that we issued on Monday: the one that dealt with creating an economic framework, the one that dealt with jobs, the one that dealt with giving Canadians skills, that said basically that the best social policy is a good job, the one that dealt with building this country.

The member is very wise to point out that we embarked on a two track project in the red book and in the election campaign. We were going to build this country and we were going to clean up the nation's finances. We remain faithful to both tracks.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: My colleagues, I would like to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of Mr. George Heller, president of the Victoria Commonwealth Games Society.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the first report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

[*Translation*]

I have the honour to present, in both official languages, our response to the first report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in only a few short days we will celebrate the first anniversary of the Liberal government.

• (1505)

Over the course of that year the red book has become a guiding light of government policy. Today I am proud to announce that once again we are delivering on another red book promise.

I am proud to announce that we are going to follow up on the recommendations of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. We are following up on our promise not only to appoint an environmental auditor general, but to go even further.

[*Translation*]

Today, our government has decided to make profound changes in the way we operate in order to ensure that Canada's environmental agenda is integrated with Canada's economic agenda.

[*English*]

We have heard the members on the opposite side of the House say spend money. What the members of the third party do not understand is that a government that incorporates the principles of sustainable development into all of its actions will be a government that will save taxpayers money.

We promised in the red book that we would appoint an environmental auditor general. Many people thought the government would never follow through on that promise because it opens the government up to the potential for criticism. It could subject us to the same kind of hard nosed analysis and criticism that we are currently open to as a result of the Auditor General's current level of activity on our financial behaviour.

I wish to tell members of Parliament that not only are we fulfilling our red book promise today, we want to go further. We think it makes good environmental sense and it delivers better government. We are serious about promoting sustainable development and we are delivering today. We are serious about the greening of government.

This place alone saved over $750,000 when the former Speaker decided to make the practices of the House of Commons sustainable. It does not cost more money because we are spending money smarter. We are serious about getting the federal government's act together on environmental issues and we are serious about being held accountable for our environmental actions and our environmental planning.

The cabinet has reviewed the extremely thoughtful work of the parliamentary committee chaired by the hon. member for Davenport.

[*Translation*]

The committee felt that while it is vitally important to audit past actions of the government, it is even more important to ensure that environmental considerations be a fundamental component of planning in all government departments.

We have decided upon a package of initiatives which meet all the objectives of the committee's report and does so in a manner consistent with the fiscal framework of the government. Members of Parliament from all parties and a wide range of individual witnesses indicated the importantce of moving from the concept of sustainable development to the practice of sustainable development.

[*English*]

I want to repeat that in English because I think it is an important underlying principle. We have to stop talking about sustainable development and start delivering. We have to move from the theory to the practice, and that starts right here in this place with the actions of the single biggest employer in the land, the Government of Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Committee called for enhanced environmental auditing of the government's policies, programs and laws.

[*English*]

The committee believed that individual government departments must improve their practices to achieve consistency with sustainable development and the greening of government. The committee called for the review of existing policies and independent and internal evaluation of all new policies and laws.

The committee also felt that the government must be held accountable to Parliament and to the public for demonstrating real progress in meeting these objectives.

[*Translation*]

The committee advocated that the government go beyond the idea of just an Environmental Auditor and, instead, establish a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

• (1510)

The government will amend the Auditor General Act to establish a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

To guarantee the absolute impartiality of this person, she or he will be appointed by the Auditor General of Canada and report through the Auditor General to Parliament. The government will include a definition of sustainable development in the Auditor General Act and ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account in all Auditor General reports to the House of Commons.

[*English*]

All cabinet ministers will be required to table sustainable development strategies in Parliament. The act will make the commissioner responsible for monitoring and reporting, not to cabinet, not behind closed doors, but to Parliament to monitor and report on the performance of government departments in meeting our sustainable development goals and objectives.

The Auditor General Act will also be amended to allow the commissioner to receive from the public and to forward to appropriate ministers petitions on environmental concerns. The commissioner will have the authority to monitor and report on government responses to petitions from the public.

I want to be crystal clear. The commissioner, through the Auditor General, will issue a separate report annually to Parliament on the extent to which departments are or are not meeting the goals and objectives of their stated sustainable development strategies.

In addition to this separate report, the Auditor General's report will include considerations of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and environment.

These changes go well beyond the red book commitment and we intend to do even more. The parliamentary committee indicated the importance of an open, inclusive process to really get people involved.

[*Translation*]

We must get people involved in the greening and sustainable development process.

[*English*]

Government departments will be required to prepare their sustainable development strategies in an open and transparent manner which includes review by public stakeholders in receiving the advice of independent, objective experts, including the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy.

[*Translation*]

We want to guarantee that members of Parliament have a key stake in ensuring that we meet our objectives. All ministers, therefore, will be required to report on their progress toward sustainable development in preparing and presenting their annual estimates for consideration by Parliament.

[*English*]

The environment is not just a job for the Minister of the Environment. The environment is a job for every minister, every member and every department of government. The government, through the red book, devoted a chapter to the importance of sustainable development in building a strong economy by linking a healthy economy and a healthy environment. We are committed to this integrated approach.

Economic, social and environmental policy must go hand in hand. We are committed to ensuring the promotion of thinking green and delivering on our actions. It must be a central component of decision making, not just from the Ministry of the Environment but in the decision making of all departments of government and at all levels of society. That is the role Harlem Brundtland was talking about when she said that you think globally and you act locally. What you flush down your toilet is part of what affects the environment. What we flush down the sewers, sometimes unaccounted for, affects the drinking water and the ecosystems and the gifts that we can give to our children.

In the Government of Canada, decisions of government departments must reflect a sustainable approach to building on our economic strength by recognizing that the world is going green.

We have announced already our intention to proclaim and strengthen the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. I was pleased that we received the support of the opposition in this particular initiative.

• (1515)

We have already announced a comprehensive proposal for the management of toxins which put the onus not on people to prove that chemicals kill, but on companies to prove that they are safe. Reverse onus is a very important principle.

We have followed up on our promise to establish an environmental industry strategy at a time when everyone knows that government dollars are tight. We are spending new dollars from a reoriented budget to ensure that we have our fair share of an emerging world market that has the potential to create thousands of Canadian jobs over the next decade.

In less than one year we have also delivered on our promise to put in place an independent task force. The Minister of Finance and I spent a number of months working on the membership of that task force. That task force is going to report in one month on where the government is developing tax policies that help the environment and where perhaps some of our policies might be disincentives to sound environmental practices. The information from that report will help the Minister of Finance as he has to make the tough decisions that come up in the next budget. That work will also lay the groundwork for a comprehensive review of federal policies and programs again as promised in the red book.

We are determined to see the greening of the federal government. Looking around, this is a green chamber, but we want to make sure it is more than in name only. We are prepared to put our government on the line, to hold ourselves accountable for meeting our objectives and obligations.

Today's announcement means the beginning, just the beginning, but it is the beginning of a fundamental change in the operation and practices of government. Environmental and economic thinking must converge. They are not disparate; they are not fighting against each other. They are coming together because environmental health is essential for long term economic and human health.

Who would have thought 10 years ago that a whole industry would be wiped out because we did not develop sustainable practices? Just look at the fisheries, the cod stocks in Atlantic Canada to see a living example of the lack of a sustainable development policy.

Today's initiatives will be funded within existing resources. I believe in the long run today's announcement will pay off major dividends, environmental and economic, to the taxpayers of Canada, because thinking green does not cost money, it saves.

The government is getting its act together on sustainable development. We are beginning to make the links between the environment and the economy. We are turning the sentiments of Canadians into concrete action. We are delivering on the spirit of the red book. We are taking measures to seek out independent advice because we are not afraid to have our mettle tested. We are not afraid to put our feet in the fire and say we will be accountable not only to cabinet, not only to the government but to the people of Canada through the Parliament of Canada.

That is what is happening with the creation of the commissioner who reports to Parliament. The government wants to hold Parliament accountable and the people want to hold the government accountable.

[*Translation*]

With this announcement, the government is fulfilling, in less than a year, yet another primary election commitment of the Prime Minister. One chapter was devoted to sustainable development in the red book. This is much more than words. It is a set of specific initiatives to ensure all government departments develop, announce and publicize our sustainable development programs.

I want to thank, first of all, the members of the standing committee and the witnesses who appeared before the committee for their invaluable advice and insight. Today's initiatives are much stronger because all members of the committee undertook their responsibilities with the utmost seriousness and dedication.

• (1520)

[*English*]

I want to acknowledge the work of all the committee members, some of whom actually along with the chair are currently on the road on another task of reviewing the five year plan of CEPA. One former member is in the House today. I know he and his colleagues contributed very constructively to the outcome of today's announcement. As I said, it is only the beginning. We want to look to him and his party and to all parliamentarians for that kind of constructive co–operation in the future.

I can say from a personal point of view that I have spent a lot of time in opposition and not much time in government. Sometimes it is hard for governments to open themselves up to public scrutiny. It was not easy to move this through all the levels behind closed doors. However I can say that the commitment of the cabinet to open this to transparency and in particular the commitment of the Prime Minister to live up to the promise of the red book is what has made today's announcement a reality.

We came into government and some of the people in the bureaucracy said that the red book was politics. Now it is government and now they are starting to understand that the politics and the policies of the election form the basis of what it is we want to achieve.

We were successful in actually moving forward on the creation of a commissioner for sustainable development who will report directly to Parliament through an agency outside of cabinet and outside of government departments. I had the full support of all my colleagues because they understand that to really make government work we have to incorporate the principles of sustainable development not only in the Ministry of the Environment, not only in the agencies involved in environmental protection, but most particularly in how we do business in the future.

May I conclude by saying that I believe today's announcement is the beginning of a future when the commissioner for sustainable development will provide the kind of ammunition opposition parties need to get up and hold the government to account.

I am confident the mandate we have accorded to the new commissioner for sustainable development with the political teeth of the Office of the Auditor General and with the personal commitment of the current Auditor General will make this process work. Just as today when the Auditor General comes down on government departments, we may not always like it but we change, we move and we respond to the analyses of the Auditor General. In the same way future Parliaments will be waving around reports of the commissioner for sustainable development to make government accountable, to work for the people, of the people and in particular to be accountable to the Parliament of Canada.

I am thrilled. This is a small step in the right direction, but it is a step that could yield fantastic dividends for the greening of Canada in the next decade.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, today I have been given the great honour of hearing the Minister of the Environment respond to the report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development about the position of environmental commissioner.

Throughout last winter, the members of this committee heard many witnesses who, one after the other, told us how they felt about the idea of creating such a position in order to assess federal programs, activities and legislation, thereby translating sustainable development into something concrete, measurable and quantifiable.

The work done by all committee members was unquestionably very serious and constructive, while the discussions held during our meetings were always frank and honest.

• (1525)

I must pay tribute to all members of the Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, and particularly to its chairman, the hon. member for Davenport, who always showed throughout our discussions a respect—I would go so far as to say an innate respect—for the environment and sustainable development.

The Bloc Quebecois members on the committee, that is, my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Terrebonne, and myself, expressed a dissident opinion on the main directions set by the majority. We did so with the necessary rigour, without partisanship and in the hope of optimizing the resources and expertise already available in the Canadian Parliament.

So I take a certain pride in the fact that the minister accepted the alternative proposal we submitted to her at that time. The minister and the Cabinet agreed to amend the Auditor General Act to outline a function to be assigned to the commissioner. The government decided to make departments more accountable for sustainable development, so that efforts made in this area can be assessed.

Making departments accountable for the environment is the way of the future for sustainable development. The Auditor General, need I remind you, has learned a great deal about environmental assessments. He has developed an expertise in this area over the years and he now performs several environmental assessment functions. The Auditor General has a thorough knowledge of where environmental jurisdiction is shared and where the provinces have exclusive authority.

In a word, the Auditor General has the necessary integrity to carry out these tasks, to give the person appointed all the requisite technical support to meet the objectives and fulfil the ensuing action plans, in order to make sustainable development a reality. Of course, to do this, he will need the financial resources required to implement these objectives, which the minister has surely provided for and will assuredly inform us of in the near future.

We members of the Bloc Quebecois thought it was most important to amend the Auditor General Act to allow the Auditor General to present more than one report a year to Parliament and the people.

A few moments ago, the Minister of the Environment, in full oratorical flight, said that the auditor or the commissioner might tell the government things it did not want to hear. Of course, it hurts to hear that one has done something badly, but to be told it only once a year by someone who has a four–year contract with the Canadian people is not so bad. We suggested that the Minister of the Environment allow the commissioner to make two reports a year, or better yet, to present them as required in case of disaster and not to wait 18 months to bring this disaster to the public's attention. But no, they are still sticking with an annual report.

• (1530)

We members of the Bloc Quebecois thought that it was very important to amend the Auditor General Act so that the Auditor General can report to Parliament as required. If there is an emergency, another report will be presented; if there is another emergency, one or two more reports could be presented.

It seems that the minister did not want to amend the law that way. If our understanding of this is correct, two separate annual reports will be published, dealing with two different aspects of sustainable development: one for the departments and the other for current activities affecting the environment.

Hopefully, the bill to establish a commissioner responsible for the environment will be more specific and will provide a clear idea of what is involved.

The environment minister acknowledged the contribution and concerns of Bloc members regarding the position of commissioner. We will continue our critical but constructive work in committee during the review of this legislation.

Sustainable development and the environment must become priorities for the federal government, the provinces, the territories and the municipalities.

Our concern for the environment is real and permanent. Recent measures taken by the minister, including the proclamation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the proposal regarding an integrated management policy on toxic substances, seemed to be motivated by a stand–offish attitude.

However, establishing a dialogue and harmonizing policies with the provinces are essential to promote sustainable development.

Our environment is too important and too fragile to start arguing over issues of jurisdiction. True sustainable development can only occur by co–operating with the provinces, not by antagonizing them or acting alone.

We feel the minister is making a mistake and will not help the environment at all if she does not enlist the participation of the provinces in various federal initiatives. The minister must make sure that the efforts to provide a healthy environment for future generations are not wasted.

I am sure the minister will agree that our environment is too important to avoid a dialogue with her provincial counterparts.

In conclusion, I once again say to the Minister of the Environment that she can count on the support of the Bloc Quebecois regarding any policy, provided that she respects provincial jurisdiction and that she avoids overlapping.

• (1535)

Her colleague, the Minister of Finance, used a very vivid metaphor, when he said that jumping over a bar three feet high does not look like much, but if you happen to be standing six feet down in the hole, it is quite a challenge. It means you actually have to jump nine feet!

Well, the minister can always count on our support, but Madam Minister, you will have to recognize provincial jurisdictions, and especially Quebec's, and you will have to avoid overlap, something Bloc Quebecois members on the Environment Committee have said repeatedly. Of course we did not always get our way on the Environment Committee, but considering the announcement made by the Minister of the Environment today, we were probably the only two members—after three or four months of debate, who were right, because from the very beginning our position was that the environment commissioner should work with the Auditor General.

Perhaps the Minister of the Environment will appreciate the following story. When I was a little boy, in a certain country they had a red book that was read by everyone. Children grew up reciting passages from the red book. Of course, Mr. Speaker, they later went to the other extreme—

An hon. member: Like a catechism.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Yes, like a catechism. They collected all the red books to make huge bonfires. The hon. member for Shefford mentioned this awhile ago, and I suddenly remembered. So the red book became toxic waste, as it were, and they tried to erase its harmful effects from the minds of the people, and they will succeed. Mr. Speaker, you have probably guessed the name of the country and the author.

Speaking of red books, I had one during the election campaign almost a year ago, and then my organizers made the mistake of throwing it out when they were housecleaning. I asked some Liberal colleagues for one, and of course they were quite willing to give me photocopies of part of the red book but never the real red book. Madam Minister, could I make a formal and official request for a red book?

Ms. Copps: Please drop by my office.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): I will be there in less than an hour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge at the commencement of my remarks that when I first started into this process I rose in the House and I said: "If the minister is serious and if we have the opportunity to go through the whole process, I am looking forward to her and her department coming forward and saying yes, this is the collective wisdom of the committee and we are prepared to act on it". I said that if she did that I would congratulate her, so today I congratulate her.

I realize as a Reformer that I have to be careful, but I would like to make special note of the chair of the committee, the hon. member for Davenport. I believe he and I share a mutual respect for each other, for the fact that we have hard opinions, strong opinions and different opinions. In spite of that he did a masterful job of bringing together all of the opinions that were available through this arduous process. He is absolutely to be commended for his work.

In addition, taking some of the responsibility for this, the member for Comox—Alberni and myself absolutely held out, dug in our heels and would not be moved. I am now very pleased to see that the minister has announced that we will fund these initiatives within existing resources. I take some small amount of credit for that on behalf of the Reform Party. There were people on the committee who had a differing point of view to that.

• (1540)

I would like to read from the minister's prepared comments: "The government will include a definition of sustainable development in the Auditor General Act and ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account in all Auditor General reports to Parliament". She will know that extreme environmentalists would see the term sustainable development as being an oxymoron, in other words the two things do not necessarily fit together. The responsible industrialist, the entrepreneur, does not see it that way. I must tell this House that neither does the Reform Party.

The Reform Party sees sustainable development as being an absolutely achievable goal. However, one of the difficulties is what does sustainable development mean. That is a very difficult question. I have some small bit of concern because the minister in her comments today in the unprepared part of her speech said that there will be an onus on the companies to prove their process is safe.

One of the concerns that I have is that I do not know what that means either. In other words, are we going to kill the goose that lays the golden egg by becoming so wrapped up in saying we cannot do anything that we will not be able to have any responsible development of the resources that we have in Canada? It is a concern.

I would like to read into my speech from the Reform Party blue sheet. We have gone from mauve to purple to red to green to grey. The Reform Party has always stayed with blue.

> The Reform Party supports ensuring that all Canadians and their descendants dwell in a clean and healthy environment. The party supports sustainable development because—

This is the most important part.

> —without economic development and the income generated therefrom, the environment will not be protected or enjoyed.

That is where the hon. member for Davenport and myself differ. From his perspective I believe I would be fair in characterising his point of view to say that we must protect the environment before we get into economic development. I suggest if we take a look at what is happening in the third world where the countries do not have proper economic activity, where they do not have the resources to protect the environment, we end up with absolutely atrocious situations in the third world in terms of pollution. They do not have the resources to protect the environment.

I say again that the Reform Party states that without economic development and the income generated therefrom, the environment will not be protected or enjoyed.

This has been a consistent position of the Reform Party contrary to what has been said. I am sure that the minister would never have said anything disparaging about the Reform Party, but maybe there are some people in the Liberal Party who have said some things that perhaps have not been totally accurate in characterising where the Reform Party is coming from. I would like to read in exactly where we are coming from on the issue of sustainable development. This by the way has been in our blue book since 1991.

> The Reform Party supports the view that environmental considerations must carry equal weight with economic, social and technical considerations in the development of a project.
>
> The Reform Party supports the integration of environmental and economic objectives in management philosophy, structure, procedures, planning and all decision–making matters involving economic and environmental issues in which the federal government has constitutional jurisdiction.
>
> The Reform Party supports the initiation of a public education program of environmentally conscious purchasing. The federal government and private sector should cause their purchasing departments to be environmentally conscious in all their purchasing.
>
> The Reform Party supports the federal government in taking leadership in developing a new discipline integrating economics and the environment.

This has been the position of the Reform Party. I cannot possibly imagine that the responsible members of the Reform Party would ever move from those very sustainable and responsible positions.

However, there is a battle for the hearts and minds of people over the issue of responsible resource management and development and probably no place more strongly than in the province of British Columbia.

• (1545)

This battle for the hearts and minds of citizens is waged by people who seem to get on to the extreme. We have to realize that, just as in society, people, human beings, have a finite life. For example, in British Columbia the flashpoint is trees. Trees have a finite life.

What has to be decided is what we are going to do with the fibre. Are we going to let it fall to the ground in decay? Are we going to harvest it? Are we going to be handling it responsibly? There is this battle for the hearts and minds of people.

I will tell a quick story. I was at a meeting attended by people from all over Canada in my constituency a few weeks ago. A prairie farmer came up to me. He was very proud of the fact that he was going out of his way to save all the forests in British Columbia. He was one of the largest contributors to one of the more extreme environmental groups that have single–handedly shut down logging operations, put loggers out of work, and created all sorts of havoc in situations where the companies within the last five years have turned around and managed their affairs and the affairs of the forests very responsibly. I suggested to him that maybe I should start to contribute to a fund that would advocate returning all the prairies to grasslands. How would he feel about that? Of course he became very incensed about it.

One issue in the entire area of the environment is to get good, quality information out. I congratulate the minister and the committee chairman for their effort to this point. I look forward to the Reform Party supporting the initiative.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 40th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding membership of committees.

If the House gives its consent I intend to move concurrence in this report later today.

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CANADA HEALTH ACT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, N.D.P) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–284, an act to amend the Canada Health Act (conditions for contributions).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the act to amend the Canada Health Act, conditions for contributions, is intended to ensure that the health care insurance plan of a province provides for the obligation for hospitals to disclose to emergency response employees, who provide emergency medical or rescue services to a patient, the name and nature of an infectious or contagious disease that the patient might have transmitted to them.

This is something that the International Association of Firefighters has been requesting for a long time. It is similar to a bill which was first introduced in the last Parliament by Joy Langdon, the former NDP labour critic. However the bill includes a clause dealing with confidentiality which is an improvement over the previous bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

NUCLEAR REACTOR FINANCE LIMITATION ACT

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, N.D.P) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–285, an act to eliminate financial support for nuclear reactor design and construction in Canada or abroad and to amend the Atomic Energy Control Act in consequence thereof.

• (1550)

He said: Mr. Speaker, actually the tabling of the bill is quite timely when we consider that the subsidies to Atomic Energy of Canada amount to almost $200 million a year at a time when we are very concerned about deficit reduction.

Essentially the bill prevents the federal government from giving any financial assistance or technical support to nuclear reactor projects except those for making isotopes for medical use, acknowledging that there is an appropriate use in terms of a nuclear industry particularly when it comes to treating the illnesses of people.

It is essentially a moratorium on any further construction of these types of projects.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think there would be unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the 40th report, interesting as it may be.

I move that the 40th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

PETITIONS

VIOLENCE

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the House will know that violence in our society is a great concern among Canadians. Violence in the media is of particular concern perhaps principally to parents who are raising children.

The petitioners ask government to ensure that the CRTC monitor very closely violence in the media. They feel there is a relationship between that which they see and hear and that which happens in society. They believe that violence is not necessary in order to entertain. They also underline that violence and violent acts are counterproductive to that which they try to do in raising their families.

They point out, however, that there have been some changes and that they are appreciative of the initiatives the CRTC has taken.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from residents of my riding asking the government to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code which would sentence people convicted of murder to life imprisonment with chance of parole after 25 years but review after 15 years. They are objecting to it and think that section of the Criminal Code should be repealed so that it would not be allowed.

It is always kind of sad when somebody in the community starts a petition, collects hundreds of names, and then when the petition arrives it does not meet the requirements; it is lacking in form. I am always sad when that happens.

I have two such petitions here which I know I cannot present in the usual way at the table or get any record for them. However they are both objecting to suggested gun control that is being discussed in Canada. They think we should have criminal control.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to the House that asks Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

I submit that with my full concurrence.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, N.D.P.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition from constituents who call on Parliament not to amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act, or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality. The petition includes amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation. That is the way the petition reads.

• (1555)

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. John Maloney (Erie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the solemn responsibility to present a petition to the House.

Last May 6, I stood in the House to table a petition in memory of Carrie Lynn Pinard signed by over 54,000 Canadians. Today I add 972 names.

The petitioners pray for more severe penalties for those convicted of violent offences; the release of names of those young offenders convicted of murder, sex crimes and other violent assaults; and the automatic transfer to adult court for those young offenders charged with sex crimes and murder.

I am pleased that since May 6 the government proposed amendments to the Young Offenders Act and that the Pinard and Racine families have been heard.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two sets of petitions. The first has 247 signatures.

The petitioners pray that Parliament ensures that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously, and that Parliament make no changes in the law that would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

The signatories are mostly from the city of Nepean but also from the city of Kanata.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has 90 signatures, again of residents of Nepean.

They ask that Parliament review and revise our laws concerning young offenders by empowering the courts to prosecute and punish the young law breakers who are terrorizing our society, by releasing their names and lowering the age limit to allow prosecution to meet the severity of the crime.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 42 minutes, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACT

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food) moved that Bill C–49, an act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other acts, be read the third time.

He said: I am glad to address the House as Secretary of State for Agriculture and Agri–Food, Fisheries and Oceans and to move the third reading of Bill C–49 entitled: An Act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act and to amend or repeal certain other Acts.

Three weeks ago, at the start of this debate, the minister was telling the House that this bill was a reflection of the kinds of changes the Canadian agriculture and agri–food industry has undergone in recent years and can anticipate in future years. The proposed changes are not spectacular, but they are important for the two following reasons. First, they take into account the fact

that agriculture as a commercial activity is evolving and is now much more that mere growing of plants. Second they represent sound public management.

• (1600)

The agri–food element now added to the mandate of the department is important, because it reflects the interactions we must have with all our clients, from producing farmers to urban consumers. To prosper, the processing sector must rely on flourishing farms and, conversely, farmers need a healthy processing sector for their goods. We are mutually dependent for our daily bread.

[*English*]

Allow me to illustrate with a few examples. In 1993, $10.5 billion worth of farm inputs such as seeds, machinery and fertilizers were transformed into farm production valued at $21.5 billion. In turn that farm production was further transformed into processed foods and beverage products worth $46 billion.

In 1993 Canada exported $13.3 billion in agri–food products. That contributed to a surplus of some $3 billion to Canada's balance of trade.

The recognition of these connections will be important as we plan for the future.

[*Translation*]

These amendments will contribute to better public management for the following reasons. The bill defines more clearly the department's responsibilities in research. The present legislation indirectly refers to research by mentioning experimental farm stations. The bill broadens this definition to include research in agriculture and its products specifically with respect to experimental farm stations. This is a wise clarification at a time when Canadian industry must compete on international markets dealing with food and non–food products, that is to say products resulting from research.

More amendments. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food will have the authority to designate inspectors for the purpose of the Food and Drugs Act, a responsibility which is presently his under several other acts. Contrary to what the opposition has been implying, this amendment does not add to the inspection functions of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food. Rather, it is an amendment necessary to allow the minister to carry out responsibilities under the Food and Drugs Act he inherited from the former Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

These amendments represent a sound management practice since they repeal three pieces of legislation which had become useless.

Finally, under this new bill, the department will publish only one yearly summary of its expenses and programs in a single document, namely Part III of the Main Estimates, instead of doing it in several annual reports. This will save a lot of time and money.

[*English*]

With the world trading environment opening up with new ways of doing business emerging, it is an opportune time to review the mandate of one of the country's oldest departments.

• (1605)

Over the next few months the minister will be working with producers and industry to hammer out a shared, comprehensive vision about where we want agriculture and agri–food to be in the year 2000, 2005 and 2010 and how we plan to get there.

The government is preparing to make some fundamental decisions about many longstanding and difficult issues in agriculture and agri–food. These decisions for the future will be part of a comprehensive plan for a modern, progressive industry.

The minister has spent a good deal of his time during the past month or so talking about the need for a long term vision. The minister's view is clear. Industry should be growing. Industry should be competitive. Industry should be market oriented and, of course, it should be profitable.

It should respond to the changing food and non–food needs of domestic and international customers. It should be less dependent on government support. It should contribute to the well–being of all Canadians and it should contribute to the quality of life in rural communities. Overall it should achieve farm financial security, environmental sustainability and a safe, high quality food supply.

As a New Brunswicker I am of course very interested in the vibrant farming community and agri–food industry. My province may be small, but it has developed a very competitive food sector. McCain Foods Ltd., Cavendish Farms, Ganong, Moosehead, Baxter Foods and Dairytown Products are all New Brunswick firms that have found success beyond provincial borders. In my own riding of Beauséjour, although concentrated in the fishery, food processing is a major activity and farming is as well.

I see in agriculture an agri–food industry that is leading the way in achieving growth, jobs and security, the three overriding themes of this government in the Atlantic region and across Canada. To achieve this, it is vitally important that everyone involved in this industry, from suppliers to producers to handlers and processors to consumers and governments, recognize that most of our issues cannot be dealt with in isolation.

[*Translation*]

This bill, which groups agriculture and agri–food together under one roof, highlights how important it is nowadays for sectors, provinces and even continents to consult one another.

We are all interconnected and interdependent. We must be aware of the possible impact of our aspirations and actions on the other links in the complex chain of stakeholders in the agricultural and agri–food sector. We need one another and we must adopt a concrete and firm team–work approach to solve our internal problems and compete against the rest of the world.

The GATT and NAFTA agreements have resulted in freer trade and easier access to world markets. Every government on the planet is helping its exporters to make inroads abroad. We too must follow suit. During our first year in power, we have taken steps towards this end.

Soon we will create a Canadian agri–food products marketing board which will be made up of people from the industry representing every sector of the agri–food business. This board will act as a forum to improve co–operation among industry players and to help them to be more competitive.

• (1610)

The Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food, in co–operation with the departments of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, will create an international agri–food marketing branch. Through this single window, the industry will have access to federal foreign market development programs. We have already put in place a network of agri–food trade specialists in key locations like Seoul, Singapore, T'aipei, Mexico and Dusseldorf, and this network is growing.

We are getting ready to take advantage of increasingly sophisticated national and international information highways. Our offices world–wide will be linked to the Info–Agro–Export network. This is an interactive, automated system providing personalized information on world markets. Canadian food industries invest a relatively small percentage of their sales in research and development, as compared to their US counterparts. They could do better in this area.

A few months ago, the research branch undertook a pilot–project called Agri–Food Research and Development Cofinancing Project. In this project, the department and the industry will work together to carry out research and development, each contributing half the funds. Since the industry will be setting its own priorities, the relevancy of the research and development activities will be guaranteed. In addition, technology transfer will be facilitated because, with the industry sharing in the financing of the research activities, its support will be guaranteed in advance. We hope that this project, to which a budget of $2 million was allocated this year, will be a first step towards a substantial increase in agri–food research in Canada.

[*English*]

This is only the beginning. The challenges we face are formidable. As I said earlier, in 1993 Canadian agri–food exports of $13.3 billion contributed a surplus of almost $3 billion to Canada's balance of trade, almost a full one–third of Canada's total merchandise trade balance.

However, it is worth noting that while there is a positive balance for primary products, there is a negative balance for processed products.

Strong export growth has been registered in early 1994 with projections for the year moving beyond the $14 billion mark. Canada's overall share of the world agri–food market has declined since the early sixties. Our growth in agri–food exports is lagging behind the rest of the world. It will be a major push to meet the $20 billion export target by the year 2000 set last year by federal and provincial agriculture ministers.

We are on track toward that target in 1994 with exports projected to reach $14 billion. What can we do in co–operation with industry to keep on track?

These are some of the issues we need to address: From 1992 to 1993 our agri–food export surplus declined. In fact, countries which used to buy Canadian commodities and products are now net exporters. We have higher processing costs and less private sector research than some of our competitors. Government income support payments exceed net farm income and are much higher than our investments in marketing or market development.

• (1615)

There is little growth in our exports of these higher value products to countries other than the U.S, in particular, to Asian markets where demand is growing rapidly. We must therefore continue to address international access issues without forgetting there are unnecessary trade barriers here at home.

Of course food safety has been and must continue to be a priority in and for Canada. Our reputation for safety and quality is vital to our domestic consumers and it is a critical advantage in the international marketplace. At the same time we need to ensure that it is an efficient system.

[*Translation*]

The minister fully intends to continue playing an active role in promoting Canadian agri–food products abroad. Next month, the Prime Minister will head a trade mission to Asia, a region that the Governor General and the minister visited last spring. Next week, he will go to the international food fair in Paris, where he will participate in the presentation of international prizes to five Canadian companies that showed excellence in creating or marketing innovative food products. The Paris fair is the largest trade fair for food products in the world.

The Canadian agri–food sector already enjoys some significant advantages such as internationally famous product competitiveness, high health and safety standards, and environmentally friendly agricultural practices.

If we focus our activities on the markets, if we use our limited financial resources wisely, and if we keep in mind that the various elements of the agricultural and agri–food sector are interrelated, we will be able to preserve and even increase the level of success enjoyed by the whole sector.

By proposing these amendments today, we recognize that, even in a changing world, the Canadian agricultural and agri–food sector can continue to play an important role at the international level.

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–49 which we are debating on third reading this afternoon would amend the Department of Agriculture Act.

Mainly, this bill adds the term "agri–food" to the department's name. Like the minister, his secretary of state said in his speech on second reading of this bill that it is important to change the title of the act.

This emphasizes that Agriculture Canada's field of activity is not limited to helping farmers. Indeed, their economic future is closely tied to processing, distribution, marketing and of course research and development at all levels of these various products. It is essential to deal with the whole cycle of farm products.

As agriculture critic for the Official Opposition, I can tell you that we in the Bloc Quebecois will not oppose this bill.

• (1620)

Nevertheless, as my colleague from Jonquière said on second reading of this bill, changing the department's name will in no way solve other thorny problems, including overlap with the provinces. What farmers, like pork producers in Quebec, want is not a change in the name of the Department of Agriculture. They do not want a change of deputy minister. What our pork producers in Quebec want is a government that works for them.

For example, regarding pork exports in particular, what has the minister done to clear up the mystery surrounding the reproductive and respiratory syndrome in pigs? Nothing. What did the federal agriculture minister do to reassure the nine countries importing pork, namely Russia, Argentina, Venezuela, Australia, Uruguay, Panama, Korea, Denmark and South Africa? Nothing. What did he do to reassure Quebec's maple syrup producers? Nothing.

Quebec's maple syrup producers do not care whether the department is called the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food. What they want is that department to help them sell their product at a fair, reasonable and, above all, stable price. Last Sunday, I met a producer who told me that he had sold maple syrup, in bulk, for $1.62 a pound. Some people and friends told him that this price was too low and that he should wait until the end of the fall to sell the syrup produced in the spring.

So, that person waited until last month and instead of getting $1.62 he only got $1.47, which is 15 cents less. That price does not even cover production costs. These costs keep increasing year after year, while the selling price of maple syrup is almost constantly getting lower. In fact, one can now buy maple syrup for much less than in 1980. This gives you an idea why Quebec producers do not care about the name of the agriculture department. What they want is results.

What did the federal Department of Agriculture do to stabilize prices? Nothing. What budget did it allocate for research and development in the maple syrup industry? None. The result is accumulated surpluses in Quebec, where 90 per cent of all the maple syrup in the world is produced. I come from the region of Plessisville, the national capital of maple syrup; I know what I am talking about and I can tell you that we produce the best maple syrup in the world.

• (1625)

We have surpluses and if the government would only take the trouble to release funds for research, we could surely find some new attractive outlets. Just the other day, the former Liberal Minister of Agriculture, Eugene Whelan—I can give you his name since he is not here—said: "In the agriculture industry, $1 invested in research later yields $7." I told Mr. Whelan: "I am no businessman but I can count. If you can guarantee me a seven–fold return over seven, eight or ten years, I am willing to sell everything I own and to invest the money in your research and development company. I am ready to do it if I am to get a seven–fold return."

What has the Canadian Department of Agriculture done to ensure income security for Quebec farmers in supply–driven sectors such as milk, eggs and chicken? Not much. What has this famous department done to find more new outlets for dairy products, eggs and chicken? Not much. Surely, changing the name of the department will not make it any more efficient. We need to change our ways. We have to be willing to change our ways. The department is not doing anything. And the Bloc Quebecois will keep nagging at it until it decides to act, because the farming community is fed up with this stagnation.

What has Agriculture Canada done or what will it do in the short or medium term to support young farmers, to ease the transfer of family farms from one generation to the next? Nothing.

My neighbour bought a hog farm not far from us. He went to the Farm Credit Corporation, the federal agency, to negotiate his loan the day after New Year's Day and was able to sign the contract the day after Canada Day. It took exactly six months for him to get the necessary financing. I should tell you that he nearly lost the opportunity to buy this farm. And, in buying it, he created a job for himself, for his brother and for another person.

For Quebec's farmers, the Department of Agriculture seems rather sluggish and unwilling to help. So much so that last week, during our recess, whether my government colleagues like it or not, I toured my riding where nearly 20 per cent of my constituents depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood and I submitted them to a test. I just love tests. I asked them: "Do you know who Quebec's new Minister of Agriculture is?" Eight out of ten said that it was Marcel Landry, a member from the Gaspé Peninsula, and some of them were even able to name his riding, Bonaventure. Then I asked them: "Could you tell me who the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa is?" I could not find anyone, Mr. Speaker, who was able to tell me the name of the Minister of Agriculture sitting right in front of me. Nobody could. Perhaps it is because he went too often to Quebec or spoke to Quebec producers in their own language, listened to their concerns, their needs, the solutions they had to propose, I do not know, but the fact is that they do not even know his name. Let us hope that he is better known in his own riding than he is in Quebec within the farming community of my riding.

• (1630)

What did the government do to promote gobal marketplace access for ours producers? I listened carefully a few moments ago to the Secretary of State who said he was going to favour this, to develop that, to open our borders. Our farmers are fed up with talk. They want action.

This afternoon, someone pointed out that next week would mark the first anniversary of the Liberals' coming to office, on October 25. Let me tell you that the Liberals are slapping themselves on the back for winning such a clear majority, 98 seats out of 99 in Ontario, almost a perfect record. One hundred per cent in the Maritimes. There is one lady there who was elected—

An hon. member: Fifty per cent of the Tory caucus!

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Indeed, 50 per cent of the Tory caucus. But even there, one out of approximately twenty, and 98 out of 99 in Ontario. Fine. But in Quebec, the results were not so fantastic. Except for the English–speaking ridings and the Outaouais, they were elected in two predominantly French–speaking ridings, apart from the riding of Saint–Maurice which elected the Prime Minister, have elected Liberals. Of course, no expense was spared in Saint–Maurice. And let us not forget that in Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine, they won by a very narrow margin. These things must be pointed out.

Nevertheless, I would like to put another question to the Liberal government: What has the Department of Agriculture done to reduce acid rain? As you know, acid rain affects the soil. Year after year, we check the pH balance and we find that the acidity level is too high. When flowers and strawberries grow in crop fields, that is bad news. Children like that, they can pick them. But farmers know very well it means that the pH level is too high and must be lowered, and that costs a lot of money. Lime is getting more and more expensive. The riding of Frontenac is getting acid rain and as we know, this riding and the Eastern Townships are where acid rain conditions are the worst in eastern Canada. This is not because there are industries in Frontenac because we have almost none, except for asbestos mines and a few small and medium–sized firms. The acid rain is not caused by industries in Montreal. A good part of it comes from Ontario but for the most part it comes from the American Midwest.

What have my Liberal friends done to compensate farmers and help them eliminate the acid rain that seeps through the soil? Every year farmers must buy lime to lower the pH level in order to have decent crops. Year after year, farmers see their production costs rise and their gross income decrease.

• (1635)

What has the Minister of Agriculture done and what does he intend to do for farmers with respect to the global warming problems? It is all very well to say that, over the last 50 years, the temperature has risen by 3.2 degrees centigrade. Some people are smiling at the thought of lower heating costs. But the problem is not so simple. Far from it.

The Department of the Environment is not alone in having a role to play. The Department of Agriculture is also in for trouble. What has it done? Nothing. What has the Minister of Agriculture done to reach a reasonable and acceptable agreement between his department and the Department of the Environment? Nothing.

To illustrate, one of my constituents called me last week. He was desperate. Let be tell you briefly what happened to him. Three or four years ago, a fire destroyed his farm, leaving only the foundations. People in my region are very supportive, you know, so we pulled together, we all contributed money according to our means and we organized a bee, as we often do in the Beauce area, and we rebuilt the barn following all the standards set by the Department of the Environment. We had obtained permits to build on the same spot.

A river runs very close to the barn, perhaps 700 or 800 meters away, 1,000 meters at the most. In May, the farmer applied for a permit to the Department of the Environment to build a liquid manure tank. Believe it or not, last week, he was still waiting for his permit to dig a manure pit. Why? "You are too close to the river". After being granted a permit to build a $450,000 barn four years ago, why is he being told today that a permit cannot be delivered because he is too close to the river and why do they make him wait for a permit to dig a manure pit?

You see, too often, it seems as though, in some departments, the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. Merely changing a name will not help to improve foolish situations like this one.

What has the Department of Agriculture done to improve rural services? I was about to say: "Nothing." But another department has chosen to close down some post offices, arguing: "They are not profitable".

An hon. member: Not any more.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Not any more, you say? But they did. Stop kidding me, they did. They closed down some post offices.

How about the road conditions. You could tell me: "The province of Quebec has jurisdiction over this issue". It is true, but what did you do four years ago? You cut transfers to the provinces. What did Mr. Ryan, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, do? He transferred $500 million of expenses to the municipalities. Municipal governments do not have the money, the technology nor the know–how to maintain the smaller municipal roads.

• (1640)

Can you imagine the 1,500 municipalities of Quebec each buying a grader, a salt–spreader, a small bulldozer and a backhoe. It does not make any sense!

I know where the Minister of Finance is heading! Of course, it is not the Minister of Agriculture, but his good old buddy. The Minister of Finance will cut transfer payments to the provinces. He is paving the way for this announcement. He has promised not to increase taxes, but last night, on the news, he did say that they never promised such a thing. In the red book, there was a promise—but now they have discovered a gaping hole. They will not be able to fulfil their commitments; they will need more time.

I can see where he is heading! He is going to transfer part of the federal deficit to provincial and municipal governments, again at the expense of rural Canada.

I visited a small town whose 500 residents are concerned with gas supply. Standards for gas tanks are very strict and since it is too expensive and not cost–efficient to dig out old tanks and replace them by new ones, gas is not sold there any more. These people must drive 15 kilometres to buy gas. That is what it means to live in rural communities.

As for government services, since regional offices are not cost–efficient, they are closed down. People will just have to go to the city. As it happens, MAPAQ services were closed in Disraeli. Granted, Ottawa had nothing to do with this but these services were closed and people must now go to Thetford. If you need to have an autopsy carried out on a dead animal, you can no longer go to Sherbrooke. You have to go instead to Saint–Georges de Beauce.

These are small irritants people have to live with in rural areas. People are telling us it is not fun any more to live in the country, and that they want to move to the city to earn a living. Young farmers are fewer and fewer.

What has the Liberal government done this past year? After all, it will be a year next week since it took power. What has it done to help young farmers? Nothing.

One thing we must recognize is that this bill to change the name of the department includes amendments to update the real mission of Agriculture Canada. Therefore, this measure is part of a vast process of reorientation and redefinition which the government is going through with respect to this department's future.

It is in that context that during the next year, the Committee on Agriculture and Agri–Food will try to redefine the future of agriculture in Canada. Let me tell you that this is a big challenge because considering the current economic and political conditions, one thing is sure, and that is that it is absolutely necessary to find a direction for the future of agriculture.

I submit that our discussions on Canadian agriculture must be based on the following three factors: First, the willingness to respect the provinces' priorities. I tell you, Mr. secretary of state, that if the priorities of the provinces are not respected, you are sure to fail. Second, the recent trade deals signed by Canada, in particular GATT and NAFTA. And third, the ability to balance the interests of the various regions fairly. It is not without reason that Quebec's farmers have great difficulty naming the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food. There are hidden reasons and I know them.

• (1645)

There is nothing wrong with amending the act governing the Department of Agriculture with a view to planning the direction that Canadian agriculture will take in the future. However, before redefining anything, it is important to ensure that the provinces' work plans are fully respected.

In Quebec, this consultation and orientation process concerning the future of agriculture has already begun. Following Quebec's development model, the various players in the agricultural community have undertaken an extensive reflection effort. Let us just mention the *États généraux du monde rural* and the Trois–Rivières Summit which resulted in a series of real commitments. Quebec took the lead in laying down the principles on which that province's agricultural future will be built. It would be inconceivable that the federal government, the Liberal government, would establish national standards that are inconsistent with its own priorities and development goals. There-

fore, it is essential that any initiatives undertaken reflect the priorities set by the provinces.

Another problem that should be examined is the provisions in the free trade agreements affecting Canada. With market globalization, we recognize that all trade areas will have de redefine their orientations. The main goal is to allow farmers from Canada and Quebec to be able to compete internationally. Agriculture is an important and well established industry in Quebec as well as in Canada. It is essential that it remain so and that we take greater advantage of its export potential.

It is all very nice to export, but it is even better to export processed products, commonly referred to as value–added products. We have just been told that value–added exports are stagnating whereas we are exporting wheat that we import later under a processed form, for instance as flour. Japan is doing that to us. The Japanese buy our wheat, refine it and then re–export it as flour. If Japanese are bright enough to mill our wheat and resell it to other countries as flour, I wonder why we could not do the same here at home. This would provide jobs to our people, and in so doing we would be promoting job creation and economic recovery. We need more than mere words, we need action. We have to get going.

GATT and NAFTA herald deep changes in the workings of international trade. That is why Quebec and Canada must have a clear and specific agenda.

• (1650)

It is important at this point to mention negotiations on durum wheat. My colleagues in the Reform Party dealt extensively with that in the agriculture and agri–food committee. Those negotiations should teach us a lesson. If our arguments are flawed, and if our action plan is defective and outdated, we will knuckle under to major league players like the United States.

The government and the agriculture department had an ideal case with durum wheat. They had all they needed to play a good hand of poker, but they ended up sharing the pot. This does not bode well for the future. It is therefore becoming urgent that we plan our strategies and solve the difficult problem of Canadian trade deals. I ask the Minister of Agriculture: Which comes first, GATT or NAFTA? Let me say this once more. Which takes precedence?

I do not want to hear anything like sometimes it is the GATT and sometimes it is the NAFTA and in some cases neither one because they are equal. Which one takes precedence? As long as this question remains unanswered, any assumptions on the markets for agricultural products will only be a smoke screen.

When we talk about negotiations, the issue of regional disparities always comes up. Agriculture is one of the best examples of this dead end debate. The heart of the problem is that in a negotiation process, you must compromise in order to make gains you consider crucial. You cannot win it all, but you cannot lose it all either. How can we speak for the key sectors of all provinces with one single voice?

Canada is a vast country and, as my colleague the hon. member for Richelieu said so very well, it is quite a job to govern a country. How could we speak for the key sectors of ten provinces and two territories with one single voice? The GATT negotiations are a striking example of the fact that one voice cannot speak for all regions of Canada. In Western Canada, the priority is grain exports; in the East, it is quota controlled productions.

There is no denying that Canada's failure with regard to Article XI.2(c) of GATT is a good example of these opposite interests. In December, a few months after being elected member of the federal riding of Frontenac, I went incognito to a meeting organized by UPA in Saint–Georges–de–Beauce—I remind you that I am also a farmer. At that time, the GATT negotiations were going full steam. I wanted to find out the farmers' opinion on the matter. I walked in and, although I was recognized by a few people, I could sit in a corner with a few friends and listen to the chief economist of UPA. This man is a professor at Laval University and also the owner of a dairy farm in the Drummondville area. He explained very simply what the negotiations involved.

• (1655)

I must say that the 500 producers present at the meeting were very concerned. The older farmers especially were worrying about their retirement, because their milk quotas represented their retirement savings. Clearly they worried about their future: "I invested in milk quotas. I was counting on the sale of this quota to retire". They were unable to give him a satisfactory answer.

Most farmers do have RRSPs. Today, during question period, the finance minister was asked once again if, in the next budget, he was going to tax RRSPs. His answer was neither yes nor no.

If the Liberal government decides to tax RRSPs, I hope that the agriculture minister, totally unknown by Quebec farmers, will stand up and speak with one voice for all the farmers in Quebec and Canada. This is their pension fund. The government changes the rules at the very last minute. This is totally unacceptable.

In Quebec, we believe that the future of agriculture lies in shifting power to the regional decision–making units which are more sensitive to local realities. Unfortunately, shared jurisdiction in agriculture and the very diverse interests of the main agricultural areas in Canada leave very little room for initiative on the part of Quebec farmers.

The Bloc Quebecois believes that sovereignty is the indispensable tool which will allow Quebec agriculture to fare better. I want to stress that bills like the one before us this afternoon are surely very important, but we should keep in mind that there are other urgent issues to deal with.

Bill C–49 reflects the government's desire to make changes within the Department of Agriculture. I sincerely hope that it will meet the provinces' concerns and that the government will not take advantage of this to confuse further the issue of provincial jurisdiction.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food and his secretary of state that it is not by changing a name that they will solve the agricultural problems in Quebec. It will take the will to change, and things have to change.

• (1700)

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Mississauga West—Pearson International Airport; the hon. member for Calgary West—The Constitution.

[*English*]

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I must admit when I first laid eyes on Bill C–49 I had no idea it would be so convoluted and complicated. Today we have heard two speeches that went into great detail and involvement in the department of agriculture. Certainly I had no reason to expect what we saw yesterday with the amendments in Bill C–49. There were voice votes and all matters of things I had not anticipated we would see in a bill that I originally thought was a very lackluster one containing absolutely nothing.

The federal department of agriculture certainly needs more than just a name change. As laudable as Bill C–49 is, to reflect the reorganization of the department made in June 1993 we need to do much more to restore hope for the future in the agriculture industry. Today I would like to place before this House a proposal for reforming the entire jurisdictional areas of the agriculture industry.

My proposal builds on statements and ideas put forward in this House by my colleagues on this side beginning last May. It also reflects the ideas that are being generated and talked about by many farmers, academics, and farm leaders right across this country. There is a real momentum building to radically alter and redesign how governments and industry function together in agriculture, in other natural resource sectors and the other many sectors of our society.

This is an issue where people are way ahead of governments in their thinking, their ideas, and their proposals. It is time to lay those ideas and those proposals out on the table to look at them honestly and openly, to have the debate and discussion needed to move forward. I am not suggesting in any way that what I will share today will be the final word in the way things should ultimately be but, it is a starting point for discussion and dialogue.

Our proposal builds on Reform's vision for reconfederating agriculture on the basis of a clearer division of responsibilities for both levels of government and for the industry. It also lays the foundation for a new visionary, comprehensive and cohesive Canadian agri–food policy.

The new governance system proposed here calls for decisions to be made at the lowest most local level at which decisions can reasonably be made. The task of the larger unit is to assist or support the individual industry or more local government bodies in carrying out these tasks. This new governance entails a devolution of senior government responsibilities to the provincial and local levels and to the industry and the citizens themselves.

Consequently we should have a leaner and more strategic senior level of government to deal with norms, standards, general directions and values over and beyond the managerial tasks that can be handled effectively at that level. The system would be more community owned with the federal government in a more catalytic role. It would call for local and provincial governments to minister to the public and to deliver the service best adapted to the diverse needs of different communities.

Such devolution might entail a Canadian governance system of the year 2020 in which a small percentage of the agri–food civil service will be federal. It would be organized into small units concerned with longer term national policy in the areas of trade arrangements, financial support, and safety and health standards. Again, although there is an attempt in this proposal to more clearly delineate jurisdictional responsibilities in the agri–food sector, this does not mean an absolutely watertight allocation of tasks among players.

This new system of governance tries to reconcile contradictory tendencies, for example the need to be global in outlook but local in application, to be small and big, to be centralized and decentralized, to be capable of generating both freedom and justice for all the players. This therefore must and will be an ongoing process of learning.

• (1705)

This proposal complements the current study being undertaken by the Liberal government in its effort to downsize government programs and departments. The Liberal study is based on six questions that each department asks itself.

The questions are: Does the program or activity continue to serve the public interest? Is there a legitimate and necessary role for government in this program or activity? Is the current role of the federal government appropriate, or is the program a candidate for realignment with the provinces? What activities or programs could or should be transferred in whole or in part to the private or volunteer sector? If the program or activity continues, how can its efficiency be improved? Lastly, is the result and package of programs and activities affordable within the fiscal constraint and if not, what programs or activities would be abandoned?

By thinking hard about these matters now we can help lead the way to a sound future for the agri–food industry. This proposal forms a theoretical basis for examining how agri–food programs currently in existence at both levels of government and in the industry could be reformed, removed or reassigned. As such, it is a prerequisite step for proposals we would make about federal budget cuts, savings and expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I will not be able to continue my speech as I cannot get a word out of my voice. I would just like to ask the Chair if I can take my leave right now.

The Deputy Speaker: Certainly. Would somebody wish to carry on and give the speech for the hon. member?

Mr. Kerpan: Mr. Speaker, if it is all right, I would just defer at this point in time.

The Deputy Speaker: Does that mean nobody wishes to speak on behalf of the Reform Party at this point in the debate?

Mr. Kerpan: Mr. Speaker, maybe we could move on to the next speaker and that will be fine.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to participate in the debate on third reading of Bill C–49, an act to establish the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food.

Our farm community has many concerns today. I used to farm. I was not a full time farmer. I was a part time farmer but I certainly realized very shortly that farming is a lot of hard work and not a lot of money.

I would like to deal with two concerns that our farm community has today and possibly address how our government is dealing with them. They deal with general financing and also with intergenerational transfers and farm properties.

In my riding agriculture is a very significant enterprise where gross agricultural production is second only to General Motors. From Bowmanville to Orono to Port Perry and Uxbridge farming is a major way of life. It is a community that has developed over 100 years of agricultural background. One thing I have noticed is that our farm community is aging. The average age of the Canadian farmer is about 54 years.

I have spoken in this House and in committees about the need for small business to seek access to new forms of capital. Indeed, the industry committee which I sat on has just put out a report on access for growing small business. All too often we forget that farms are small businesses as well and they have significant problems in dealing with their banks. When I was farming every spare dollar I had went back into the farm, into equipment and new buildings. As a consequence, farmers have very little cash flow.

• (1710)

Over this last break I had the opportunity to talk with some of the local bank managers. Many of my constituents who are farmers have expressed the major concern that they are having a hard time dealing with their banking enterprises. These are not people who started farming overnight; they have had long term credit ratings with their banks, possibly 15 or 20 years. I talked to some of the managers. One of them commented that the banks no longer want to make evergreen loans. I had never heard that expression before so I asked him to explain. He told me that an evergreen loan is one the banks consider never gets repaid. I suppose the analogy is that evergreen trees never shed their needles; similarly the banks do not want to make loans they think will not be repaid.

Quite frankly, I thought that to be rather preposterous. I can remember not too many years ago that the last thing a bank wanted to do was have its loans repaid, because obviously once forming a good credit relationship with a farming enterprise it went on for decades and decades. A relationship was formed with these people.

Farmers need to finance numerous things on the farm. The two basic ones however are the financing of livestock inventory and the financing of next year's crops. Like any other small and medium sized business, as it grows it continually needs that degree of financing. By definition, it is not money that is paid off every year. In fact in a sense it becomes a fixed asset or liability of the farm. It becomes what we used to call a hard core loan, something that is there all the time; the farmer pays his interest on it and the banks make their profits on it and everybody is happy.

We have discovered that the banks have changed their attitude to all kinds of sectors of small and medium sized businesses. Farmers are feeling this very hard pinch as well. The banks are saying they want their loans paid off. They have also become a little different; they are now brokers of money as opposed to bankers. That means every time someone wants to borrow money the banks will charge a fee. They charge all kinds of setup fees.

Worse than that, I have clients in the farming business who have been with a bank for 15 or 20 years and they are now being asked to do all kinds of financial reporting. These are things the banks used to do internally and now they are telling the farmers to hire professionals to get all this work done. Of course the farmer is in a very precarious situation. He owes the bank $100,000. He may have a half million dollars worth of assets but he cannot pay the $100,000 back tomorrow without selling his cattle or getting rid of all his crops, or not planting next year's crops. In a sense the farmer is in a bad position so he has to comply.

I am a chartered accountant and my own profession would love to deal with the extra business from that source. But the reality is and the question is, is it necessary? Is this a necessary expense to farmers? I suggest that along with some of the studies that have been done in the industry committee that we also focus on small business loans to farmers.

I look at the banks and their pampered position in this country. There are special tax laws for banks. There are even laws that allow them to create money. What better operation can you have than that, when you can lend money that you do not even have? These are the rights of the banking sector. We have to look at those rights and privileges and reflect on what they are doing to our farm community.

One of the recommendations made by the industry committee was the possibility of regional banking. People can think back to the early 1900s when there were such things as farmers banks. The local people could form their own banking enterprises so that the smart alec MBAs from Bay Street are not telling them whether or not they can buy that new combine or manure spreader, even though they may have more of an affinity for the latter than the former. These are some of the aspects of capitalizing small business. I think our government is very interested and very concerned about moving in the area of improving access to capital for farmers.

• (1715)

I would like to deal with the aspect of retiring farmers. As I mentioned in my opening remarks the average Canadian farmer is 54 years old. One of the exemptions that they have under the Income Tax Act today is a $500,000 lifetime exemption for capital gains. I would like to discuss capital gains in relation to farming.

The reality is that the capital gains tax, in spite of what the people in finance might tell us from time to time, generally speaking does not exist on the farm. In fact what it represents is inflation. In other words, what was the value of the farm in the 1950s and what is the value of the farm today. If we go back and extrapolate the real value of money we discover the farmer in fact has not gained anything.

He has however taken every spare cent he has and buried it in that farm property. That is his retirement income. He does not have a retirement savings plan. Maybe some do, but very few just by the nature of the business itself.

Finance from time to time talks about $2.2 million lost revenue from this deduction for farmers. The reality is that it is not lost money at all. It is money that does not exist. It is a tax on inflation.

I draw that to the attention of the House. Presumably the finance minister will also feel similarly impressed that this is something we have to maintain in order to assist our farmers to make orderly transfers of their farm property to another generation or even to retire completely from farming.

My second point is where Agriculture Canada and more specifically the Farm Credit Corporation have been active in assisting our farm community. Only recently Farm Credit Corporation introduced a new mortgage plan for farmers. Some of that will relate to farmers who are retiring and turning it over to their sons or daughters and some of it will involve farmers who are retiring from farming completely. Generally speaking this program will assist retiring farmers to transfer their properties to another generation.

All too often farmers stay with the farm away beyond the time they should turn it over to another generation. Usually the problems are financial. Farming is hard physical work. Obviously at 54 we should have thought about retiring or becoming a manager long before this.

Farm Credit Corporation has devised a mortgage instrument. It is a little complex but I will explain it briefly. If the farmer wants to sell his farm for say $100,000, his son will have to come up with 10 per cent of the proceeds, $10,000. Farm Credit Corporation will then advance $40,000, up to 40 per cent of the sale price to the retiring farmer. He will have $50,000 or half of the proceeds of the sale on the day of sale. The balance of the money is paid to the retiring farmer over a maximum five year period. It could be a shorter period than that.

The other side of that is the retiring farmer only receives the interest on the $40,000. The new farmer, his son or daughter, will pay full mortgage payments. More and more money is being applied against the principal and only a small portion is paid toward the interest on the $40,000.

This is another good idea that Farm Credit Corporation has which is going to assist the new farmer to build up equity in the farm and assists the retiring farmer to get his money out of the farm.

• (1720)

What is the catch? Generally speaking the retiring farmer is not going to receive interest on as much as $50,000 over that short period of fiscal time. However, most farmers I know realize and in fact I have heard it mentioned many, many times in the farm community that if we charge over 10 per cent interest we are going to get the farm back.

Most farmers are knowledgeable about the concept. They would be happy to reduce the amount of their real interest with the concept that they are going to get their cash flow out of the farm.

This is one area where the Government of Canada through Agriculture Canada and the Farm Credit Corporation has added a very specific and useful instrument to assist the farm community to make intergenerational transfers.

I conclude with the remark that these are some of the things we will have to take into account when dealing with our agricultural sectors, the problems they have with their banks, the fact that they must retain their $500,000 lifetime exemption. The Government of Canada has heard their concerns about intergenerational transfers and it is trying to do something very positive in assisting them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean–Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what the hon. member for Durham had to say when he talked about financing for intergenerational transfers. I will comment very briefly and would appreciate the hon. member's comments as well.

I know quite a few farmers who need a very substantial line of credit. The problem is, however, that the bank or credit union charges very high interest rates on this line of credit, because it does not pay for the farmer to mortgage his farm, his house or part of his property to get the loan.

I am reminded of one of my friends who bought a quota in the spring, a very substantial quota worth $35 per kilo of butter fat, not produced, and then ran into some bad luck. He had to replace, and he had not budgeted for this, his baler, bale–catapult and four–wheel drive which all broke down at some point, and at the end of the haying season, he had to replace his mower–conditioner as well.

This was money he had to spend right away. He could not afford to waste three weeks looking around for financing. He needed the money yesterday. He could not afford to wait, because every minute counts when the haying season is under way. So he increased his line of credit and had to pay much higher interest.

Perhaps the hon. member for Durham could suggest that his government set up some form of assistance, so that farmers could have a line of credit based on their income as reported on the previous year's tax return. The interest would be paid largely by the Farm Credit Corporation or else the FCC, which he mentioned earlier, could provide financing in a few cases when farmers are hard pressed. As I said before, a farmer cannot afford to wait six months. The money would have to be available within a week.

I would appreciate the comments of the hon. member for the Liberal Party.

[*English*]

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

First, the Farm Credit Corporation does have a program of what is called variable rate mortgages. The reality is that Farm Credit usually takes its credit by way of a mortgage on fixed property so it is usually the mortgage on the farm.

• (1725)

I think what the hon. member is really addressing is more of a demand for what we would call working capital. The reality is that there is a great void between our banking sector and how it operates and how farms operate. As the hon. member has mentioned, it is because there is always a degree of uncertainty on the farm. There is always the possibility that hailstones will wipe out your crop. There are countless problems.

In my brief encounter with farming it seemed that the equipment would always break down on a Sunday when nothing was open. It goes on and on and on. These are the problems of farming.

To address the specific intent of the question, I think it goes back to some of the things that I was saying. Our financial sector genuinely is not set up to really deal with farmers. The banking sector, which has always been a short term lender, is becoming more and more of a short term lender and wants its money back every year. It wants to be able to be flexible. It wants to be fluid. Farms are just the reverse of that. Farms are long term commitments to capital. In other words, there is a breakdown in the financial structure of that system.

We have realized through the Industrial Development Bank that in the business sector there is this problem of obtaining long term capital. I think it is an apropos question to ask how we can reform the credit lending system for agriculture. Maybe this goes back to my first comment. Maybe we should think about things like schedule 3 banks, regional banks, a farm bank where farmers will understand as creditors of that bank and as lenders and depositors the problems of banking. I think that is possibly one way we could address that issue.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member about the Farm Credit Corporation. The member referred to a particular program that the Farm Credit Corporation offers.

I would like to ask whether the Farm Credit Corporation is needed any more. I have heard from managers, directors and members of the credit unions that they would like to fill the lending gap or would like to be lending the money that Farm Credit is lending now. They are asking if there really is a need for the Farm Credit Corporation and that is the first question I am asking you.

The second question is along the same line. There is considerable money which should be available to farmers in any farming community. This money comes from retired farmers and in particular from within that community. Unfortunately what is happening now is retired farmers are concerned enough about the economy and the future of agriculture that they are investing the money mostly outside of the country now. This is as a direct result of the lack of resolve on the part of finance ministers for the past 10 to 20 years to eliminate the deficit and reinstate in Canada an air of confidence in the economy.

My question to you is do you believe it might be a wiser move to get rid of Farm Credit and use that as part of the budget balancing funds and indeed make that money available through private investors by creating this more positive atmosphere?

The Deputy Speaker: I take it the member for Vegreville wants the Chair to answer the question. I am making the point. Please, members, when they say you please refer to the Chair and the third person as an hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you very much for the question. I think the thrust of that question is whether there is still a need for a Farm Credit Corporation in this country. I am going to say yes, very much, in the affirmative. On some of the things that you are talking about concerning confidence in our economy, we are doing those things in a positive way as well.

The problem with financing in agriculture is the thing that I talked about which is the necessity for long term capital. Generally speaking, our capital markets have not addressed that, even in the residential mortgage business today. I can remember when everybody had a five year mortgage. Today it is down to two years or three years and people are playing around with that. That is another problem with residential mortgages.

• (1730)

The United States has 30–year mortgages. Canada cannot come up with anything better than a five–year mortgage. It seems to be a dilemma of our capital markets. They are not large enough and strong enough to be able to address that concern.

We have a parallel situation in industry with the industrial development bank. In spite of what we might say—they have had a lot of management as all other banks have had—generally speaking the industrial development bank has been successful at addressing the issue of the need for long term capital. If private industry would come along and take that over we would all be very happy about it. The reality is that they are not prepared to take the risk.

In answer to the member's specific question, we still need something like the Farm Credit Corporation. Perhaps we should open up its doors. The hon. member talked about farmers who are investing overseas. In my area we would not have such a luxury. Perhaps too many subsidies are being directed to the member's area so these people have that kind of luxury.

They might invest in something like a farm credit corporation. That is a possibility. Perhaps we can cross the line and partially privatize it. Everybody wants to address the concerns of farmers for long term capital.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, my speech will deal with Bill C–49, an Act to amend the Department of Agriculture Act.

The Department of Agriculture being renamed the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food is something that we can understand. It goes without saying that the economic future of the agricultural sector depends not only on government assistance but also on the development of processing, marketing and distribution. I have questions on the last point, distribution, and on overlap. Agri–food processors often talk about the difficulties they encounter in distributing their products.

How can we develop the agri–food sector successfully without tackling the deficiencies of the distribution sector?

Let us take the example of fine cheeses, which are difficult to distribute. This small market could be profitable but transportation and market placement costs are exorbitant. Intercompany consultation could be a solution. The current distribution monopoly hurts processors. We could look at the example of the Quebec consultation forum on exportation, where businesses worked together to transport food products to new markets. The government has a responsibility to provide more information on these markets. There is room for improvement on its part in this area.

Such co–operation must be encouraged among wholesalers, who have a hard time competing with their American counterparts enjoying special access through U.S. subsidiaries established in some Canadian markets. These subsidiaries already have their own suppliers of cheaper U.S. products. That is why it is important for our wholesalers to work together to fight these American companies with a significant advantage.

Producers do not enjoy a power relationship with the distribution sector so they must co–operate on transportation to become more competitive. Joint price setting by producers, processors and, of course, the government must not be done at the expense of producers.

With respect to overlap, we see, once again, that the government did not take it into account in drafting a bill. The minister of agriculture did not say clearly that his bill would save Quebecers from paying twice for the same services. This happens all too often, unfortunately.

As I already pointed out in a previous debate on agriculture in this House, industry and government in Quebec have worked together for a very long time to implement market–winning strategies. Meanwhile, the federal government sets up programs that conflict or overlap with provincial programs, thus wasting public funds.

• (1735)

This also increases the debt, which surely displeases the Minister of Finance. When the government imposes its policies, does it realize that these do not always, and I would even say not often, fit in with the priorities and development approaches of those who work in the sector concerned?

Let me remind you of some of the objectives which came out of the summit conference on rural Quebec in 1991: respect and promotion of regional and local values; co–operation among regional and local partners; diversification of the regional economic base; protection and regeneration of resources; a top–down shift of political power. From this conference arose the co–operative councils, which have proven their effectiveness. The federal government does not take these objectives into account at all in developing its programs.

The government should stop trying to direct farming, but should consider farmers as business people when it supports regional entrepreneurship. It must distinguish agricultural development policies from regional development policies and encourage farmers themselves to realize the importance of environmental issues as a way to promote agriculture. Those are provisions we could have found in this bill.

It is all very well to agree with the spirit of this bill, but nothing prevents us from seeing that there is still a big potential for overlap. Some activities that overlap? Here are some: The Canadian and Quebec governments both support farmers. They both promote the development of markets, research initiatives, as well as inspections of agricultural products.

The fact that the Department of Agriculture will become the Department of Agriculture and Agri–Food confirms the greater responsibility of that department. It will no longer simply help producers, because the future of the agricultural sector is dependent on the processing, marketing and distribution of products. The minister made it clear in this House last month. Needless to say that the new department will have to help our producers become more competitive and self–sufficient in relation to foreign producers, and will also have to ensure the future of our agricultural sector.

The bill provides that the minister will assume his responsibility in the field of research, which is essential. Indeed, with the opening of world markets, the department should play an active role in that regard.

I will conclude by asking the minister to look at the issue of overlapping as well as the distribution problems experienced by processors, which I referred to earlier. Then, the new name of his department could be a meaningful change.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of farmers in my riding, and as you know, farming is a major industry in Eastern Quebec, in the province as a whole and, of course in Canada.

I was again very interested to hear the hon. member's comments, but I was surprised at this tendency to ignore what the Government of Canada does for a sector that is so important to Quebecers and especially to the people in the Gaspé.

I had the privilege of working with the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec in my riding, where we handed over a cheque of $84,000 to develop a small–fruit industry, as part of a program to provide new incentives for local farmers to grow new products for local, provincial and even international markets.

I would also like to point out that the same people have already contacted me, and I am referring to representatives of the UPA and farm producers, especially in the dairy sector, to set up a program for regional processing of milk and cheese.

• (1740)

These people came to see the Government of Canada. They came to see their federal member. However, they have yet to receive an answer, and people may have the impression that their member is the Minister responsible for Agriculture in the riding of Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine and has not bothered to respond.

I took this project very seriously. I transmitted it to the Federal Office of Regional Development, because we want to show local people that the federal government is prepared to work with them, in partnership with farmers, the Government of Quebec and all the agencies concerned.

An hon. member: Question.

Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine, Lib.): So I am very surprised, and I realize we are on questions and comments, but just the same, if we are talking about agriculture and research, including research on cattle, I repeat, the federal government has made a commitment to develop new technologies, but unfortunately, once again we hear the Bloc Quebecois setting themselves up as the defenders of the public service. I do not claim to defend the public service. I defend and promote the

interests of farmers in the Gaspé. And when I hear the opposition defending the public service, I have my doubts.

Mr. Landry: Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to respond to my colleague opposite. There is one thing that I would like to tell him about. Let us look, if you will, at maple syrup, where we have an over–production. Look at what is going on. I will go further than that by telling exactly to the government what happened in Quebec and the rest of Canada. Let us talk about potatoes. In New Brunswick, farmers produce potatoes; they are also produced in Quebec, and the federal government was subsidizing the New Brunswick potato growers so that they could go on the Quebec market.

Quebecers never got 5 cents to leave their area and go on the market, within their own province. So, I justify myself today; that is exactly what the federal government did, or give me some evidence to the contrary. The evidence that I have is that it has never been fair. I could also talk about many other issues.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, it is a well known fact, although the opposition seems to ignore it, that 48 per cent or the Canadian milk production comes from Quebec, and this is because of the quotas that were instituted by the federal government. It is thanks to the federal government which protected the Canadian market that Quebec could control 48 per cent of our milk production.

Potato farmers were mentioned once again. Let us talk about potato farmers, let us talk about maple syrup. I know what I am talking about, I used to work for a company abroad which tried to open up this market for Quebec producers. It is totally false to say that the federal government did nothing. In my riding, UPA received $84,000, and you refuse to acknowledge that we paid more money to people who work in the field in order to diversify local production.

I am disappointed by the denials of the opposition. Once again, we only hear the separatist rhetoric, that real Quebecers do not want.

Mr. Landry: Mr. Speaker, in Quebec 24 per cent of the population works in the agricultural industry, but only 10 per cent of the agriculture budget goes to Quebec.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac, B.Q.): Only 10 per cent.

Mr. Landry: Only 10 per cent. I want equity. Once my colleague opposite gives us equal treatment, we will talk.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that much remains to be done in agriculture. The hon. member must bear in mind however, that the federal government and several departments are working on finding ways to make programs more accessible to the Quebec producers. At any rate, I would like to point out to the hon. member that, as it happens, we are managing and considering programs in which producers are invited to get involved in biotechnology.

As it happens, there is program in my riding to encourage farm producers, these men and women who work the land, to try and find ways to perhaps introduce such products making use of new technologies, for the betterment of Canadians health and well–being.

• (1745)

Of course, the opposition is none too pleased to hear such things, but as far as the entrepreneurs are concerned, when we talk about bank loans, about the implications for example of the involvement of the Federal Office of Regional Development, of the Federal Business Development Bank, it is all a matter of balance. What matters for Quebec producers, in terms of balance, is to make sure that there is a Canadian market in the first place.

I think that Quebec producers agree almost unanimously on the importance of the Canadian market and the need to maintain this market to compete with the United States.

Funds were made available to farmers, scientists, research workers, unions, labour organizations. The federal government has a role to play. Let us not forget it and let me tell you that it is often welcome, contrary to what the hon. member opposite claims.

Mr. Landry: Mr. Speaker, we were talking about fairness. That is a point I wish to raise. I would like to debate the issue of fairness.

In my riding in Quebec and elsewhere, we see young people who, after completing agricultural studies, want to start working on farms, or to buy family farms. There are many restrictions and requirements at the FCC. Young agricultural school graduates are not allowed to work in their field of study.

We in Quebec know what we need. I have nothing against them defending the federal government but I want fairness. As I said earlier using the figures I quoted, we have 24 per cent of the population but only 10 per cent of the budget. I am not asking the impossible; we should simply get our fair share per capita, that is, 24 per cent.

With respect to agriculture in Quebec, there is overlap and duplication. The party opposite has asked us to offer solutions. We do more than just criticize. The Official Opposition is not here only to criticize but to propose solutions, as we saw this afternoon when we talked about tax shelters and family trusts. We indicated where cuts must be made and what is needed. We do more than just criticize. I am willing to criticize but also to offer solutions.

[*English*]

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address this bill as a politician and also as a farmer. I appreciated the comments of the last two hon. members because as a farmer I am a little hard of hearing. Finally I could understand the debate and it made my day a little

happier. I do not want to comment on the remarks. I do not know how valuable they were but I could understand them.

When the bill was first proposed to the House we were briefed on it. I found it almost unbelievable that a new government would pick up on a suggestion that more or less was put to us by the previous government under Prime Minister Kim Campbell to reorganize this department. I felt that the bill would have at least contained some improvements to make the department more efficient or in some way give the Department of Agriculture a stronger voice in the House. I do not see anything of that. That is the point I would like to raise at this time.

If I as a farmer had not reorganized every year before I put the crop in, if I had not updated my machinery or improved my seed varieties, I do not think I could have survived. If I had gone out and purchased a different machine in a different colour and it had no more performance and did not do the job any better, although I had just spent a bunch of money, my neighbours would have thought me a little queer and I am sure I would not have survived very long.

• (1750)

The government reminds me a little of the first self–propelled combine I owned. It had all the parts. It looked like a beautiful machine. I was so proud of that machine I was just dreaming of the day I could take it into the fields. By coincidence that machine was a faded red colour.

When I started up that machine there was noise. Boy, it really performed out in the yard. I said: "If this machine works like this in the fields I will get my crops off in half the time". However that is about where my joy ended.

When I put the combine in the field and pulled into the swath there were noises; loose chains, loose bearings, walkers banging. The worst part was that the cylinder was out of balance.

An hon. member: It sounds like a Liberal combine.

Mr. Hoeppner: Let me get to it. I am trying to get there. This was a tremendous experience. My hair stood on end. I was furious that I had been really duped into buying this machine. When that cylinder got some straw in it, it bounced around and almost left the ground. What were the results of this? I got very little work done all day.

It reminds me of this Liberal government. I have heard noises. I have heard: "Boy, we are going to do something for agriculture". Boy, we have accomplished very little. That cylinder I see in front, which I call the cabinet for comparison, I hear one member say "cut", the other one says "spend" and the agriculture minister says: "Hold it members. Let us not do too much. We could be accused of doing something".

I was a little enthused the other night when all of a sudden I saw one of the standing committee members on that side making amendments that would make this bill of some value. He tried to balance that cylinder so it would run a little smoother. What did the majority of the members do? They shot him down, 90 per cent. The Bloc agreed and the Reform agreed. Finally we had an amendment that would have made this bill of some value.

What was the result of this? It was the same as with my combine. I got very little done. We have been two days on this bill and we still have not passed it.

It amazes me that people do not realize that when you put in a long day and only get little done the fuel tank still gets emptied. That is all we have received out of this debate so far. We have an empty fuel tank and when that happens we are going to be in big trouble.

Grain that should be in the bin is not in the bin. Grain that should be in the tank is mostly chaff and straw. It has no substance. Why do we pass bills like this when we should be talking about problems like provincial trade barriers and value added? Instead we are talking about building swimming pools and maybe adding a sports arena somewhere. We are forgetting that we may be hungry some day. Why are we even going through the motions here?

I would like to compare the tremendous amount of effort we have put into this bill to my tremendously efficient combine that went so slow that when I turned the corner I was usually lost in the dust and I could not find the next swath. People around me wondered if there was a driver in the machine. I get the same impression from this Liberal government. When we as a standing committee make suggestions to the government they just get shot down or forgotten. Ask me why.

• (1755)

When we told the agriculture minister to stop the back–tracking and change the car allocation system, what did the government do? This was recommended by every member on that standing committee. The government did nothing. Is the Liberal government running this by remote control? Are the railways, or the grain companies or the unions running the government? Who is running it? Sometimes I wonder.

This bill reminds me of a lot of other bills. When we should have been addressing problems what did we do? We did the same thing as that old, faded out red combine did for me. It put the grain over the walkers back on to the ground and we are going to see it sprout and be ruined.

That is what Parliament has done as far as agriculture is concerned. It makes me wonder when I see a bill which contains a clause like clause 6 which says that the agriculture minister can appoint any person to inspect any product, to control any act that he has anything to do with.

I will tell members why that bothers me. The government previous to this government and the agriculture minister tied the hands of the customs and revenue people and allowed unlicensed grain into the country. He set at risk the quality of our wheat. He set at risk the reputation that farmers had built up of growing a superior quality of grain. Not that he listened to farmers, he listened to a few individuals or self–interest groups.

This agriculture minister is going after illegal exports of grain, for which I must commend him, but why does he not prosecute those farmers under the wheat board act? Why does he have to enlist customs and revenue when they have nothing to do with it? Customs and revenue are there to prevent imports, not exports.

This is the type of bill I will not support. That is why I think clause 6 should not be in the bill.

I see I have taken my 10 minutes or so. I always like to end on a positive note. There is hope. One of these days we will have a green machine on that side. Then as farmers we will say when we see a green machine on the fields, it runs like a deer and we will see a government that runs slick, smooth and swift and we will get things done.

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I say to the member for Lisgar—Marquette that I thought the story of the combine was absolutely fantastic. However he missed the essential point. He should have told us why the operator, to wit himself, was punishing through with that kind of machinery. Why would he not do what we are doing with this bill? The time comes to refurbish, to trade your equipment in or at least refurbish it instead of trying to punish it out in the field with very low production. That is what this bill is all about.

The member for Lisgar—Marquette said something else and I wrote it down. I will probably get it framed. I want the House to realize, all my friends to realize—

Mr. Nunziata: Friends, which friends?

An hon. member: I'm his friend.

• (1800)

Mr. Simmons: Are they ready for this now? Even the member for York South—Weston will appreciate this one, I am sure. The gentleman from Lisgar—Marquette said something just now that has to be absolutely historical. He sits with the group that said: "We are not politicians. We are going down there to get them politicians". He started his speech today beautifully. I commend him as a politician and as a farmer. Welcome to the real world.

Mr. Hermanson: An honest politician.

Mr. Simmons: Now the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster wants to qualify it. There is only one kind of politician. Either he is a politician or not a politician. He should stop apologizing for it.

If we had the time—we certainly have the audience; there is no question about that—I would tell the House about agriculture in Newfoundland. There the combines do not break down. They are all green. Roadrunners, almost.

You will be interested to know, Mr. Speaker, in the very short time I have at my disposal that in my riding alone we have quite a diversity of farm activity.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Better green than red.

Mr. Simmons: Only yesterday I was musing with my friend here about how times have changed. This crowd came to Ottawa not to heckle. They were going to be pipsqueak quiet all the time. It is beautiful; I am feeling more at home with this crowd. I might join this crowd.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Simmons: I say to my friend from Winnipeg South that the idea of being the first Reform cabinet minister of Newfoundland and having my own clothing allowance had its appeal, but I said no. I said it was a good opener but it was not enough. I asked what else they had. It is a question of time.

Mr. Ramsay: At least we do not put our helmet on backwards, Roger.

Mr. Alcock: At least we wear one.

Mr. Simmons: That is his sin. That is the Prime Minister's sin, I say to the gentleman from Crowfoot. Is that a terrible sin? Is that a terrible gaff? Imagine, the member for Crowfoot has gone right to the nub of the issue. Some people, no matter how many helmets they put on or which way, would not protect anything important.

We can change the name of the department and the sooner we do it the better.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is the following one. Mr. Robichaud for Mr. Goodale, seconded by Mr. Chan, moved that Bill C–49, an act to establish the Department of Citizenship and Immigration—

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In the din I did not hear the speaker ask for the next presenter this evening and I was prepared to give a presentation on Bill C–49.

• (1805)

The Deputy Speaker: There was a mistake in the form and I read the wrong bill. I asked if the House was ready for the question and I do not think I heard anybody say no.

Is the member indicating, and we always take a member's word on these matters, that he could not hear and generally wished to say that the House was not ready for the question?

Mr. Benoit: Yes, that is right, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair will always take a member's word on that. The hon. member for Vegreville.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that very much.

The Deputy Speaker: It seems to me the member has already spoken in this debate. Am I not correct?

Mr. Hill (Macleod): No.

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe you had already called the question and that you had moved on to begin reading the question. In fact there was substantial agreement among the three major parties in the House that we would allow the debate to collapse at this point and have a vote on division on this question.

Perhaps the hon. member who just rose might want to consult with his whip before he insists on making a speech at this particular time. The fact is that the question has been called and we should then go on with the vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Does any other colleague wish to speak on this point of order, mostly including the whip or the acting whip of the Reform Party?

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, Reform had agreed that if the debate did collapse on the bill we would have the vote on division. However I was informed that the member for Vegreville intended to speak and had prepared a speech.

However in the din and the excitement between the speech of the hon. member for Lisgar—Marquette and the response of the member for Burin—St. George's I think he did not hear you, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, if the House would be agreeable, we would appreciate it if you would give him an opportunity to speak to Bill C–49.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I made some preliminary comments during my speech. I had intended to make a speech on the issue but I was informed there was an undertaking among the parties that there had been enough debate on the issue and that it was the general wish of the House to conclude the debate. I co–operated by sitting down and yielding 15 minutes of my time to allow the vote to go forward.

I think a deal is a deal. I appreciate the member for Vegreville would have liked to make some remarks on the matter. He should have told his whip or his House leader in due time so that could have been communicated as part of the deal. We had an arrangement here. We have observed the arrangement and in so doing I have forfeited my speaking time. I am sure there will be other opportunities for the member to participate in debate.

I would suggest that technically the Speaker has already put the question anyway. I believe the Speaker has effectively called for the question and I think we should get on with it.

Mr. Hermanson: The agreement was whether or not we would call a recorded division.

Mr. Simmons: I submit that the question has been put. I also submit that we had an arrangement and we should in honour stay with that particular arrangement.

Mr. Keyes: Mr. Speaker, not with the intention of leading the Chair but rather making a suggestion to the Chair, it has been precedence in the past that in some cases where this has arisen the Speaker recognized the request by the hon. member who may not have had the opportunity to rise in his place at the moment that was important. What that led to was a request for unanimous consent of the House to proceed with the member's request to make the speech. Maybe that could be the compromise the Chair might want to reach on this particular occasion.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, for our part, we would be ready to vote. However, if I understand correctly, I believe that the government is adamant on having a vote today.

On the other hand, the Reform Party wants one of its members to be allowed to speak. I think that we are running out of time. If we could have unanimous consent to prolong the debate in order to allow the Reform member to speak before proceeding with the vote, it would be satisfactory to all of us here. We all know that the vote will be taken on division. I believe that if there were unanimous consent to do so, everybody would be satisfied and this would put an end to these incessant points of order, clearing the way for a real debate on important matters.

[*English*]

Ms. Catterall: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: If the member would take her seat for a moment, the time has expired for the debate unless there is unanimous consent from all the members not to see the clock for a few moments.

It was the Chair's understanding that there was an agreement by all parties to end the debate a moment before 6.12 p.m. and

then the vote would be taken on division. On that understanding the Chair was not listening for anybody saying that he or she was not prepared to go ahead.

We are now in a very difficult position. I wonder if the deputy whip of the government party has something to propose.

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly prepared to accede to unanimous consent, provided the member for Vegreville displays the same courtesy to our agreement that the member for Burin—St. George's did and keeps his remarks equally brief. Otherwise we would have the position where one member was denied his speaking time. I hope he will respect that.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chairman: Is there unanimous consent to give the floor to the member for Végréville for a few minutes and then proceed with the vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the House for causing all the problem this evening. It was lack of experience on my part. Indeed I will keep my comments very brief. I will just hit on the points I was going to elaborate on in some detail.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Department of Agriculture Act to give effect to the government reorganization initiated by the previous government. For the most part it is an administrative bill. Its basic intention is to streamline and clarify the mandate of the department. Streamlining is consistent with Reform thinking but when streamlining is done there has to be a positive outcome, or at least Reformers demand a positive outcome.

In the case of the streamlining proposed in the bill there is only a very small efficiency added to the way the department operates. There is no indication at all of any cost saving, which is the other requirement of any streamlining. The bill falls far short of what any reorganizing bill should. It will not improve the efficiency of the department substantially and it will not cut the cost of operating the department.

The specific clause of the bill I would like to address again briefly is clause 7 that deals with reporting to Parliament. The bill recommends and, if it passes, will cause the reporting to Parliament to be removed. These annual reports have been around for some time.

Part III of the main estimates give more detail than the reports do in terms of how spending occurs within the department. The problem is that part III of the estimates do not give enough information to make the finances and spending of the department clear. I would propose this accounting to Parliament and this report to Parliament should remain in the bill so that there is proper accountability.

• (1815)

This is exactly what the hon. member for Malpeque was suggesting in his amendment which was shot down by his colleagues.

I am only asking for what the hon. member for Malpeque was suggesting in his amendment and nothing more. The parliamentary secretary to the minister when addressing this issue said: "Why keep the annual reports because they were always late anyway and they had very little in them?"

That does not sound like the way to handle a situation like this. If the annual reports were of very little value then the annual reports should be presented in a more timely fashion and with enough information to make them worth while.

There are two different views on how to handle a situation like this. I believe that by making these annual reports timely and meaningful that together with the main estimates this House and the people of Canada, to whom we are responsible, would be able to understand whether the spending within the department is done in an efficient and acceptable way or not.

The only other comment that I will make now in the extended time I was given is that the main estimates do not give enough information to make the spending by this department or any other department easy to understand. As evidence of this I would challenge any member opposite to a duel at high noon tomorrow.

Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): I will take you on.

Mr. Benoit: I will ask questions about the department. I will ask questions and using part III of the estimates, the hon. member will answer the questions. I hope there will be a taker for this challenge, certainly the parliamentary secretary or the minister. I will be absolutely delighted if this challenge is accepted.

I will end my remarks saying that we will not oppose this bill although there is very little in it for us to support.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried on division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.20 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's *Order Paper.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.) moved that Bill C–226, an act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity this evening to speak to Bill C–226, which I initially introduced in the last Parliament and reintroduced in this Parliament on March 17, 1994.

I would like to thank the chairman of the subcommittee on Private Members' Business, the member for Scarborough—Rouge River, and other members of the committee for selecting this bill as a votable item. As you know Mr. Speaker, it means this bill at some point will be put to a vote in this House, a free vote. Every member will be called upon to exercise his or her discretion in saying either yes or no to repealing section 745 of the Criminal Code.

I am convinced, given the discussions I have had with a great number of my colleagues, that this bill will in fact become law in the not too distant future. I am convinced as well because of the overwhelming public support for the removal of this section from the Criminal Code.

Section 745 of the Criminal Code was introduced in 1976 when Parliament was debating the abolition of capital punishment. At that time there were a series of compromises and deals struck, presumably in the backrooms of the precincts of Parliament, in order for capital punishment to be abolished.

One of those deals or compromises was that in return for abolishing capital punishment there would be a law that said if you are convicted of first degree murder you have to serve a minimum of 25 years in prison before you become eligible for parole. That is not where our predecessors let it stand. A group of others decided that was cruel and unusual punishment. Before giving their support for abolishing capital punishment they argued that what became known as section 745, because they thought 25 years was too long, would give inmates faint hope that they could in effect apply for a reduction in the parole ineligibility period. They argued that it would be used very rarely, only in exceptional cases.

Most Canadians are not aware that section 745 is in the Criminal Code of Canada. It says very simply if you commit first degree murder, it is the worst possible crime in the Criminal Code. This is cold blooded, calculated, premeditated murder. These are the people who plan a murder. They buy a gun or a knife. These are not pleasant crimes, not your run–of–the–mill armed robberies. These are vicious and cruel crimes that result in the victims being mutilated and raped before or after they are murdered. We are talking about the worst crime under the Criminal Code.

Section 745 says if you are convicted of murdering somebody in those circumstances, if you kill one, two, three or more people—Clifford Olson raped and murdered 11 young children and he will be eligible under section 745—regardless of the number of people you murder or how you committed those murders, you can apply to have your parole ineligibility period reduced to 15 years.

Most Canadians believe that the penalty for murder is life in prison. We all know that is bogus. Nobody serves life for murder, or at least not that I am aware of. Most Canadians think it is 25 years, but that is not the case. Right now the going rate which I refer to as the Walmart discount in the Criminal Code is you can get 40 per cent off that 25 years by applying under section 745. These applications just started a few years ago because of the time lag from 1976 and 15 years hence. As of May 1994 there were 60 applications from convicted killers. Forty–three of those 60, or 72 per cent, were successful.

That tells you very simply that the penalty for first degree murder in Canada is fast becoming 15 years. Is that what Canadians want? Is that a fair penalty? I suggest not. In my view it demeans the value of life. It is one of the reasons why Canadians have so little respect for our criminal justice system. It is an example of how the criminal justice system in this country is totally imbalanced. The rights of convicts, the rights of criminals are considered to be first and foremost. The rights of victims and their families are shunted aside.

• (1825)

This Parliament now has an opportunity to create a more equitable balance in our criminal justice system. Section 745 must be removed from the Criminal Code in order for Canadians to at least have some belief in the criminal justice system that it is serving the public and not serving convicted killers.

I spoke of Clifford Olson who becomes eligible for parole on August 12, 1996. It was not that long ago. Most members in this House recall the hideous nature of Mr. Olson's crimes. I have here some comments from Mrs. Sharon Rosenfeldt, the mother of one of the Olson victims, Daryn Rosenfeldt, who was abducted, sexually assaulted and murdered by Clifford Olson. She says and I quote: "I am so repulsed that our justice system

can circumvent a court of law decision. A court of law sentenced the killer of my child to life in prison with no eligibility for 25 years. Who then is lying to me, my family and the public?"

That is the mother of just one of the victims. I can say that in the next 12 to 15 years 600 of these applications will come forward. I have here the list of those who have committed first degree murder or those who have committed second degree murder and have been sentenced to a period of incarceration of more than 15 years. A good number of them have already been successful. Some of my colleagues might recognize some of these names.

In Ontario for example, the province I am from, there is Gerald Chase, Darryl Dollan, William Frederick, Frederick Sweet, Norman Clairmont, Rolf Droste, Allan Kinsella whose case is coming up, and Federick Radike. These cases have all been successful. There are a good number of other cases across the country that have been successful.

It would appear that a good number of these applications, unless Parliament acts decisively to repeal section 745, will be made by Olson. Do not let anyone kid you that it is impossible for Clifford Olson, the Canadian version of Charles Manson, to be released. All you have to look to is the Karla Homolka case here in Ontario. A woman who was privy and party to the murder of two innocent young women was sentenced to 12 years in prison. We are not even talking about first degree murder. She becomes eligible for full parole after serving only four years. She becomes eligible for day parole after serving only two years. Something is drastically wrong with our criminal justice system in this country.

There is the case of a family of another victim, in this case a police officer in Saskatchewan. In 1978 a 39–year old RCMP officer by the name of Constable Thomas Brian King had completed his shift on duty and was returning home to his wife and three small children. There were two men who decided that they were going to bag and murder a cop. What they did was remove the licence plates from their vehicle. They were stopped by two police officers. They wanted to get stopped. The two police officers searched the car and levied a fine I suppose. Because there were two officers and only two of them they decided not to do anything to those two officers.

They again removed the plates from their car. This time they were stopped by Constable King. They overcame Constable King, handcuffed him with his own handcuffs and then went around to boast about how they had bagged a cop. Because they could not find some of the friends they wanted to boast to, they took Constable King out and fired two shots into his skull. As he was dying, and I am reading from a synopsis of what occurred, according to the evidence in court, "as the steaming warm blood was gushing on to the two soon to be convicted killers they delivered a few more final blows to the head of their victim and began dragging his body off to the river to discard it". That was in 1978, not a long time ago.

• (1830)

Mrs. King, her three young children and all the other relatives thought that these two individuals would serve a minimum of 25 years in prison. Much to their horror, last year it was revealed to them that one of the killers was applying under section 745 to be released from prison or to have the parole ineligibility period reduced.

The wife of Constable King writes:

> This suddenly opened a terrible new chapter in the life of the King family for which we were not prepared. If a book were to be written, it would show enough pain in this one chapter to nauseate or embarrass them into reconsidering the way in which section 745 functions and how it is so counterproductive to the very lives of those whose Canada's judicial and correctional system is intended to serve.

I relate these two cases to you, Mr. Speaker. Here is another. Let me make it three, the Kaplinski family. In January 1978 a young night desk clerk at an inn in Barrie was robbed by two men. Mr. Kaplinski was the father of a very young child. He was a law–abiding citizen, working to support himself and his young family. The inn was robbed and several months later his decomposed body was found in a snowbank north of Barrie.

They came in to rob the guy. They took the money and then drove him up north where they pumped a number of bullets into Mr. Kaplinski's skull and left him in a snowbank. This is what the sister, Joanne Kaplinski has to say about how section 745 has impacted on her family:

> We the Kaplinski family received our own life sentence by being forced to look into the abyss of human cruelty and selfishness. However, last December 1993, we were once again forced to revisit that abyss by the application of one of the murderers, Allan Kinsella, for early release under section 745. We thought that after the original trial the men responsible for taking Ken's life in such a cruel and brutal fashion were being made to pay for their actions by forfeiting at least 25 years of their lives under the conditions of incarceration. We simply could not believe that release after only serving 15 years was an option.

She goes on to say:

> Fifteen years is not adequate retribution or denunciation for the wanton destruction of human life and we fail to comprehend why the current legislation fails to include protection of the public as relevant criteria being only reflective of the rehabilitation principle of sentencing and ignoring—

She goes on about how this section is a miscarriage of justice.

Those are just three cases. Six hundred others are coming up. Families that were victimized 15 or more years go will be revictimized as a result of this provision in the Criminal Code of Canada.

It is an injustice. Section 745 ought to be repealed. I regret to say that it is not the official position of the Government of Canada today that it ought to be repealed. However I am pleased with the government's commitment to Private Members' Busi-

ness and I am pleased that this bill will have a free vote in the House of Commons.

As I said earlier, I am convinced that it will pass. Not only does section 745 demean the value of life and create a terrible imbalance in our criminal justice system, but it is costing Canadian taxpayers millions upon millions of dollars for these applications to come forward, an estimated $4 million a year over the next 15 years. I believe that is a low estimate, given the fact that those who will be applying will be using legal aid lawyers.

• (1835)

This bill is supported by CAVEAT, the Victims of Violence, the Canadian Police Association and, I would submit, the overwhelming majority of Canadians. I cannot accept the views of the bleeding hearts. I suppose we will hear from some bleeding hearts here in the House who say that 25 years is cruel and unusual punishment.

Those who argue that 15 years is a sufficient period of time for first degree murder, I suggest that they are sadly mistaken or misguided. There are those who will argue as well that those convicted of first degree murder will not reoffend.

I present this statistic for consideration. Between 1975 and 1986, there were 130 murders committed by people who were released on parole. Ninety of those were murder and 40 were manslaughter. Anyone who suggests that people who are released on parole are unlikely to reoffend and commit murder refer to these statistics which were put out by the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

In closing, I urge my colleagues on all sides of the House to support the bill at second reading. In so doing, it will be referred to the justice committee which will then provide an opportunity for all Canadians, various interest groups and others to come forward and present their views.

When the bill comes back to the House I hope and I expect it will be passed, resulting in a major correction of a flaw in the criminal justice system.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, in 1976, the federal government amended the Criminal Code to make it consistent with its parole legislation and policy. It replaced the death sentence, which had just been abolished, by life sentence for murder.

The Liberal philosophy, to which the hon. member for York South—Weston would never have subscribed, was inspired at the time by the general principles of humanism. In 1976, the criminal was looked upon first and foremost as a victim of society in general, of his social group in particular and even of himself. His crime was above all a social act. Irrespective of the harm done, criminals were treated like the casualties of the system, individuals who had to be saved even at the expense of common sense.

We must now recognize that such noble principles overlooked certain realities. The system had come to consider all criminals, that it to say individuals convicted by a court for an offence against a criminal law, as the first victims of their actions. Our parole legislation is a product of this thinking.

Once the judicial drama is over, you deal with the real stuff. As soon as the court has passed sentence, the correctional system takes charge of the individual behind closed doors, whether in an institution or in an in camera sitting of the parole board. Regardless of the work of the court, the correctional administration undertakes to assess the criminal and to establish how much of the sentence he or she will actually serve. And all of this under the cover of a big word: rehabilitation.

The entire system is predicated on this concept that the public does not look upon favourably, an argument put forward by criminologists, these crime philosophers. In a word, the concept of rehabilitation is defined as an act of pity on the part of society towards criminals perceived no longer as individuals responsible for their faults but rather as victims of an ill–accepted social environment.

Therefore, crime no longer being a real crime, the criminal is no longer a real criminal, and a quiet reintegration into society is supposed to serve the public interest.

• (1840)

Even if the court feels that an individual is beyond redemption, Parole Board and correctional system officials will, in their ivory tower, decide to set that person free when he should have been kept in jail.

Even if they admit that an individual is the sole responsible for his crime, these so–called rehabilitation experts firmly believe that criminals can be rehabilitated. It is time we set the record straight.

Our criminal law is based on the responsibility of the individual. I realize that many hold less pragmatic views on the Canadian criminal law, but let me say to these philosophers that, in our judicial system, positive law still takes precedence over moods, which is certainly a good thing. Consequently, an individual who has committed a murder will be handed down the mandatory sentence provided by the law and by the law only. That is the reality.

The general public thinks that murderers are jailed for at least 25 years. This is what the law provides. However, along with our common law system, a new law full of subtleties, nuances and surprises has developed. The public does not know about it, because this new law is, more often than not, applied in an absolutely discretionary manner by crown agencies. There is now such a thing as correctional law.

If I were cynical, I would define correctional law as the set of written or implicit rules which allow criminals to serve the shortest possible sentence in the best conditions. Behind its functional aspects, correctional law refers to the allocation, by public authorities, of maximum resources to reduce the sentences handed down by the courts.

Our so–called correctional law is based on a set of laws and regulations more elaborate than our criminal law. We have developed a very sophisticated administrative legal system for the benefit of criminals.

Criminals who go to jail enjoy the protection of a true charter of rights and freedoms for convicted offenders. In fact, the correctional system abides by the following principle: the sentence is now calculated based upon the duration of the total reduction. The prisoner knows about this.

All the efforts made by the prisoner, often with the help of correctional officers, aim at changing the length of his sentence. It is a well–known fact that prisons are full of converted and born–again Christians just waiting for parole.

A life sentence should mean imprisonment until the death of the inmate, but the average citizen has come to understand that, by some work of fiction, it now means a minimum of 25 years before parole. But this is where he is wrong. In fact, a life sentence can mean 25, 15 or 10 years depending upon the inmate's eligibility for parole. And this is when the average citizen lets you know that he has had enough.

So, I understand how frustrated the hon. member for York–South–Weston feels, but I do not think that the minor amendment he is proposing will change anything in the system. I even think that striking down section 745 of the Criminal Code would do more harm than keeping it.

What we find appalling in the parole system is the philosophy behind it, the costs and the aberrations, but mostly the discretion given to the sentencing courts, despite all the information it has about the crime and the criminal.

Actually, the sentencing court is in the best position to evaluate the individual and the crimes he has been found guilty of. The sentence is contemporaneous with the offense.

Do you really believe that, 15 years after the sentencing, a civil servant would be in a better position that the court to determine if the decision was justified? Or that because of changes in his personal outlook, the criminal no longer deserves the punishment imposed for acts for which he remains responsible, despite the passage of time? Tell that to the relatives of murder victims.

In these circumstances, whether a sentence is exemplary is very much a matter of opinion. In the end, the principle of immutability and the usefulness of sentences as a deterrent should prevail over all the nebulous theories of liberal criminology.

• (1845)

Under its existing provisions, the Criminal Code provides for a judicial review mechanism, which seems appropriate.

In every case where the inmate has served 15 years of his sentence after being found guilty of murder, he will have to convince a jury that he should be released before his ineligibility period expires. If he is not successful, he will have to serve his full sentence.

Personally, I am more inclined to trust the judgment of six or a dozen ordinary citizens than that of a commissioner of the National Parole Board, whose qualifications are strictly based on his political past.

The statistics I obtained from the Department of Justice tend to confirm my opinion and put into context the relatively small number of individuals concerned by section 745.

Since the 1976 amendments and up to March 31, 1994, only 128 inmates across Canada were able to apply for a judicial review under section 745. Only 71 actually applied, and 43 requests were heard.

Before looking at the conclusions, we should remember we are discussing the cases of about fifty people. We are looking at legislation that is aimed at a very small group. I want to make it very clear that I do not understand the relevance of the bill standing in the name of the hon. member for York South–Weston.

As for the outcome of these hearings, I think we can conclude that the system works quite well. As a matter of fact, of the 43 applications heard to date, and again I repeat that this number covers the 28 years since the introduction of section 745, 11 were turned down, 13 have led to a partial reduction of the number of years of imprisonment without eligibility for parole and 19 have been successful.

Thus it seems to me that the system is working relatively well. This is why I think we should end the discussion immediately since we are discussing situations so rare that I feel I am wasting my time.

Must we remind the House that in case of murder the rule is still life imprisonment?

Finally, section 745 allows any inmate guilty of a murder of either category, first or second degree murder, to apply for a reduction in the number of years of imprisonment without eligibility for parole. The bill proposes to abolish this section.

In other words, imprisonment without any possibility of parole.

I will conclude by saying that by abolishing section 745 we would be replacing a necessary evil by a mandatory evil. I nevertheless congratulate the hon. member for his initiative but I must tell him and the House that I will not support the bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for York South—Weston for this bill. I stand in support of it.

Today there is a cry across the land for the return to capital punishment. Why is this? It is clear this cry for the return of the death penalty is a recognition of the complete and utter failure of the bleeding heart approach to criminal justice. The philosophy underlying our present criminal law is not protecting members of society. Our sons and daughters are being assaulted and murdered without end.

The most horrific sign of failure of this underlying mentality of our criminal law is the murderer who kills again after being paroled. I thank my hon. colleague from York South—Weston who told us today that 130 innocent people have been murdered by people who have been released on parole.

• (1850)

These politicians who have set the agenda for the administration of Canada's justice system for the past 20 years are responsible for paroling into society criminals who have raped, assaulted and killed again. The custodians of our justice system, these very same people, want to continue to release these people into society. Section 745 of the Criminal Code is the most pathetic example of this bleeding heart mentality.

In 1976 the death penalty for murderers was abolished. At that time the politicians assured us that society would be protected because murderers would be sentenced to life imprisonment and would have to serve a minimum of 25 years before release. However, the people of Canada were betrayed by these politicians.

Bill C–84 which eliminated capital punishment contained a little known clause which allowed for the creation of section 745 of the Criminal Code. Section 745 nullifies the term life imprisonment and grants murderers the right to apply for parole eligibility after serving only 15 years of their so–called life sentence.

The bleeding hearts assured us that in exchange for the abolition of the death penalty, society would be protected by a 25–year minimum sentence. Then they deliberately betrayed us. They provided the murderers with the right based in law to be released back into society after serving only 15 years.

I ask these people who support section 745 and the early release of killers into society: What is a human life worth to them? I ask these politicians: What penalty should Larry Sheldon pay for having raped and murdered a little, innocent 9–year old girl? What penalty should Norman Clairmont serve for brutally and savagely murdering the 19–year old Potts girl? What penalty would the bleeding hearts have Charles Simard pay for murdering two innocent teenagers in the province of Quebec? I ask again: What is the value of an innocent life to these politicians?

On April 28, 1994 Judge Demetrick of the Alberta provincial court declared that portions of the definition of firearm contained in the Criminal Code of Canada were so convoluted as to be legal fiction and twice removed from reality. It seems incredible that the Government of Canada is producing legislation that is being declared by our courts to be fictitious and twice removed from reality.

The only explanation for this type of legislation is that the political thinking and reasoning that is producing this type of legislation is fictitious itself and is itself twice removed from reality. Can the families of victims murdered by criminals who have been released on parole come to any other conclusion than the politicians responsible for this are twice removed from reality and do not know what they are doing?

When we look at our national debt, our Young Offenders Act, the horrendous mess our immigration policy is in and the betrayal of section 745 of the Criminal Code, is it any wonder that our courts are pointing out that some of this stuff is twice removed from reality. And by so doing are they not clearly implying that our politicians do not know what they are doing?

The hon. member for York South—Weston has my support for this bill. I believe he has the support of the entire Reform caucus and I believe he also has the support of millions of Canadians who back in 1976 were conned into believing that the abolition of the death penalty was to be substituted for a term of life imprisonment with a minimum of 25 years.

• (1855)

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I take offence to the term that Canadians were conned by a piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order as I suspect the member fully knows. The hon. member for Crowfoot.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I believe as well the hon. member for York South—Weston may even have the support of many of his own colleagues in the Liberal caucus if they are allowed a true free vote on this private member's bill. I shall wait and see. I am sure millions of Canadians who are demanding the return of the death penalty are also waiting to see how many in this House consider the taking of the life of an innocent human being to be worth less than 25 years imprisonment.

We will see if the twice removed from reality mentality still controls the agenda in the Liberal caucus. If it does, then the only real hope for the people of Canada who want change to legislation like section 745 of the Criminal Code is to wait until the next federal election. They can then remove the Liberals from power as decisively as they removed the Tories from office in the election one year ago.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I owe it to my constituents and the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, CAVEAT, the families and friends of victims of violent crimes and tens of thousands of Canadians who signed petitions, to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C–226, an act to amend the Criminal Code.

During the last Parliament and through two years of work my own private member's Bill C–330 attempted to introduce similar changes to the Criminal Code that among other things would eliminate section 745. Consequently I applaud and second the member for York South—Weston's bill to reintroduce this initiative to the House of Commons for consideration. I thank him for that honour.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Keyes: The Reform Party should wait to hear my whole story before applauding.

In our society first degree murder has always been considered to be one of the most heinous crimes punishable by law. Despite our unswerving disgust with the premeditated destruction of another life, our approach to punishing first degree murderers has changed somewhat over the years.

With regard to convicted first degree murderers, the most significant change to take place in our criminal justice system occurred in 1976 when the members of this House passed Bill C–84. In addition to creating two new categories of murder, first and second degree, this bill also brought about two significant changes to our criminal justice system. It abolished the death penalty for Criminal Code offences such as first degree murder. It went even further by creating a legal loophole, section 745, that allows convicted first degree murderers to apply for early parole consideration after serving only 15 years of a so–called life sentence without parole for 25 years.

The actions taken in this House by my predecessors 18 years ago constitute what I call a double compromise. This double compromise is unwarranted and unjust. It serves only to confuse, frustrate and even traumatise the many families and friends of murder victims throughout this country.

When the death penalty was abolished 18 years ago, it was done in recognition of several key factors: one, the fact that capital punishment was not and is not an effective deterrent for heinous crimes such as first degree murder; two, the death/penalty obviously eliminates the entire notion of rehabilitation of the convicted criminal; three, at the time this legislation was introduced, Canada's social conscience was more conducive to sentencing a convicted first degree murderer to life imprisonment rather than authorizing state sanctioned murder; and four, the legal and administrative costs associated with successfully carrying out a death sentence are often, I say to the Reform Party, far greater than the costs of incarceration.

Clearly the abolition of capital punishment represented the first compromise between two extremes. Those at one extreme were like our friends in the Reform Party who believe that all first degree murderers should be lined up and shot immediately. Those at the other extreme believed that we should simply rehabilitate first degree murderers for a few years instead of subjecting them to the harshness of long term imprisonment.

• (1900)

As though that compromise were not enough, section 745 of the Criminal Code allowed for what I call a double compromise. Not only would first degree convicted murderers escape the death penalty, they would also have a chance to escape their so–called life sentence by applying for early parole consideration after serving only 15 years of a minimum 25–year sentence.

I personally do not agree with the death penalty but let us be reasonable here. By compromising ourselves twice in this area we went too far. Whose interest does this second compromise really serve anyway? Does section 745 serve the interests of the victims who were brutally murdered in cold blood? Of course not. Does section 745 serve the interests of a society that is led to believe that it will be safe from first degree murderers for at least 25 years without parole? Of course not. Does section 745 serve the interests of a criminal justice system that aspires to be balanced, fair and effective when dealing with first degree murderers? Certainly not.

People across the country are asking us to say what we mean and mean what we say when a person is convicted of first degree murder. If an individual is convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole for 25 years then that is what should happen. If people think that life in prison without parole for 25 years is inappropriate for the same reason then we should debate what the actual sentence should be, reach an agreement and codify it in our laws. We should stick to it until we have reason to change those laws.

Under the current provisions of section 745, the sentence of life imprisonment is nothing but legal doubletalk. According to the statistics of the National Parole Board there are over 2,000 offenders serving life sentences in the Canadian correctional system. Furthermore over the next 15 years—and this is for the Bloc's edification—655 inmates in federal prisons will be eligible for this judicial review courtesy of section 745.

As of May this year there have been 60 judicial review applications made under section 745. A staggering 42 of them have been successful. That means 72 per cent of the convicted first degree murderers, first degree premeditated murderers who applied for early parole consideration, were successful under the current provisions of section 745 of the Criminal Code.

To anyone who is thinking that I am just a vindictive individual, I ask them to consider this: crown attorneys, our public defenders, tell me they are not prepared to handle the sheer volume of judicial review cases that are about to come crashing down upon them. Most crown attorneys have little or no experience with this type of judicial review, which makes me a little concerned with the proper administration of justice in the country.

Canadians are fed up. They feel their rights are being superseded by the rights of the criminal. They feel that the scales of justice are no longer balanced but tipped in favour of the criminal and that there is not enough justice for the victim in society in general. For the benefit of those who may have forgotten why we need to seriously punish for heinous crimes, allow me to awaken their collective consciousness.

Daniel Gingras was convicted of murder in 1978. Nine years later he was released from a maximum security prison on a day pass for his birthday. He escaped his police escort and later celebrated his birthday by brutally killing two women.

Clifford Olson was convicted of murder in 1981. He still managed to murder 11 children while out on parole, one of whom was a young boy who was repeatedly raped for several hours before he was killed. He has the right under section 745 of the Criminal Code to be eligible for parole in less than a year.

Joseph Fredericks was convicted of raping and sodomizing a little boy in 1984. While on parole this man raped and murdered an 11–year old boy.

Patrick Mailloux was convicted of a long list of violent crimes. While on parole he walked into a corner store, pulled out a gun and murdered a 17–year old girl in cold blood.

Charles Simard killed two teenagers in Quebec. He had his parole eligibility period reduced by a judicial review from 20 to 15 years. Also there were Gilles Lavigne, Larry Sheldon and Serge Roberge.

• (1905)

Perhaps the most stirring case is that of Saul Betesh, Josef Woods and Ronald Kribs. In 1977 those three men lured a 12–year old boy into their apartment and raped him for 12 hours before strangling the little boy to death. Betesh and Kribs were convicted of first degree murder and Woods was sentenced to 18 years without parole, which means that he may be released as early as next year. All three prisoners are expected to seek judicial review courtesy of section 745.

Mr. Speaker, think about what that 12–hour torture was like for that little boy. Now think about what it would be like if he were your child.

In my own riding of Hamilton West there was the case of John Rallo who brutally ended the lives of his wife, his five–year old daughter and his six–year old son, whose body has yet to be found. Indeed the list goes on and on.

What exactly are the people of Canada saying to us about this issue? I have received a great deal of feedback from my constituents over the years that illustrates the public sentiment out there. I will give one before I conclude: "Only a politician and/or a lawyer could come up with a penalty which turns out to be not life imprisonment for 25 years but 15 years, and our politicians wonder why people do not trust their words".

How much longer must Canadians live with the double compromise presented by section 745 of the Criminal Code? Let us say what we mean: truth in sentencing. Life without parole for 25 years should mean exactly that and section 745 of the Criminal Code must be eliminated.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard St–Laurent (Manicouagan, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–226 could have been called "sink the shipwrecked" or "shoot the ambulance". In actual fact, it comes to the same thing. In the society we live in, the light at the end of the tunnel is part of daily life, irrespective of the environment we are in.

For example, we are currently going through an intense recession. The Minister of Finance knows it, he does not see the light at the end of the tunnel either. We have difficulties imagining that one day this country will come out of it, financially. Yet, we do not shoot the Minister of Finance. The system is not perfect, only human, and no human is perfect.

To understand the consequences of Bill C–226, we have to put it back in its context. In 1961, murders fell into two categories: capital and non–capital. Before that, death was the only sentence available for convicted murderers, even though the governor could grant a stay of execution and intervene in favour of the sentenced.

Those convicted of non–capital murder were sentenced to life in prison, but were eligible for parole after seven years. We are talking about 1961.

After 1967, people sentenced to life in prison needed permission of the governor in council to be released. They had to serve at least ten years before becoming eligible for parole.

In 1974, changes to the Criminal Code allowed judges to raise to 20 years maximum the period during which no parole could be granted.

As we can see, sentences are becoming more and more severe. In 1961, we were talking about seven years; in 1967, ten years; and in 1974, we could go to twenty years.

On February 24, 1976, the Solicitor General introduced Bill C–84 which abolished the death penalty altogether. At the time that was a hot topic. We were wondering whether the death penalty should be kept on the books or abolished.

It is still a very contentious issue today, so imagine what it was back in 1976.

Bill C–84 offered a new variation, namely different categories of murders: first degree murder and second degree murder. People convicted of first degree murder had to serve 25 years before being eligible for parole, whereas people convicted of second degree murder had to serve between 10 and 20 years, depending on the sentencing judge's decision, before being eligible for parole.

• (1910)

Therefore, in 1961, seven years, in 1977, ten years, in 1974, maybe 20 years, and in 1976, maybe 25 years. Bill C–226 is aimed at removing any hope of parole for convicts serving a life sentence. Everybody agrees that society must be protected, but to what extent? As parliamentarians, do we have the right to pass laws regarding the probable behaviour of individuals 15 years from now?

As it now stands, the law gives individuals the opportunity to be tried and sentenced to penalties proportionate to the seriousness of the crime which brought them to court. Bill C–226 claims that none of us believes that individuals who are sentenced today will be rehabilitated 15 years from now. It closes the door to hope. It shoots down rehabilitation. Do we have the right to do that?

As parliamentarians, we have rights, but we also have the fundamental duty to do our best so that, when we leave, society is a bit better off than when we arrived. It is to meet this humble objective that we must strive. Statistics show that only 6 per cent of inmates on parole re–offend within six months of their release. That is to say that the present judicial process and parole system are not working too badly.

The controversy surrounding the review process is fuelled by two often contradictory objectives. On one hand, there is the way we feel about crime and, on the other, the desire to rehabilitate offenders, which are often mutually exclusive. The initial reasons for a judicial review are always the same. At the time, in the years 1961, 1967, 1974, and 1976, reactionary views were predominant. There were debates on the death penalty and life imprisonment. Those were the buzz words, back then.

The right wing is back, and we hear the same debate all over, especially with the emergence of victims' rights groups, the word victim being used in its widest sense. The emphasis is now placed on the problems those victims experience. We should realize that arguments for repealing section 745 of the Criminal Code are based on retaliation.

Retaliation does not justify shattering one of the few hopes lifers have left. When you are in prison, the light at the end of the tunnel is essential. I do not mean to put up an all out defence for prisoners, but we must recognize that those people are not animals. They are human beings, and we have no moral right to utterly deprive them of hope.

Let us not forget that judicial review after 15 years does not mean lifers will automatically be released from prison. It is just another step a prisoner has to take before parole is granted. People who sit on parole boards are there to determine whether individuals can be safely released in our society. If not, parole boards have every right to keep them behind bars till the end of their sentence.

I am puzzled by Bill C–226. First of all because I honestly do not think victims will be better protected. Nor do I believe that sentencing will be improved by this bill. Moreover, we have to wonder if Bill C–226 really serves any purpose since there are already, within the parole system, people whose job it is to be sure that the individuals they choose to release will make a positive contribution to society. Obviously, it is important to protect society, but as members of this society we have a role to play. When we see an ambulance going down the street, we do not fire at it. We give it the right of way without even asking who is inside.

• (1915)

For a person who has received a life sentence, the parole system is the light at the end of the tunnel. I do not think that the victims' relatives will suffer after 20 years. They certainly have suffered and everybody deplores that fact. However, we do not have to always give in to the people who shout the loudest.

A politician must be able to stand up and defend his views. My view is that Bill C–226 serves no useful purpose.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the debate on these bills under review this evening gives me the opportunity to dispel certain myths concerning the Criminal Code provision which Bill C–226 would repeal and that is the section providing for a judicial review of the parole ineligibility period.

This provision was adopted in 1976. The legislation adopted at that time stated that people convicted of first degree murder or high treason were to wait for at least 25 years before being allowed to apply for parole and for those convicted of second degree murder, the jury would set a 10– to 25–year parole ineligibility period.

But Parliament was wise enough to determine that in both cases, once the convict had served 15 years of his sentence, a jury could be formed and the parole ineligibility period could be reviewed and revised if appropriate.

This provision was based on the principles of justice and rehabilitation, two principles which are still very sound today. Parliament added that section to the legislation because it believed individuals could improve.

They considered then, and the argument is still valid today, that the possibility for the parole ineligibility period to be reviewed could be an incentive for the convicts to make special rehabilitation efforts.

I should remind you that this provision was linked to the abolition of capital punishment which occurred in several countries where authorities instituted life imprisonment without any eligibility for parole as a compromise to please both those in favour and those against the death sentence.

[*English*]

No doubt the creation of section 745 was unique in the criminal law of the country. However the section was included in the first reading of the original bill in 1976. It was fully reviewed and discussed by the justice and legal affairs committee at that time before it was finally debated and passed by the members of Parliament.

In fact, rather than the original proposal to have three judges to hear a case, Parliament amended the bill so that a jury would decide the case instead. This was done specifically to increase public participation in the process.

Clearly there was debate and communication in the public arena. Efforts were made to make the resulting judicial review hearings as public as possible.

Let me review briefly how the provision works. I think the Reform Party—

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Pearson International Airport is a vital asset to the Canadian economy.

• (1920)

I recently chaired a Toronto Liberal caucus task force investigating the immediate needs for runway construction at Pearson. The task force reviewed the available documents and held two public meetings. There were several issues considered: the immediate completion of a second north–south runway; the construction of two additional east–west runways and the impact these runways would have on the travelling public, the economy and the surrounding communities.

Currently air traffic at Pearson is handled primarily on two east–west runways. Five per cent of the time, about 70 times per year, severe cross winds force planes to change to the one available north–south runway for periods of up to five hours, a total of 350 hours per year. Capacity is cut in half, disrupting airline schedules, forcing delays and re–routing, allowing potentially dangerous landings to occur on the east–west runways at higher cross wind limits than are allowed at U.S. airports.

Does Pearson need a second north–south runway at this time? The Minister of Transport recently announced a second north–south runway will be tendered for completion. This construction will not increase the overall capacity at Pearson, only the efficiency and the safety.

An environmental assessment report completed in 1992 recognized that a second north–south runway was needed to eliminate the current imbalance of two east–west with only one north–south. They wanted a safety and operational feasibility of a shorter 4,500 north–south runway investigated. This short runway would have had less noise impact on the local residents.

Two studies were undertaken by Transport Canada and the Canadian Airline Pilots Association in 1992 and 1993. They found that 85 per cent of the aircraft that use Pearson could not land on a 4,500 foot runway. Arriving aircraft would have to be kept at high altitudes of 10,000 feet to facilitate sorting and sequencing. These restrictions would increase the probability of mid–air collision. The operational separations imposed for safety reasons might even result in less capacity than exists now.

Both reports concluded that safety concerns would have to be given priority over all other considerations. They recommended

against the short runway. The caucus committee concurred that a full length north–south runway is needed at this time. It further recommended the new north–south runway should be used for landings only during severe cross wind conditions only.

Does Pearson need two more east–west runways at this time? The Air Transport Association of Canada has provided figures which indicate aircraft movements are down 12 per cent from their pre–recession high. Currently Pearson processes 20.5 million passengers per year, a volume easily handled by the two existing east–west runways.

Travel replacing technology such as faxes and tele and video conferencing are being increasingly utilized with fewer people travelling for business purposes.

Our committee concluded that any additional runways should not be contemplated until the threshold of passengers exceeds 30 million per year. This will not take place before the proposed Canadian airport authority takes over the management of Pearson.

I endorse the minister's decision to complete the second north–south runway for economic and safety reasons. I applaud the innovative plan to turn the operation of airports over to local airport authorities so they can be financed and improved in a self–sufficient, cost–effective, businesslike manner.

I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport to expand on the concept of the Canadian airport authority for the residents of Mississauga. What assurance do we have that this will be the most efficient and economical solution to Pearson's current problems?

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Transport I would like to respond to the question from my hon. colleague, the member for Mississauga West.

Let me first assure my colleague that she can reassure the residents of Mississauga that when the new north–south runway is completed at Pearson it will be used primarily for landings. In recognition of the concerns of the residents living near the airport about noise I want to reiterate that the new runway will only be used 5 per cent of the time when severe cross winds make landings on the two east–west runways unsafe.

The only time the new north–south runway would be used for take–offs would be on those extremely rare occasions when, combined with adverse weather conditions, the existing north–south runway is unavailable due to emergency or repairs. On these occasions only take–offs toward the north following the established departure path of the existing north–south runway would be permitted.

The minister wants to assure the member and her constituents that absolutely no decision will be taken on the matter of additional east–west runways until the Canadian airport authority is in place and functioning at Pearson International Airport. In any event it is anticipated that the additional east–west runways would not be constructed until traffic warrants it. This is not expected to happen until the turn of the century.

• (1925)

One of our colleagues from the Reform Party has said that we do not intend to move on the new Canadian airport authorities for Pearson until 1998. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As the minister has made very clear we will be moving to establish CAAs at many airports as soon as the communities involved identify their representatives and pass the necessary local resolutions which is indeed the case for Pearson. There is no question about waiting until 1998.

The fact is that the local municipalities have named their representatives and the minister has indicated that we will proceed with all that needs to be done at Pearson. The only logical option though is to work with these representatives in an advisory capacity for the time being.

We will move to activate a Canadian airport authority which we believe is in the best interests of the Canadian public as soon as the Senate puts the interest of the taxpayer ahead of its rhetoric.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, October 17 I put two sets of questions to the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs. The minister effectively declined to answer those questions at the time saying they were hypothetical. However, the exchange after question period between the leader of the Reform Party and the Speaker would indicate the questions as put were of course not hypothetical and were in order. The questions were in order because they dealt not with the government's political plans but with its competence, jurisdiction, and role in the matters of constitutional law and the possible separation of Quebec.

The first question was formed from a quotation from the Prime Minister of Canada. He said a Prime Minister of Canada has a constitution he must respect and there is no mechanism in the Constitution permitting the separation of any part of Canadian territory.

While that is very narrowly true in fact the Constitution does have provisions relating to amendment of various things that would be required in the event of the separation of a province. These are things as elementary as the transfer of the legitimate powers of the federal government to a province which would generally speaking require the consent of two–thirds of the provinces representing 50 per cent of the population. In other cases where it actually involves institutional change it would require unanimous consent. These clauses are laid out in part 5, sections 38 through 49 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

My question to the government was merely that it affirm that it is the position of the Government of Canada that the constitutional status of a province could only be changed legally and would be done through this amending formula. This would of course not apply simply with a separation scenario but to any constitutional change. I would maintain that it is the duty of the federal government which purports that national unity is its highest priority to recognize that it does have an obligation to uphold the Constitution.

I would also note that politically there would be considerable advantage for it to make clear to the people of Quebec that when they are being told that separation can be achieved unilaterally that this is legally untrue. In fact, it would also be political untrue, politically unfeasible to pursue in that manner.

We would also of course be interested to know what the position would be of the leader of the official opposition on such an illegal position as unilateral separation. However I do not expect the parliamentary secretary to comment on that particular question.

My second question concerned an article recently written in *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Autumn 1994, by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra. He held that today the federal government retains full constitutional options to allow or not to allow a referendum vote, to control the content and wording of any referendum question, to control the actual timing of any vote, and to launch its own pre–emptive nationwide referendum legally superseding any Quebec vote.

As you well know, the opinions of the member for Vancouver Quadra are of some interest not simply because he wrote the article but because he is a noted constitutional expert and also a member of the governing caucus. While I do not subscribe necessarily to all his constitutional views I would certainly think that the government would take note of them and would be prepared to comment on whether it believes these are in fact the constitutional powers of the federal government.

I would note that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs himself has previously commented that the federal government should consider the option of a national referendum. I believe this is an option our own party would suggest should be considered, not necessarily acted upon but certainly considered given that ultimately the unity of the country and its future constitutional status is the business of all Canadians.

I put that question and hope to receive more enlightenment than I did on Monday.

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. It is quite an extended question and is obviously a subject of considerable debate.

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs for whom I am answering believes that the Constitution Acts do not provide any rules or procedures for secession of one of the provinces.

The argument which has been presented by the hon. member for Calgary West that the amending formula can be stretched to include the secession of a province is a point of view. However as the hon. member suggests there are many points of view on constitutional questions. Colleagues of mine have expressed constitutional views. Members of the opposition have as well.

It is very clear that when the time comes there is international precedent and their is domestic precedent in this regard. However, what I think the record shows internationally is that in cases of secession what is likely to occur is so much confusion and trouble that it would be impossible to proceed in an orderly and fashionable manner and indicate what goes before.

It seems to us that the premise of the member's question is that we should say: You cannot leave unless we let you go. That does not seem to be a very helpful approach at this time. Our approach is to argue to Quebecers that the case for secession cannot be sustained. It involves costs and risks that are unnecessary and that this country is too precious to be destroyed.

We want the question to be put fairly and quickly. We agree with the leader of the Reform Party who has expressed that point of view. I do not intend to talk on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, but I believe he said this morning in Toronto that he is a democrat and we are all democrats. Certainly we in this Chamber are all democrats and a democratic decision is appropriate and will occur we hope promptly and with a clear question.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), a motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.32 p.m.)